

# UFO INVESTIGATOR



## NICAP TO FOUND DATABANK

### New Study Group Leads Off with Ambitious Recommendation

NICAP has initiated plans to establish a master computer file of UFO sightings and related data. To be designated ACCESS (Automated Clearinghouse for Collection and Exchange of Sighting Statistics), the system will be constructed with NICAP sighting files as a base, then expanded to include files made available by other organizations and individuals in the UFO field.

As its name suggests, ACCESS will seek to provide scientists and researchers a centralized source of information that can be used for statistical and analytical studies. At present, no such databank exists to make quantitative material accessible to the scientific community.

The idea for ACCESS was spawned by a new NICAP advisory body called Special Study Group for Data Processing Applications (SSGDPA). Staffed by volunteer specialists in computer sciences and systems research, the group was organized late last year to conduct a feasibility study on the use of computers to store and analyze UFO reports. The team was charged with making specific proposals on how such a computerization program could be configured.

In recommending the clearinghouse concept, the study group emphasized that it is a formidable step in a long-term effort to utilize automation technology for UFO research. The group noted that ACCESS could serve as a focal point for other studies, and hopefully would stimulate an active interest among scientists who have refused to embrace the UFO problem on grounds that useable data were lacking.

No target date has been set for implementation of ACCESS, due to the extensive prerequisite studies that must be made to define design and operational parameters. Such complex tasks remain as contracting primary input sources, developing a file structure, and specifying programming requirements. SSGDPA is currently working out the sequence it will follow in performing these and other operations.

Spinoff from ACCESS will offer almost as much practical aid to UFO research as the Clearinghouse itself. One basic byproduct already expected is a substantially more sophisticated sighting report form that will permit improved standardization and organization of observational data. The report form will be designed in accordance with the needs of both investigators and users of sighting information. It is hoped that a model will emerge that could be adopted by researchers engaged in data-gathering activities throughout the world.

Parties interested in contributing files to ACCESS, or in becoming users when it is operational, are invited to so advise NICAP by letter. Interim reports from SSGDPA will be summarized in the UFO Investigator, as the study group completes the various phases of its project.

## NICAP ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

### Commitment to Scientific Objectives Reaffirmed

At its annual meeting on May 29, NICAP's Board of Governors elected its newest member to Presidency of NICAP. John L. Acuff, 37-year-old businessman from Washington, D.C., was chosen the first man to serve a full term as chief NICAP officer under the Committee's new corporate program.

Acuff is Executive Director of the Society of Photographic Scientists and Engineers (SPSE), a technical group headquartered in Washington, just six blocks from NICAP. His tenure as NICAP President will be part-time, without compensation. This differs from the old NICAP Directorship, which was a full-time, salaried position. Termination of that office occurred earlier this year when incumbent Major Donald Keyhoe retired.

In assuming the Presidency, Acuff affirmed his determination to continue NICAP in its conservative scientific role. "We will exercise imagination and flexibility in our management policies," he stated, "and we will remain faithful to those standards of research that have earned NICAP the respect of the scientific community."

Acuff is a graduate of American University, with a BS degree in Distributed Science. His professional background includes positions with Technology, Inc., of Dayton, Ohio, and Flow Laboratories, of Rockville, Maryland. His tenure with SPSE began in 1967. SPSE is a nonprofit, membership organization similar to NICAP. SPSE members have cooperated informally with NICAP for several years in the area of photographic analysis.

## SIGHTING ADVISORY

Preliminary information on new reports. Details and evaluations will be published when available.

June 11, 1970 -- A fragmentary report by shortwave radio said crewmen of Thor Heyerdahl's papyrus boat Ra II sighted an unidentified object moving across the sky. In sight for several minutes, the object disappeared "in a bright orange flash." The sighting occurred in the mid-Atlantic.

May 28, 1970 -- Police officers in Winooski, Vermont, reported seeing "bright discs of light" moving overhead in the early morning hours. Policemen in nearby areas and local citizens also witnessed the phenomenon. Initial indications were that a weather beacon might account for the reports.

April 22, 1970 -- Two women driving near Blytheville, Arkansas, observed an object with small white lights hovering over a field. Initially silent, the object made a "whistling noise" when it started to move. It went out of sight extremely fast, according to the women.

