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From: "Grant Cameron" <gcameron@usa.com> [[Save Address](#)] [[Block Sender](#)]
To: nids2@earthlink.net
Cc: bcox@flatoday.net
Subject: MAJOR GENERAL JAMES C. PFAUTZ
Date: Sat, 22 Jun 2002 11:22:55 -0500

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Eric

The Air Force Intelligence General who made the presentation in the E link basement Pentagon vault was MAJOR GENERAL JAMES C. PFAUTZ.

http://www.af.mil/news/biographies/pfautz_jc.html

Blum stated that he ran his own secret UFO task force for Air Force Intelligence in 1983. (p.57)

He lives in Annapolis Maryland. His number is (410) 849-8918.

Blum also stated that following his speech Alexander told him the Working Group operations were compartmented, and that he would have to leave the room. (p.75)

Grant
--

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Message Alert:



You Have One PRIZE Waiting!

OK

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, 6/5/75

(UFO sightings all over northern Wisconsin and Minnesota--is this unusual?) It is rather unusual for that area, although we have now had for the past 6 weeks a fair amount of activity in southern Manitoba, an area about 55 miles south of Winnipeg. ~~It~~ We've had some very interesting sightings from there. The pattern has been in the past that an area can remain what we call 'UFO hot' for several weeks and then things just die down. The ~~same~~ Wisconsin thing is unusual in that it has persisted this long while. (In fact, it's still going on. Sightings as recently as last week in May.) It's beginning to look like northern Wisconsin and northern Minnesota and southern ~~2~~ Manitoba Canada form one rather large area.

January 13, 1977

Dear Grant

I'm sending you the details that I remember from the sighting of a UFO that I had on September 3, 1976.

I'm sorry that I took so long in sending this to you but I just kept putting it off.

I hope this information is still of some use to you.

I won't mention the names of any of the others who also saw the UFO, because I don't know if they would appreciate it.

On September 3, 1976 at about 7.00PM I was called out of the house to look at a bright light in the Northeastern sky.

The light moved slowly west and was descending slightly. It then went backwards with^{4c} losing any speed, it went up and made movements impossible for an airplane or helicopter to make.

This object then slowly disappeared behind a bluff of trees north of the house.

During the time that we were watching this we heard no noises from the object.

There were few if any clouds in sky at the time and there was more than enough light to make it possible to see if the object was an identifiable one or not. None of us could

Explain what the object was.

This sighting occurred at a farm about 3 miles east of Carman on highway #3 at about 7.00 p.m. on Sunday September 3, 1976.

I hope that this is of some use to you I'm sorry that I took so long in getting it to X you.

Love in Christ
Buen

February 22 '77

Box 341

Gimli, Man.

Dear Grant,

Hi! Sorry I've taken so long to write back. Enclosed you'll find the names and addresses of the people you requested. Also, I've enclosed a newspaper clipping from the "Lake Centre News (Feb. 15 '77)". This is the first time that I've heard about this story, so I couldn't offer any additional information about it. The tape from Virginia Beach is also enclosed. That's all for now. Thanks! See you soon.

Yours.

Kim
Pyman

UFO

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Aliens on Earth

"for selfish purpose"

By Jean Kowalski

Aliens from another solar system are on Earth, possibly living underground somewhere in New Mexico. They are abducting humans for genetic research, and the governments of the world know something about it.

"I put credence into reports that the aliens are up to something, and it's no good," Leonard Stringfield, an author and investigator of unidentified flying objects, said. "Aliens are here for a definite purpose and a selfish purpose."

Stringfield spoke to about 70 people April 27 at the Milford Branch Library about the history of UFO sightings, the evidence that extraterrestrial beings are abducting humans for experiments, and the U.S. government's involvement in investigating and covering up the alien presence.

In the past 40 years, Stringfield said, he has come across information from various reliable sources—police officers, engineers, government and military officials, pilots and weather forecasters—convincing him that aliens of several different races have landed on Earth, sometimes in large concentrations.

"And it seems that the little aliens are misbehaving," he said. "because I've suddenly been inundated again with sightings."

Late last fall, Stringfield said, "there was so much going on it was unbelievable."



Leonard Stringfield

Sightings of low-level, huge objects were reported nightly in the Blue Ridge Mountains, as well as areas of Kentucky, Arkansas, and western Pennsylvania. Stringfield said he has heard from various sources that government officials from several nations are meeting or soon will meet, under tight security, to discuss the aliens presence on earth. Also, delegations from Australia, the Soviet Union, and China have visited the Blue Room at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Fairborn, one of the reputed headquarters for the U.S. government's UFO and alien research.

"We are at a serious phase concerning the UFO, if what I've been hearing is not disinformation," Stringfield said. "You will soon hear of some news, and it will be UFO-related."

Stories about the underground installations and experimentation on humans have "gotten out of hand over the past year," Stringfield said, helped along by several books published on the subject. People have reported being abducted by aliens, and that they have been mistreated; probes have been inserted in various parts of their bodies, and chips of some sort have been placed into their brains.

"I believe they are here for scientific curiosity," Stringfield said. "They know what they are doing, and they are taking advantage of the human being. They are not here to take us over, but to merge with us and use us until they reach their goal."

The reason for the international meetings about the aliens may be to devise a countermeasure, he said, to thwart the aliens' purposes. Or, he said, they may be to meet with the aliens themselves.

Stringfield said he has heard reports about government officials meeting with aliens in the U.S. deserts; he also has heard of an agreement between the aliens and the world governments made in the 1960s where the aliens agreed to share some technological in-

Weird-sounding UFO seen by 2

Two people said they watched an object "making weird sounds" cruise over Simi Valley earlier this week.

Andy Anderson of Simi Valley said the object was "rectangular, with one light on each corner. It was bigger than an airplane and wider."

Anderson, 18, and his friend, Frank Mulholland, 20, were working on a car in the back yard of Mulholland's sister's house at Pacific Avenue and Fourth Street when they heard a loud noise and saw the object, flying southeast about 300 feet high.

"It sounded like a low hum. The sound was nothing like a jet or a propeller," Anderson said.

Anderson said he was sure the craft, which they spotted at about 10 p.m. Tuesday, wasn't some kind of plane. "It was too big and going too slow. There's no way a jet could do that."

"If a jet was flying that low, the sonic boom would blast your cars off," he said.

