

letters

New UFO center

More than a year has passed since the Air Force formally closed its Project Blue Book, which acted as a national center for the receipt of reports of certain types of strange phenomena more commonly known as UFO's.

As consultant to that project for many years I am aware that neither the closing of Blue Book nor the Condon Report has laid the UFO problem to rest, and a number of my scientific colleagues and I have become concerned lest data of potential scientific value be lost for want of a reporting center. As evidence that the subject is still very much alive under the covers, I can cite not only my own personal mail which continues to contain UFO reports from reputable persons but also news-clipping services. The latter show an almost complete absence of UFO reports from urban dailies but a continued spate of UFO reports from small-town newspapers, where the editor is either less sophisticated, or less prone to be influenced by officialdom, or where he may have

knowledge of the source of the UFO reports.

It has been my estimate over the past 20 years that for every UFO report made there were at least ten that went unreported. Evidence for this comes from the Gallup Poll, the many UFO reports I subsequently learned of that were not reported to the Air Force, and from my own queries. There has always been a great reluctance to report in the face of almost certain ridicule. It would seem that the more trained and sophisticated the observer, the less prone he is to report unless he could be assured of anonymity as well as respect for his report.

Accordingly, in order that material of potential scientific value not be lost, and in order that persons, particularly those with scientific training and experience, can submit a UFO report without fear of ridicule and publicity, my colleagues and I, all associated with universities, hereby offer to act as a receipt center for UFO reports that otherwise would almost certainly be lost to science. I will be personally responsible that the data so submitted will be treated seriously and that no embarrassment to the sender will result. Names, for instance, will be immediately disassociated from the report and not used without specific written permission of the originator.

It may be of interest to note, in passing, that over the years I have been the recipient of UFO reports from many highly trained technical people and scientists. It is a gross but popular misconception that UFO reports spring from "ding-a-lings." A study of the record shows that such persons are almost entirely absent. The address to which UFO reports may be sent is: J. Allen Hynek, Chairman, Department of Astronomy, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

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