First of a Series**MAN AND NON-MAN****What Impact the Discovery of Extraterrestrial Intelligence?**

*It is not at all certain that human society could assimilate positive knowledge of extraterrestrial intelligence. For all the speculation on what changes such a discovery might produce, man has not experienced that rude moment when he knows absolutely he is not alone in the universe. It seems likely that at the very least, some degree of cultural shock would occur, and that a crisis in man's self-perspective would indeed follow. But this is only one of many possibilities, and no data exist for framing anything more than the most tenuous projections.*

*This series of articles will look at the question of what would happen if unequivocal evidence of alien intelligence were discovered. It will include some of the best opinion available on this problem, as well as new material not previously published. The first installment, below, is excerpted from a report prepared for NASA in 1961 by the Brookings Institution.*

If plant life or some subhuman intelligence were found on Mars or Venus, . . . there is on the face of it no good reason to suppose these discoveries, after the original novelty had been exploited to the fullest and worn off, would result in substantial changes in perspectives or philosophy in large parts of the American public, at least any more than, let us say, did the discovery of the coelacanth or the panda. It might well be that this sort of discovery would simply not be sufficiently salient for most people most of the time to cause any noticeable shift in philosophy or perspective. If superintelligence is discovered, the results become quite unpredictable. It is possible that if the intelligence of these creatures were sufficiently superior to ours, they would choose to have little if any contact with us. On the face of it, there is no reason to believe that we might learn a great deal from them, especially if their physiology and psychology were substantially different from ours.

It has been speculated that, of all groups, scientists and engineers might be the most devastated by the discovery of relatively superior creatures, since these professions are most clearly associated with the mastery of nature, rather than with the understanding and expression of man. Advanced understanding of nature might vitiate all our theories at the very least, if not also require a culture and perhaps a brain inaccessible to earth scientists. Nature belongs to all creatures, but man's aspirations, motives, history, attitudes, etc. are presumably the proper study of man. It would also depend, of course, on how their intelligence were expressed; it does not necessarily follow that they would excel technologically.

It is perhaps interesting to note that when asked what the consequences of the discovery of superior life would be, an audience of Saturday Review readership chose, for the most part, not to answer the question at all, in spite of their detailed answers to many other speculative questions. Perhaps the idea is so foreign that even this readership was bemused by it. But one can speculate, too, that the idea of intellectually superior creatures may be anxiety-provoking. Nor is it clear what would be the reactions to creatures of approximately equal and communicable intelligence to ours.

What may perhaps present a particularly knotty philosophical problem, and one which would seem most clearly to have the potentials of profound repercussions for our values and attitudes and philosophies, could arise if we discovered a creature whose intelligence and behavior, by our standards, was indeterminate to the point that we were unable to decide whether or not it should be treated morally and ethically as if it were "a human being." Certainly, this could provide a continuing subject of controversy across and within various earth cultures; some people who had not otherwise speculated on these matters might gain a sense of the complexity of the universe [from consideration of this question.]

Editorial

With NICAP under new management, a word is in order about our policy on publishing sighting reports. Having received a variety of opinions and questions in this regard, we hope this will serve to clarify our position and define some of the relevant issues.

NICAP has always been committed to a program coupling research with dissemination of information. This has been deemed basic to any serious effort to investigate and illuminate the UFO problem.

Pursuant to President Acuff's affirmation of our scientific goals, we will continue to follow this policy. As previously, NICAP will publish reports and information it regards as reliable. Beginning with this issue, sighting material will be presented in new formats that permit easy reference by the reader and standardization according to the nature of the material. Space will impose some limitations, but our purpose will be to keep our members informed.

No attempt will be made to publish only those reports that favor a particular hypothesis. Our position has been, and remains, that UFOs represent real phenomena that cannot adequately be explained in conventional terms. A small percentage of reports gives evidence of interplanetary travel by extraterrestrial intelligence, and it is this possibility that is of special interest to most researchers. Nonetheless, we are in business to seek factual resolution of the UFO question, and we will continue to consider all approaches and interpretations for which scientific support can be shown.