Mulholland, who lives in Moorpark, said he heard a

humming noise and saw the object. "I looked up and all I could see was these lights. They were red and white lights," he said. At one point, he said, the lights on one side started blinking.

Five people came out of the house and also saw the UFO, Anderson said. "We ran out into the street and watched for about three minutes," he said.

The object cruised out toward the San Fernando Valley, said Anderson, who estimates it was over Los Angeles Avenue and First Street when he first spotted it.

According to Mulholland, the object was "big and dark."

"I don't know what it was. It was making some weird sounds," he said. He saw a similar object fly over the Simi Valley Freeway a few years ago.

The Simi Valley Police Department said that no calls about UFO sightings had been reported Tuesday night.

When he saw the object Tuesday night, Anderson said: "I just stared at it the whole time."

ENTERPRISE, Simi Valley, CA
MAY 27, 1988

HERALD-TRIBUNE, Chippewa Falls, WI
MAY 20, 1988 CR: R. Heiden

Weber calls on Reagan to acknowledge UFOs

By H-T Staff

The president of the Chippewa Falls-based UFO Site Center has sent a letter to President Reagan asking that the president go before the American people and tell them that unidentified flying object do exist.

Tom Weber, a Chippewa Falls businessman, is the head of a non-profit organization which is trying to raise millions of dollars to construct a UFO landing site near Elmwood.

Elmwood has been the location of many UFO sightings in the past.

In his letter, Weber asks Presi-

dent Reagan to consider the following suggestion:

"That you will appear before the American public, which has twice elected you as their president, and make a full and open statement that UFOs are real. Also, that all documents previously classified will be declassified and made available to the Site Center Corporation and the public in general."

According to Site Center officers, their goal is to build a landing site "leading to contact, dialogue and, ultimately, a full association and relationship with advanced civilization(s) who have been observing

our planet for many years."

Corporation officials have stated that they believe humans must provide a landing site, and an invitation, before contact will be made.

In his letter, Weber said he had no problem acknowledging that he voted for Reagan because he believed that "when the chips are down, you would take the right and proper action" and that making the announcement of UFO authenticity is the "right and proper action."

The organization has opened an office in Chippewa Falls and is soliciting donations towards the construction of a UFO landing pad.

he was asked to cooperate with the military for three years. He shared information with the Air Force, and it shared information with him.

"No great secrets were disclosed," Stringfield said. "But I could tell how serious the government was about UFO." His cooperation also was used as a test, he said, to gauge the public's reaction to UFO, because after awhile his sources dried up.

"I wondered why I was getting information from key people," he said. An incident where, after giving a talk about the alien bodies allegedly housed at Wright-Patterson, he was taken by police to his hotel room and was told his life was in danger was the government's way of "scaring me off a subject that was becoming just a little too sensitive."

The U.S. government has withheld information from the public about UFOs since the early 1950s, when the Air Force formed the Robertson Panel, a group of government and military officials, which "gathered secret information so sensational that the public should not know about it," Stringfield said. To deflect the public's interest from UFOs, the government began Operation Blue Book, a project which encouraged people to inform the government about their sightings.

Operation Blue Book was a "public relations thing," Stringfield said, and the

government "played up UFO sightings as a big joke. Anyone who saw anything was drunk or a psychopath."

The real UFO investigation was called MJ-12, and the government "used every strategic ruse in the book to steer information from the public," Stringfield said.

Information held back by the government, he said, includes a description of a common alien race visiting Earth: a four-foot, three-inch humanoid with a large, pear-shaped, hairless head; recessed, slanted eyes with no eyelids; a slit for a mouth, without lips or teeth; mobile, gray skin; oversized arms and short, thin legs.

"Twenty-nine first-hand witnesses said they had seen crafts or bodies in government custody, and all are analogous to one another," Stringfield said. "Where there's smoke, there's fire, and boy was there a lot of smoke."

Theories about why the aliens are on Earth, performing their alleged research, are varied, Stringfield said. One planet's inhabitants may have "seeded" Earth thousands of years ago. Their planet may be similar to Earth and may be dying, or its sun may be dying.

"We may find we're on a lost race, or a failed experiment," Stringfield said. "There's no way to back any of this up. You just take the information you get and try to draw a conclusion, always being mindful of disinformation."



DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20340-



U-2,305/RTS-1

2 July 1991

Dr. Armen Victorian
P.O. Box 99
West PDO
Nottingham, NG8 JNT
England

Dear Dr. Victorian:

This responds to your request under the Freedom of Information Act dated 28 May 1991. Therein you requested information pertaining to a "Working Committee" as well as information concerning imagery organizations and specific individuals assigned to such organizations.

Upon review, it has been determined that we have no information pertaining to a "Working Committee" or any individuals assigned to such an organization within DIA. Further, we can locate no information for any of the three individuals listed in your item 6.

Regarding item 3 of your request, our records indicate DC-5C did at no time occupy spaces in the Melpar building in Falls Church, Virginia.

Sincerely,


ROBERT C. HARDZOG

Chief, Freedom of Information and
Privacy Act Staff

13 JUL 1991

UFOs have shown a prolonged and mysterious attraction to northern Wisconsin and Minnesota this year, for months dawning residents and at times frightening some.

UFOs have been seen in the western Lake Superior area for several decades but the current rash of sightings began in March and continued unabated into the fall.

The vast majority of them were seen zipping through the night skies but some UFOs came uncomfortably close:

① At 9 p.m. on March 13, a small glowing UFO landed on a road 400 feet from a farmhouse 4 miles east of Mellen, Wis., badly frightening a family of six.

② Two hours later, one of a dozen police officers who saw UFOs that night after the Mellen landing was startled when a huge bright object whooshed low overhead, lighting up the forest area where he was and momentarily blanking out his police radio.

③ Shortly after 3 a.m. on March 30, two city policemen were astonished when a similar bright white object passed low over their patrol car in Hurley, Wis., and then zoomed straight up into the sky, vanishing among the stars.

④ About 9 p.m. April 1, a Two Harbors, Minn., housewife and her two sons were terrified when a formation of UFOs---five glowing red objects and four white ones--drifted slowly and noisily over a field toward her house before vanishing toward Lake Superior.

"There was this circular object about 12 feet across with red and bluish-green lights around the outside and in the center there was an opening like a door with a real brilliant light coming from inside.

"I felt I could have looked inside if I'd been closer, but I couldn't see any details. The object made a high, whiny, sing-songy noise. I've never heard a sound like that before."

Jane had gone back out with him, and by now Jeff and John had come outside too while Mrs. Baker watched from the doorway. Monty stayed upstairs in his bedroom throughout the incident, too absorbed in a basketball game on the radio to pay much attention to what was going on outside.

The UFO's appearance had changed since Jane first saw it. The doorway or opening hadn't been there the first time and the lights were duller, she said.

"It's different, it's changed," she said, "the door wasn't there before."

They stood watching it for several minutes, uncertain what to do, when suddenly a pounding noise came from inside the craft.

"It was like somebody was hammering on a piece of metal or repairing something," Baker said.

"It was like [↓]bang, [↓]bang-bang, [↓]bang and so forth. Some were louder than others, like a heavy hit and then a light tap. There was no pattern to it. ^u

Said Jane: "It sounded like when you go into shop class at school and the kids are working on cars and hammering on metal."

Mrs. Baker never went outside during the incident.

MORE

"There was a lot of snow ~~1~~ and it was too icky out," she told The ENQUIRER.

"I told everybody to stay away from it. I really didn't know what it was and I was kind of hesitant for anybody to go up there and see. It was something different that we didn't know what it was."

Baker was undecided what to do.

"I didn't know what to expect," he said. "I told my wife I ought to go up and see what it was--maybe a small plane had crashed or a snowmobiler was in trouble and somebody needed help--but my wife said to stay away from it."

"She said we should call somebody and I said, 'Who we gonna call? People will think we're weird.'"

Nevertheless, he went inside--with Jane and the two boys going in with him--and called Ashland County Undersheriff George Ree, who lives 3 miles away.

"No sooner was I on the phone when there was a loud explosion from the object and it simply vanished," Baker said.

Jane and Monty were the only ones who heard the boom.

"I was standing by the door watching my dad call when I heard the boom," Jane said. "It wasn't too loud and I ran and looked out the back window and the thing was gone."

Said Monty: "I guess I wasn't that curious at first. I did go into my mom and dad's room and looked out the window when it first began. The hill was lit up and you could see something was there."

"I went downstairs but by then my dad was on the phone and everybody was around him, so I went back upstairs. Pretty soon I heard a boom and I went and looked out the window and it was gone."

MORE

Meanwhile, Baker was anything but calm when he phoned, Under-sheriff Ree told The TRIBUNE.

"He was very upset," said Ree. "He's a pretty reliable, dependable person and I have no reason to disbelieve him but he was quite excited. I had to tell him, 'Take it easy, cool down and just tell me what it is.'"

Ree finally learned what had happened and immediately drove over to the Baker house.

"When I got there those people were quite excited," Ree said. "They were a frightened family. Mrs. Baker wouldn't even come outside."

Ree drove to the end of the dirt road and back but spotted nothing that would indicate anything had landed. However, the Baker kids found something the next day.

"The next morning we went up there and the snow was all fluffed up in one spot," said 11-year-old Jeff.

"John and I had ridden out bicycles up through there the day before and the bicycle tracks were erased in this one spot."

Said Monty: "At first I didn't see anything but after looking a while I could see one part of the road where the snow was different. The sheriff (Ree) had driven to the end of the road and back and his tracks were still there but the bicycle tracks were wiped out in that one area.

"Some men came out later in the day and by then the snow was beginning to melt, but they did see where the tracks had been wiped out."

One of the men who visited the Baker home the next day was Bob Ante, 35, president of several cab companies and a car rental firm in Ashland. He is also commander of the local search and rescue unit of the Civil Air Patrol.

MORE

"There was a sudden thaw that day but when we got there, there was one area on the road where the snow appeared to be windswept," Ante told The ENQUIRER.

"We could see where the bicycle tire prints had more or less disappeared from this one spot. You could tell the snow had originally been the same all through the area."

#

If abducted by space aliens, at least you won't be alone

By Gene Emery

Wobbling, bumpy, and at the
heart of it, it's a great idea.

WALTHAM, Mass. — More
than 100 people who say they've
been abducted by space aliens
are gathered here for a symposium
on the subject of "The Flying Saucers."
The symposium is being held at
the Waltham Convention Center.
It is the first of a series of
symposia on the subject of
"The Flying Saucers" to be
held in Waltham.

The symposium is being held
at the Waltham Convention Center.
It is the first of a series of
symposia on the subject of
"The Flying Saucers" to be
held in Waltham.

There's not a whole lot of
alien abduction here, but it's
a great idea. The symposium
is being held at the Waltham
Convention Center. It is the
first of a series of symposia
on the subject of "The Flying
Saucers" to be held in Waltham.

Industrious about 250,000
people, however, are expected
to attend the symposium. The
symposium is being held at the
Waltham Convention Center.
It is the first of a series of
symposia on the subject of
"The Flying Saucers" to be
held in Waltham.

To them, every sighting is
a miracle. They are not alone
in their belief. There are many
other people who believe in
the existence of the flying saucers.
They are not alone in their
belief. There are many other
people who believe in the
existence of the flying saucers.

Sprinkle speaks about UFOs

By Gene Emery

Small Wisconsin town hopes to set up landing strip for UFOs

By Dave Matheny
Minneapolis Star Tribune

ELMWOOD, Wis. — "Envision in
your mind's eye an area of 2 square
miles with a lighted border,
transmitting a message up into the
sky," businessman Tom Weber sug-
gested recently to an audience of
more than 100 people in the school
gymnasium in Elmwood.

He was talking about the just-created
UFO Site Center, a facility that
has no location, no buildings and
no money — only four officers, a
non-profit charter, the general sup-
port of the townspeople of Elm-
wood, population 991, who formed
the bulk of his audience, and heaps
of news media attention.

At least five TV cameras rolled
and a half-dozen reporters took
notes as Elmwood Mayor Larry
Feiler told the crowd, "This is not a
gimmick."



The Dallas Morning News

reported two near encounters.
Weber, who owns a metal-finishing
business, said he had selected Elm-
wood for that reason.

Plans are not even in the draw-
ing-board stage yet, nor are private
donations pouring in. But ideas are
not scarce.

Weber told the gathering, for ex-
ample, that by using some type of
light display, a message could be
transmitted "that could be clearly
understood by these advanced civil-
izations that have been observing
our planet for a number of years."