It should be remembered that the UFO problem is a signal-to-noise problem. Reports are generated by a very large variety of stimuli, and any collecting agency will receive some amount of material, no matter how competent or incompetent the agency is. As the largest UFO research organization in the world, NICAP is sent reports every week from many different people and locations. This does not mean, however, that UFOs are passing in great numbers through our atmosphere, or that there are always dramatic cases of high credibility to report. It does mean that something is occurring, and that somewhere within the mass of raw input (noise), there is meaningful data (signal). Our problem, both in researching and reporting on UFOs, is to distinguish the signal from the noise, and to record the signal as objectively as possible for study by ourselves and others.

News Commentary

**\$5000 SAYS UFOs NOT FROM EARTH  
\$10,000 Says They Are**

If advocates of the extraterrestrial hypothesis are anxious to demonstrate the strength of their convictions, so are its detractors. Aviation writer Philip J. Klass is a good example. Proponent of the theory that many UFOs can be explained as plasma phenomena, Klass has been an outspoken critic of scientists sympathetic to the ETI thesis.

Professing to practice what his fellow lowans preach, Klass devised a way in 1966 to "put my money where my mouth is." He challenged the late Frank Edwards, best-selling author on UFOs, to wager \$10,000 on whether an extraterrestrial creature would be brought before the public within two or three years (something Edwards had publicly implied would happen). Edwards declined, offering instead to bet \$20,000 that Klass could not produce a coronal discharge spectacular enough to attract Air Force jets. (Klass passed.)

Klass continued to publicize his own wager, but without luring any takers. Finally, in March of last year, William G. Gordon, a West Coast engineer and writer on UFOs, read of the offer in a newspaper and decided to bite. After reviewing the formal agreement Klass had prepared, he wired Klass his acceptance, saying, "Welcome devil's advocate in this research and predict you will cheerfully pay off in short time with ample reasons to change your concept."

The terms of the agreement are somewhat different from the original offer to Edwards. Klass agrees to pay \$10,000 at any time in his lifetime (assuming Allen is also alive) if and when at least one of three conditions is met:

- 1) A spacecraft, or major spacecraft artifact, is found that, in the opinion of the National Academy of Sciences, is clearly extraterrestrial in origin;
- 2) A "bona fide extraterrestrial visitor" appears live before the U.N. General Assembly or on national television;
- 3) The National Academy of Sciences announces it has examined evidence it regards as conclusive proof of extraterrestrial visitation during the 20th century.

Allen in turn agrees to pay Klass \$250 per year for as many years (up to 20) as any of the conditions is not met. This means that Allen is risking a maximum of \$5000 in defense of the ETI hypothesis, while Klass is placing somewhere between \$5000 and \$10,000 against it (if Klass loses, he is actually out the difference between \$10,000 and the sum of whatever payments Allen has made up to that time; he cannot lose the full \$10,000).

Allen made his first payment when he signed the agreement May 3, 1969, and his second payment a year later (this past May). Thus he is out \$500 so far. Klass is free to spend the money, because the \$10 grand is being held in escrow by Klass's attorneys in the form of government bonds. Should the winning event occur, he will have 30 days in which to pay off.

At this writing, Allen is the bet's only taker. This is not surprising, since it is highly unlikely any scientist is going to gamble money on the outcome of his research or on the probability a given hypothesis is valid. Nothing in science is certain, and any body of evidence almost invariably lends itself to disparate interpretations. Indeed, it is largely through the tension of competing ideas that scientific "truth" emerges.

Also, it should be noted that Klass can win his wager without moving one inch closer to solution of the UFO problem. If, in 20 years, no UFO or alien being has been captured, and if the National Academy of Sciences remains skeptical such things exist, there may still be credible reports that indicate the presence of ETI in our atmosphere. It is impossible to know what forms ETI might assume or how it might manifest itself within our sense experience. As Stanley Kubrick once said on this question, "(Extraterrestrial beings) might be incomprehensible to us except as gods; and if the tendrils of their consciousness ever brushed men's minds, it is only the hand of God we could grasp as an explanation."

Book Review

Guest Reviewer: Isabel L. Davis

*Passport to Magonia*, by Jacques Vallee. Henry Regnery Co., Chicago, 1969. \$6.95.