One of the images he said he
might transmit would be a drawing

made by Wheeler of what Weber
calls "the spacecraft," another
could be a picture of a human mak-
ing a welcoming gesture, still an-
other might be a picture of an alien
based on various reports and draw-
ings made by people who say they
have seen aliens.

Later, Weber said privately that
he had been amazed at news media
reaction to the Feb. 8 announce-
ment of his plans. He said he had
been in Texas on vacation at the
time and returned to find his baby
sitter being interviewed live on ra-
dio, and that he and his officers had
been on more than 50 radio shows

in a week's time.

When informed that there have
been at least four other places in
the United States designated as UFO
landing sites by various groups
since 1975 and that none evidently
has been contacted by aliens, We-
ber said he was unaware that
there had been such places, but said
they might have failed because they
were not properly equipped. He said
he would like to staff his site with
100 scientists from around the
world.

Dolores Radtke, eighth-grade
teacher at the Elmwood school and
unofficial town UFO historian, said

the town began holding a yearly
"UFO Days" 10 years ago just for-
fun, and that she was surprised at
the Site Center proposal.

"But I'm all for it," she said.
Carole Forster is not.

She said she had a 1975 encoun-
ter with a saucer-shaped lighted ob-
ject that frightened her to this day —
although that's not why she opposes
the site. "I just feel a landing strip
like this will change Elmwood too
much," she said.

Distributed by Scripps Howard
News Service

Sea animals
found living
on methane

HOUSTON (AP) — Methane
COLLEGE STATION — Meth-
ane-eating bacteria help sea ani-
mals live on methane, the main
component of natural gas, says a
Texas A&M University research
group.

Researchers at Texas A&M
have found living colonies —
have been expected — of such
undersea life as tubeworms, mu-
shrooms and clams on the floor of the
 Gulf of Mexico.

They have discovered a number of
these life forms 30 years after
scientists first realized that bacteria
could live on methane. The bacteria
are called methanotrophs and are
found in the Gulf of Mexico.

TWENTY-TWO.

The house was dark. People were home—somehow he knew that—but they were hiding, pretending they were out. So the car (or was it a bus? it seemed bigger than a car) had no choice but to keep on going. It continued at a steady speed down the long, empty road. At last, there was another house. It was a wonderful house. There was a picket fence, and a garden, and blue shutters. A pie, or maybe a cake, was baking in the kitchen and the warm fresh smell was tempting. No, the allure was stronger than the simple tug of hunger. It was intense. Enticing. But this house, too, was dark. Again, everyone was hiding. Why? Why didn't they invite the people in the vehicle inside? Why didn't they welcome them? Yet the house remained dark. Nothing moved inside. The vehicle continued down the blacktop road. It wasn't right.

Tom Weber woke from this dream in the grip of panic. All at once he felt defenseless. He was fifty years old, a husband and a father, a good provider, and for the first time in his very ordinary life things were out of control. He wasn't scared, but something, he desperately understood, was wrong. The digital clock read after 3:00 A.M.; his wife Colleen was cuddled on the other side of the bed, peaceful and oblivious. He wanted to hug her tight, to go back to sleep, but he realized the dream would only return. His escape would be short-lived. He didn't have the will to endure it one more time: the heavy sweats, the unfocused anger swelling from somewhere deep in the very center of his being, the infuriating confusion. What was happening to him?

The dream had started perhaps six months ago. It was always the same: the dark houses, the unwelcome guests, the sharp and corrosive feeling that this inhospitable behavior was an irrevocable mistake, the seeds of something tragic. At first the dream had come upon him casually, maybe once every week or so. But now it was relentless, an

alarm sounding in the depths of each night. The time had come, he acknowledged to himself, to understand what he was being told—and to deal with it.

Not that from the start he didn't have his suspicions. But he preferred, as was his methodical way, to do things slowly, to follow a logic of sorts. So, sitting upright in his bed, his wife soundly asleep by his side, Tom Weber began an inventory of his life. In the cozy, homey quiet of the early morning—a false calm, he knew—he forced himself to work his way down a short checklist.

Work? Well, things were just starting to come together. A few years back he had started up a company to spray-paint computer parts and even though headquarters was a warehouse in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, it was beginning to attract the attention of some of the big computer manufacturers. Jobs were pouring in. Now, if only he could manage to keep his lungs clear of those damn solvents from the spray paints . . . And then it struck him. Perhaps some sort of toxic gas from all the spray painting he had been doing had already been absorbed by his system. Perhaps the noxious by-product was eating away at him; maybe that was what was driving him toward this agonized confusion. It was a chilling thought. But no, he finally decided, his symptoms would have been different. Delusions, yes; a variety of wild thoughts, possibly. But not the same small, precise dream night after night.

So, he moved on to consider the rest of his life. He was a happy man, very much in love, and very much loved. His three children were a blessing, especially the three-year-old. Who would have imagined, he asked himself with delight, that he would father another child as he got within worrying range of his fiftieth birthday? And, another unanticipated bit of good fortune, Colleen was willing to put up with a lot. She was twenty years his junior, still sparkling with youth, and he, with his gray Old Testament beard and big balding dome of a head, looked like her father. At least that was what many people thought when they were first introduced to the couple. And his kids? Most people made the same mistake there, too. Nice grandchildren you have, Mr. Weber. But did Colleen complain? Get embarrassed? Not his Colleen. She was with him all the way, "supportive," he was fond of saying. In fact, there was only one provocation that would summon a streak of her Dutch temper to rush to the surface. "You and your damned science," Colleen, shrill and exasperated, would

shout after he launched into another of his lectures. The whole thing made her nervous; she didn't like to think about it. But he did. For years he had been living with these ideas, continually collecting facts, doggedly building theories. He knew he was right. And, as he replayed a familiar scene in his mind—Colleen telling him she'd had enough, she didn't want to hear about it anymore, and he, calm but adamant, reluctant to give in—Tom Weber realized at that moment what he had suspected from the start—the dream was about *them*.

Over the years, Tom Weber had become convinced the human race was not alone in the universe. Science and logic, he insisted with the rigidity of a man who was proud of his self-taught grasp of both disciplines, provided irrefutable proof. Don't tell me, he would begin as he launched into a carefully formulated exercise in probability theory, that it's unlikely there are other worlds. Why, what are the odds that any of us should exist? That our parents should meet? That our grandparents should somehow have been brought together? And that challenge thrown, he would commence tracing a genealogical tree whose branches stretched back into the Middle Ages, an exercise that splendidly demonstrated that if the rules of strict probability truly governed this universe, then none of us would have been born. The odds that all the precise sets of circumstances that would have had to happen to make any one of us the heir to the specific family history we inherited are greater than the number of stars in the universe. "A thousand years ago, who would have predicted me or you?" Tom Weber, triumphant, would ask. "Yet," he would conclude with a last-laugh smile, "we all exist. And, likewise, so do other worlds."

Then, rolling on with perfect confidence, he would launch into his theories about unidentified flying objects and the creatures who piloted these craft. To him, all his deductions were simply common sense. A Super-Intelligent Society was presently monitoring Earth. Since they were so technologically sophisticated, these creatures lived a subterranean existence on their own planet; living on a surface exposed to myriad cosmic dangers, these wise creatures would have undoubtedly learned, was too precarious a situation. Also, because they were so advanced, they employed a mechanics quite different from our own one-dimensional aerodynamics; these creatures—and here Weber could be a bit long-winded, offering his unique, didactic revisionism as the alternative to the axioms in the dozens of physics texts he had so laboriously studied—were able to manipulate the effects of gravity

on their craft through electromagnetism. Above all, he would also take care to emphasize, it was impossible that these extraterrestrial visitors were anything but benevolent; for, he would state with unwavering confidence, "the level of a society's technology will always be proportional to those moral standards governing its use."

He had worked out these ideas over more than a decade of deep thought. Yet, as he sat upright in his bed, he could not understand why these carefully rendered articles of faith were suddenly turning on him, suddenly tormenting him. What had happened to turn his lovingly formulated philosophy into this nightly avenging dream?

And then he knew—Elmwood.

It must have been over a year ago when he first started reading in the local papers about the frequent sightings in that tiny village almost forty-five miles from his home. Though a believer, he had never seen a UFO. Perhaps this was his chance. So, when things slowed down at work, he drove to Elmwood. He sat parked in his car on a country road watching and waiting. He saw nothing. But he did make it his business to speak to many of the people who had witnessed these craft. Everyone had a story to tell, and he, intrigued, listened. He returned home disappointed, but still convinced. And that was that.

Or was it? Because now it all fell into place. His trip to Elmwood had been six months ago. *Just when the dream had started!* He rose from his bed as if summoned. The first weak rays of sunlight were sneaking into his bedroom. The muffled sounds of his children's first stirrings were floating through the house. As he stood by his bed, a man erect as if at attention, unable to move, unable to speak, the meaning of his troubling dream was at once apparent. And the odd, unconnected ideas that had for so long been rumbling through his daily life had in an instant acquired a monumental purpose.

From that first moment, the dream, now decoded, unfolded before Tom Weber with a remarkable clarity. The dark houses, of course, were the homes of the citizens of Elmwood. They were the ones who were hiding, refusing to welcome "the vehicles"—filled with the superintelligent beings. And he also understood what was making his pain so acute, why his nightmare was such an agonizing one: This inhospitable behavior would have terrible consequences. It wasn't

simply that for the throwing open of a door, the turning on of a light, the opportunity to take part in the greatest event in the history of mankind was being ignored. No, there was more. These benevolent visitors were bringing a precious gift—the wisdom they had acquired that had allowed them to survive despite their knowledge of nuclear technology. Without this wisdom, mankind would, he was certain, self-destruct. Nothing less than the future of the planet was at stake; and Earth, or at least Elmwood, was uninterested.

Who could blame Tom Weber if he couldn't sleep?

But, undaunted, he came up with a plan. The details took some long and deliberate pondering, but the broad strokes came to him, he would claim, in the quiet of that first morning when his dream was suddenly translated into a coherent message. Still, he waited awhile before sharing his idea. It was a vast enterprise he envisioned, and he wanted to get it all laid out in his mind before proceeding.

When Tom Weber was more confident, on a blustery February day in 1988, he decided to act. But there are nightmares that do not go away with daylight, and as he drove east on snow-slicked I-94, his mind, too, was swirling like the wet, falling snow. He was once more full of familiar anxieties and terrors, and only as he got closer to Elmwood did it even occur to him that it might have been wiser to have called the mayor and made an appointment. After all, not every politician might have the time to see a visitor—even if the unexpected guest was bringing an idea that would change the world.

TWENTY-THREE.

There are some politicians who are most comfortable with superlatives; the language of excess seems to suit their ambitions. Others are by nature more laconic; or then again, perhaps they simply have something to hide. But Larry Feiler, the mayor of Elmwood, was most likely to lapse into the sort of discursive understatement that left you wondering if he was a tad slow—or whether, just maybe, straight-faced Larry was putting you on. A case in point. Larry, do you happen to know how Diane's Sandbar on Main got its name? Well, he replied after a moment of pensive meditation, could be because the soil in town is so sandy. A beat and then the slightest trace of a grin. But maybe this has something to do with it. Diane's last name, now that I think of it, is Sand. And so when Larry took to describing his first encounter with Tom Weber it, too, was presented with a similar subtle charm.

It was a typical day, filled with typical mayoral problems, Larry remembered. First, there was the uproar over the bowling league. A score from one of last night's games was still being hotly contested and this had provoked a lot of nasty name-calling. Who knew where a lingering sore like that could lead once the bars started packing the farmers in; perhaps Chief Helmer should be alerted? Then there was the naked snowman—or, more precisely, snowgirl—situation. It seems last night someone had artfully sculpted a few distinctive curves and bumps into the bland snowperson across from the bank and in the light of day it clearly was one hell of a snowgirl. Dealing with the offending artwork was no problem; it had been summarily whacked in half with a shovel. But some of the shopkeepers were still demanding that the degenerate sculptor or sculptors be tracked down and prosecuted to the full extent of whatever law was vaguely applicable. And just as the mayor was mulling that one over, in walked a man, unannounced, who said he wanted to build a fifty-million-dollar

age, and that came in handy whenever a couple of the farm boys got out of line after a few too many beers. George, without a moment's hesitation, would jump into the middle of any shoving match down at the Sandbar, say, and somehow manage to wrestle the guys apart. "Now don't you two boys think you should call it a night?" he would suggest, eyes as hard as bullets, as he stared one, then the other down. It wouldn't be long after that before the two battlers, looking a bit sheepish, would mope on out of the bar and drive off in their pickups. "If I've seen George do it once, I must've seen him do it a dozen times," Hobbs Wilson, still impressed, recalled. "He was a regular John Wayne."