With numerous references to such legends as the mythical sky-country of Magonia (hence the title), mathematician Vallee contends that "the modern, global belief in flying saucers and their occupants is identical to an earlier belief in the fairy-faith. The entities described as the pilots of the craft are indistinguishable from the elves, sylphs, and lutins of the Middle Ages."

"Identical?" "Indistinguishable?" Certain resemblances do exist (almost any idea can find support somewhere in the wide fields of folklore, mythology, and religion), but the exact point-by-point similarity claimed by the author fades under scrutiny. Because he stresses the parallels and neglects the differences, his own data fail to confirm his basic contention. The beings of the Secret Commonwealth are in no danger of being mistaken, except by Vallee, for UFO pilots.

"This is not a scientific book," the author announces in his preface. Nor is it a scholarly book. Besides errors of fact, insufficient documentation of sources, and the absence of an index to the text, it suffers from omission of important data, an elastic terminology, some remarkably cloudy writing, and over-interpretation.

A conspicuous example of the latter fault is his analysis of the case of the Eagle River pancakes. To bring in the Biblical story of Lot feeding angels, and to suggest that the event at Eagle River (never a strong case) "has the meaning of a simple, yet grandiose ceremony," verges on the ludicrous.

Half of the volume consists of a catalogue, entitled (inaccurately) "A Century of UFO Landings" (1868-1968). Neatly sidestepping any responsibility for evaluation, the author includes cases of every degree of credibility, but excludes without explanation, a number of well-known occupant stories equally pertinent to his thesis.

A mainstay of the erstwhile Civilian Saucer Intelligence (CSI) of New York, and former staff member of NICAP, Miss Davis has been closely associated with UFO research since its first days.

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Annual Membership Dues	
United States, Canada and Mexico	\$10.00
Foreign	\$12.00
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## MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

After 14 years in the same building, NICAP has moved its offices. The new address is 1522 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20036. Because the new offices are in the same block as the old, the zip code and telephone number remain unchanged; only the street number is different. The move was made because the old building is slated to be demolished to permit construction of a subway station.



Remember that donations to NICAP are now tax deductible. This includes donations made last year after June 11. Receipts for donations are available on request. Membership dues are not deductible.



To those members who do not live in the United States: Please remember to make all payments to NICAP in U.S. currency. This makes it much easier for us to process your payment and provide you efficient service.



A few reminders about our renewal system:

1) When you receive your first renewal form, renew promptly so that we can update your membership well in advance of our next mailing. If you delay, you may receive a second form (with your old expiration date). When this happens, it means that we did not receive your renewal in time to update our list for that mailing.

2) Please do not renew until you receive your renewal form. The form is the quickest and simplest way to enable us to continue your membership for another year. The form will always be mailed with the UFO Investigator, and will come automatically each year. You can tell from your address label when to anticipate it.

3) You do not have to return your membership card to us for validation. When you receive it (with your renewal form), separate it per the instructions and retain it. It automatically becomes valid when we receive your renewal. If you do not choose to renew, you may discard the card; it will not be valid because the expiration date on it will not agree with our master membership file.

4) Our address does not appear on the renewal form because at the time the forms were printed, we did not know where our new offices would be located. In the not too distant future, we hope to provide return envelopes for sending in renewals. If you are in doubt about our address, it will always appear in the UFO Investigator and on our envelopes.

## Q/A

Queries for this column should be addressed to Q/A, in care of NICAP. NICAP reserves right to edit letters used.

Please send me summaries of all sightings on record, including date, time, location, approximate altitude and velocity, direction of flight, and eyewitness descriptions.

M.S./San Francisco, Calif.

*NICAP's sighting files contain thousands of reports and many different kinds of data. It is physically impossible to offer, on an individual basis, summaries, statistics, or other selected information for even a fraction of this material. We regret our limitations in this regard because we receive repeated requests of this kind, and we would like to be of help. Hopefully, when our newly planned computer system, ACCESS (see front page article), is in operation, we will be able to provide data services for all serious researchers.*

Can you refer me to any sources on the theological implications of extraterrestrial life?

P.M./Worthington, Ohio

*Interviews with several theologians on this question can be found in a new paperback book entitled The Making of Kubrick's 2001, edited by Jerome Agel.*

## FEEDBACK / Readers write

Letters for this column should be addressed to the Editor.