As for George, he grew to like life in the valley by the Eau Galle. The easy pace that allowed him to take off into the hills with his Winchester during hunting season whenever the mood for venison seemed to strike, the comfortable feeling that he would know the first name of just about everyone he would run into in the course of a day's work, the pride the whole town seemed genuinely to share in his son's being a big football star up at the university—all this helped to make his life and work in Elmwood very satisfying. There was only one thing that gave him pause. There was a peculiarity about living in Elmwood that he couldn't quite fathom. "George'd be hearing it all the time," his wife Doris recently explained. "Everyone would be telling him about the things they'd seen in the sky and my George would just look at them like they were crazy. 'What is wrong with these people?' he'd ask me. Of course I'd just smile and say nothing. I figured my George's time would come, too."

It was silent. That was George Wheeler's first clue. Earlier that night, when he saw the huge ball of flame coming in over a hill from the northeast, he was certain it was a 747 about to crash. It was low in the night sky—too low, that was for sure—but the pilot was doing his best to steer it away from town. George, who had been a combat flyer in World War II, silently congratulated the pilot for his skill. Still, George was very worried; this wasn't going to be good at all. He was sitting in his squad car and he had a perfect view. The 747 off in the distance kept on getting lower and lower, its flames growing brighter and brighter until its orange glow overwhelmed the night sky. As the

plane moved out of town, George tried to keep pace with it in his squad car. He wanted to be nearby when it went down; there was no doubt there would be people who would be needing his help.

He drove at high speed across the empty country road, trying to catch up with it. When the plane was nearly overhead, coming in really low, just moments from impact, its flames lighting up the horizon, George pulled into a ditch. He wanted to brace himself for the crash that was at hand. It was only as the plane moved directly above him, as its light and flames illuminated his squad car with the power of a spotlight, that George Wheeler realized something was very strange. The plane was absolutely silent. There was no whirr of engines, no grinding of landing gears. *There was not a sound.* And all at once something else, equally perplexing, became apparent. The plane wasn't near to crashing. It was on a steady course.

The flying object—the officer, shaken and shaky, was no longer sure it was a plane—began to fly toward the southside flats outside of town. George, his eyes fixed on an orange light as bold as the glow from an explosion, followed. When he caught up with it, the object was, to his amazement, hovering. The land here was flat, meadows and pastures fresh with spring grass, and the light from the object lit up the countryside. It was nighttime, close to 11:00 P.M., but the sky was as bright as high noon. George could see perfectly. He was scared, trembling even, but he got out of his squad car and took it all in.

The object was a craft of some kind. It was shaped like two cereal bowls put end to end and it was hovering about 1,500 feet above the ground. It was huge—at least the size of a football field. And it didn't make a sound.

George watched it for a while. Silhouetted against the sky, it was bright and silent and motionless. He felt as if he was seeing something that wasn't real, but of course he knew it was. That scared him even more. Then, without warning, the object took off at a tremendous speed. It would be incorrect, he would later insist, to describe the craft's acceleration as quick; it was instantaneous. Even more amazing, the craft began performing what appeared to be nothing less than acrobatics. It was, George decided, putting on an air show, and he was the sole audience. The craft would start out zooming along at this truly phenomenal speed, and all of a sudden it would begin turning at sharp ninety-degree angles, one after another, as though it was being driven by a stunt pilot. Someone was joyriding in the sky above Elm-

wood. George could only marvel. At last, it took off, flying silently toward the west at the same impossible speed. It was gone in an instant, and the night was once more dark.

That was the first time.

The second time George Wheeler saw a UFO was almost a year to the day later, on the evening of April 22, 1976. This time there was a noise. He heard it moments before the attack.

It all began when George, out on an evening's patrol, noticed an orange glow near the quarry at Tuttle Hill. "Looks like we got a fire out there," he radioed in. "I'm going to investigate."

When he drove to the crest of County Road P, he was high up enough to have an unobstructed view. To the north, over a flat hilltop alfalfa field, there it was. "My God, it's one of those UFOs again," he shouted into the police radio. But when he started to describe the craft, he was very calm, under control.

"It's huge," he explained over the radio to Chief Helmer's wife, Gail, who was working as dispatcher that night. "Bigger than a two-story house." And he went on that it was silver-colored, perhaps 250 feet across, and that a bright orange beam glowed from its domed roof. The light was so powerful, he couldn't look straight at it. It hurt his eyes.

And just as he was describing this light, the craft started to rise. That was when he heard the loud *whooshing* noise. And, before he realized what was happening, a blue ray shot out from the craft. The ray hit the squad car.

The police radio instantly went dead. The chief's wife was yelling on the other end, "George, can you hear me? Are you all right?"

But George couldn't hear her. The car was a wreck. Its lights were out. Its points and spark plugs were ruined. And Officer Wheeler was unconscious.

David Moots, a dairy farmer, was driving the baby-sitter home when he noticed the squad car, its lights off, sitting in the middle of the road. He went over to investigate. He looked inside and saw George Wheeler sprawled across the front seat.

"George, you OK?" he asked.

The police officer didn't stir. Moots repeated his question.

This time George tried to move. He leaned forward from his seat, and then fell back. He didn't have any strength, and he looked white as milk.

"What's wrong, George?" Moots asked. He was really worried.

It took the officer some effort, but he finally managed to speak. "I've been hit. Get me to a radio." His voice, Moots noted, was shaking, full of fear.

"By a car?"

"No," George Wheeler answered very slowly and distinctly, "by one of those UFOs."

At just about the time David Moots discovered the dazed police officer, Gail Helmer was at the radio in Village Hall trying to figure out what was going on. She decided to call Paul Frederickson, a nursing home administrator, who lived just east of Tuttle Hill.

"Maybe you can look out your window, Paul, and tell me what you see. Anything unusual out there?" she asked.

It was after eleven and Frederickson was already in bed, but when a neighbor asks a favor—especially if she's the wife of the police chief—nobody in Elmwood complains too much. He went to his window.

"I saw this flaming orange object in the sky," Frederickson remembered. "It resembled a bright orange half-moon. I watched it for a full ten seconds and went back to the phone. By the time I returned to the window with my wife, the object was gone."

A few miles away, south of Tuttle Hill, Mrs. Miles Wergland was watching the eleven o'clock news on her bedroom television. Suddenly her set went black. Annoyed, she put on her slippers and trudged to the cantankerous television. She kept on pushing the on/off button. Nothing happened. And then she noticed the glorious light shining outside her bedroom window. The room was now pitch-dark but outside something was lighting up the sky—and it was moving. Its glow suddenly illuminated the bedroom. Bathed in this light, she went to

TWENTY-FIVE.

Mayor Feiler kept his promise. But by the time he presented the plan for the UFO Landing Field to the town board, the secret was already out. And not just in Elmwood.

Ultimately it was Tom Weber's impatience, even he will sourly admit, that was to blame. He had left his initial meeting with the mayor buoyed, glad to have found a powerful supporter, and yet he was troubled. There was a vagueness to the mayor's commitment. Weber was a straightforward man, and he expected the same sort of directness from others. As he drove back home to Chippewa Falls, he kept on mulling the meeting over in his mind and with each replay of the mayor's concluding pledge, he became convinced that a lot less had transpired than he had previously believed. Sure, the mayor had said he would bring the landing field proposal before the town board. But—and Weber's active mind now zeroed in on this increasingly important omission—the mayor had not said *when*. This week? Next week? Next month? Next year? By the time he pulled into his driveway, Weber had reached such a state of disappointment that in this aggrieved worldview any sort of betrayal was possible. Could it be, he asked himself, that the mayor had just been placating him? A guy comes in without an appointment and says there are a whole bunch of UFOs flying over your town, so why don't we just build them an airport and invite them to come on down and visit—hell, Weber was beginning to suspect, you just might want to humor the guy. Let him say his piece and then be on his way. Maybe, he told himself, that was precisely what Mayor Feiler had done.

In that anxious manner it came to Tom Weber that it would be a mistake to count solely on Larry Feiler. A shrewder strategy, he plotted as he lay awake in bed that evening, would be to push on immediately with his great plan. He would set out on his own to attract supporters. Why, he began to ponder as if the idea was suddenly real for the first

time, the purchase of the land—two square miles!—was going to take a lot of money. More intimidating, he couldn't even begin to estimate accurately the millions the construction of the tarmac, the illuminated welcoming display, and the scientific facilities were going to cost. Yet as he played with the possible numbers in his mind, as he decided that the fifty-million-dollar estimate he had shared with Feiler still seemed to his businessman's brain to be the logical ballpark figure, his resolve was strengthened. He would move on without waiting for the mayor. If Feiler was truly interested in helping, terrific. There would be time for all of Elmwood to come on board. But he would not wait. The landing field was too important. Too much, he was certain, was at stake. He would act now.

The next day Tom Weber placed an advertisement in the *Eau Claire Leader-Telegram*. It was a small ad, laid out in a four-by-four-inch box. In not more than a hundred words, he announced the plan to build a landing field for UFOs in Elmwood, Wisconsin. Would anyone interested in helping out in this project—a positive, scientific enterprise, he emphasized—please contact him. He signed his name and gave his business phone.

The ad appeared on a Tuesday. By the weekend, the story had not simply leaked, it had exploded. It seemed the small ad had managed to attract some curious inquiries from a reporter on the *Leader-Telegram*, Chuck Rupnow. He wrote a straight-faced, newsy account that began on the front page. UFO GROUP PLANS LANDING SITE FOR ALIENS was the headline, while UFO GROUP PLANS INTERNATIONAL FUND RAISING was the optimistic bold-faced head on the jump. The story prompted Rob Kreibich, a reporter for WEAU-TV in Eau Claire, to do an interview with Weber. It was a rather flattering portrayal; but then again, Kreibich was a believer. And it was this interview that caught the attention of the local Associated Press bureau. A story headed "UFO Landing Field Proposed in Wisconsin Town" went out on the AP wire. And around the world.

It was after that, Larry Feiler remembered, when "the phones started ringing in Elmwood. It got to the point where they wouldn't stop. Why, we started to get calls from as far away as Australia, British Columbia, and South Africa. I was getting calls from Geraldo, from *PM* magazine. One from Pierre Salinger."

As it turned out, many of these people were calling the mayor of Elmwood for one simple reason—they couldn't find Tom Weber.

...

Tom Weber wasn't in Chippewa Falls, he was in Harlingen, Texas. He had been told the *Leader-Telegram* story wouldn't be running for another two weeks, so he had decided to take advantage of the lull. He had gone south, to the home of his wife's grandmother, not to find UFOs, but simply to find some sun. He might just as well have been looking for alien spacecraft. It had rained for four straight days; and a soaked Texas prairie, both he and his wife had rapidly come around to discover, was just as depressing as a snowbanked Wisconsin plain. Maybe even more so.

All in all, it had been that kind of vacation. He and Colleen, full of great expectations, had left the kids back home with a baby-sitter. They had hoped that this trip, just the two of them, a second honeymoon of sorts, would be rejuvenating, a chance for them to relax and work out some of the friction caused by their differences. Actually, there was only one sharp thorn in their marriage—Tom's "damn science." His tendency to expound his theories on the electromagnetic physics propelling extraterrestrial vehicles was taking its toll. "Truth was," Colleen would complain months later, her voice still sharp with exasperation, "it wasn't that I didn't understand what Tom was jawing about. I just didn't care. I was sick of it." And his new plan for a landing field for these ships was, she remained convinced, more folly. "What about his business, his family, I kept asking him," Colleen remembered. "People were going to look at us as if we were a little weird. I mean, airports for Martians? What would you think?"

Sitting in the house watching the gunmetal gray Texas rain didn't help Colleen's enthusiasm for the project. Tom tried to persuade her, but she wouldn't budge. A volatile situation, Tom was worrying, was about to become dangerous. Then he—and maybe the kitchen china—was saved by a phone call.