Dear Editor:

Like many (I guess), I felt that after receiving no UFO Investigator for several months, I thought NICAP might have died. I see now that this interim period has produced great changes in your format which I'm greatly in favor of.

This is not the real reason for my writing however. I have long been interested in the UFO phenomenon (since age 11) as I am an amateur astronomer, and the astro side of science has long been my avocation (and for awhile my vocation). In the past, there was some evidence for an apparent cyclic variation of UFO reports which seemed to grossly coincide with the opposition of Mars (Vallee).

The recent explorations of Mars via Mariner 6 and 7 cast a long shadow on any hypothesis regarding Mars as the source of activity of the UFO phenomenon. The article by John Carlson (UFO Investigator, May 1970) is a model of current scientific opinion in this regard and its reasoning quite good and well thought out.

Nevertheless, before we rule Mars out completely, there are several aspects of Mariner 6 and 7 which can be argued in favor of the extraterrestrial hypothesis in favor of Mars.

Let me state right now I'm no crackpot. I reviewed the chapter on Mars in Dr. Frank B. Salisbury's new UFO book soon to be published. Dr. Salisbury is the head of the Plant Science Dept. at Utah State University. Also I'm a member of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers and contribute to its Mars section. I've studied the planet since 1954 so I'm familiar with the various aspects of observing it.

In the past, the greatest argument for the existence of intelligent life on Mars was the Lowellian interpretation of the linear "canals". When Mariner 6 and 7 failed to show these (apparently), the life hypothesis diminished considerably.

Let us remember, however, that 200 photographs (no matter how close-up) must still be balanced against the hundreds of thousands of Earth-based photos taken over a cycle of many oppositions and therefore recording various seasonal aspects which the short time interval of Mariner 6 and 7 could not hope to record.

Astronomers who have specialized in Mars studies know that the "canals" apparently take part in the same seasonal variations as the larger dark areas. In particular, Slipher in his volume "Mars, the Photographic Story" (1962) shows several photos of long linear markings. There are also some photos in his "Brighter Planets" (1964) which show the "canal system" even better. At other times (even in superior "seeing") the canals fail to show themselves either to eye or photograph due to the lack of contrast in their immediate vicinity - apparently as a direct result of these same seasonal aspects.

To me, the most surprising thing about the far encounter photos of Mariner 6 and 7 is the lack of sharp contrast or "line of demarcation" between the boundary of a light area and a dark area. Many Earth-based photos of Mars show a fairly sharp boundary line between these markings.

Apparently, the automatic gain control on board the twin spacecraft was set so that sharp contiguous boundaries do not appear sharp in the resultant electronic pictures. The AGC therefore would be predisposed to "not see" markings of linear aspect which might be interpreted as a classical "canal," though the boundaries in the FE (far encounter) pictures are sharper than in the NE (near encounter) frames. Whether this is due to better resolution

in the NE frames or the AGC can be argued, but the question is still open.

I don't think the "canal enigma" will be truly resolved until photographs of an entire Mars seasonal aspect are taken. This will be done hopefully in 1971. The question of life (in any form) probably won't be solved until biological probes reach the planet's surface (and perhaps not even then since Martian organisms may not be constituted like Earth forms).

Despite what I've said, I still think that life on Mars is probably less than a 50-50 chance. I say this since there appear to be more unfavorable factors against life than favorable ones for it.

Dr. Salisbury and I (in private communications) have discussed the possibility that Mars itself may be a gigantic biological "experiment" by an extraterrestrial or extra-solar race, just as we conduct biological experiments in our laboratories. Admittedly the idea is far-fetched, but worth considering.

It must also be remembered that any extraterrestrial hypothesis for the UFO coming from outer space is limited (though not necessarily confined) a great deal to our Solar System. This is due to the enormous distances of the stars and the current estimates of probability of finding an inhabited planet within a radius of, say, 1000 light years (Sagan and Shklovskii, 1967 - *Intelligent Life in the Universe*), unless we admit that relativistic velocities of the spaceships of extraterrestrials are common. A thought not easy to discuss or speculate upon since no known means of propulsion would give us even a bare fraction of the speed necessary to cover a radius of even a small number of light years in the lifetime of an individual.

Sincerely yours,

Rodger W. Gordon  
Nazareth, Pa.