It was early Sunday morning and the Webers were still in bed when the call came from their baby-sitter in Wisconsin. "The phone here's going crazy," she explained, sounding rather desperate. "Reporters are calling up from everywhere, even from New York, asking about Mr. Weber and some sort of alien airport." When she had disclosed that Mr. Weber was out of town, the sitter recounted to the startled couple who were now listening on extension phones, the more ag-

gressive newshounds refused to be put off—they interviewed her. Live! On radio! "Well, I don't know much about this alien airport or whatever you call it, but Mr. Weber, yeah, I know him. He's a good guy. I can tell you that." There you have it, folks, an exclusive interview with the baby-sitter of the man who plans to have aliens land in Wisconsin!

The call from the frantic baby-sitter had three immediate consequences. First, it was excuse enough for the Webers to decide to cancel the rest of their stay in Texas. Wisdom (not to mention the weather) suggested that they had better go home and rescue their children from the harried baby-sitter's clutches. Second, it convinced Tom Weber that the time had come to hold formal meetings with his supporters, who, he was elated to find out, seemed to be many and eager. And third (and perhaps most important of all for Tom Weber; four soggy days with a disenchanted wife can do a lot to narrow your historical perspective, he was learning), it helped persuade Colleen that maybe her husband's idea was not so crazy after all. If people from all around the country—even Geraldo!—wanted to talk with him, then she, too, was ready to believe he really did have something significant to say.

The first meeting of the UFO Site Center Corporation was held on a Wednesday evening in the small conference room of the Chippewa Falls library. It was a select group. A lot of interested people had contacted Tom Weber in the busy weeks following the appearance of the *Leader-Telegram* advertisement, but not all of them were invited. He had, his patience soon rubbed to a shiny raw by the day-and-night stream of outlandish calls, peremptorily eliminated the man who had wanted the concession to sell flying saucer key chains at the landing field, as well as the man who could supply (for a suitable fee) maps of the universe with X marking the spot of planet Earth so that when the aliens landed and took earthlings as passengers, the cosmic pilots would be able to find their way back to Elmwood. And he had hung up with a suddenness that he, in retrospect, found both embarrassing and disconcerting on the man who had photographs of buildings on Mars, pictures he would be willing to give to Weber in exchange for a position of responsibility with the Site Center. The people invited

to this meeting were the ones Weber, becoming comfortable with the prospects of great responsibility, was persuaded he could count on. They were, he boasted, serious people. They would be the men and women with whom, he was certain, he would one day stand in the UFO Site Center control tower as the first ship came in for a landing. "My cadre," he called them.

There were about a dozen at the meeting, all locals and all believers. There was, for example, Dave Martinek of Eau Claire, who had become fascinated with flying saucers while in high school; he saw the landing field as part of Earth's "obligation." "What if there is another life-form out there waiting for this Site Center?" he, genuinely concerned, had suggested. And there was Lee Horne, the Chippewa Falls nursing home administrator, who became the group's treasurer. She had never seen a UFO, but she was already prepared for the inevitable day when she would spot one: "Take me with you," she planned to demand. The others were fueled by a similar sense of commitment. "We were aware from the start we were doing something historic," said Lee Horne. "If we were successful, it was going to be the greatest news in the history of the Earth since the coming of Jesus."

It was because of this motivating sense of history and duty that the meetings of UFO Site Center Corporation became a weekly Wednesday night event. They were hectic sessions. There was so much to plan, so much to decide. And of course, with something of such momentous consequence at stake, and with so many believers who sincerely felt their insights, intuitive as well as scientific, were the keys to understanding the mysteries of the cosmos, there was a lot of debate. Things could get pretty heated at the Chippewa Falls library on a Wednesday night.

There were, just to cite one acrimonious discussion, many different views about what form the welcoming illustration should take. One loud voice had a very meticulously reasoned theory involving geometry, and precisely how squares, triangles, and circles could be put together in a way any alien would be certain to read as an invitation. Another approach for attracting the extraterrestrials involved staging a musical program, actually more an extravaganza complete with costumes like a Broadway show rather than a serenade. While a third suggestion, and one that won a few supporters, was to have a larger-than-life illuminated depiction of a man and a woman copulating; what, it was asked, could be more inviting and more indicative of our peaceful

intentions than such a primal scene? The idea, though, fell by the wayside after it was pointed out that some of the residents of Elmwood might not be too happy about having a naked couple, each of them stretching fifteen feet from head to toe, going at it, day in, day out, in one of the town's alfalfa fields. So in the end it was decided to have what Tom Weber called "a simple, logical, straightforward illustration."

With Weber's guidance, a local artist had come up with a sketch of a man preparing to shake hands with an alien. The man didn't resemble the bearded, big-domed Weber or any of the heavy-bellied Elmwood farmers or even the town's slicker political leader. Rather, he had the archetypal Aryan features of Barbie's boyfriend Ken. And, in the interests of convenience (as well as modesty), he was dressed in what appeared to be a black jumpsuit. The alien had a similar outfit, Ken's hands minus two of the fingers, two solid feet, and a head the size of a watermelon.

Still, there was some concern after a mock-up of the pair of figures was presented at one Wednesday meeting. Is it possible, someone asked, that a handshake might not mean the same in the Andromeda Galaxy as it does in Chippewa Falls? Suppose, it was suggested, a handshake is a vulgar gesture to an alien? That we're illuminating a cosmic "Screw you" to the first visitors from another world? Or perhaps a handshake could mean "Let's fight"? Or even "Good-bye?" But Tom Weber was undeterred. "If they're smart enough to get here, they're smart enough to figure everything else out," he ruled. The handshake would remain.

And when the cadre wasn't debating matters of philosophy, it was busy fund-raising. It was a nonprofit corporation and adamant about neither seeking nor accepting government funds. The only hope, then, was private citizens and his troops embarked on a variety of schemes that left Tom Weber, a proud man, feeling a little shamefaced as well as more than a little surprised by his own latent aggressiveness. With Weber cheering them on, they hawked sky-blue T-shirts emblazoned with the convivial suggestion LET'S MEET, and available in a "poly/cotton blend" in small, medium, and large sizes for a donation of twelve dollars, shipping included. They distributed flyers that explained the significance of their landing field and requested pledges of either monthly or onetime contributions. And they set out systematically to solicit just about anyone they had reason to suspect of

believing in UFOs. It didn't matter if the potential donor had made his comments about flying saucers late one night in the Sandbar, or in the pages of the *Enquirer*, or even in a stray aside to Johnny Carson with the whole nation watching. The Site Center Corporation was intent on tracking them down and asking for funds. And it worked. They were able to get a hundred dollars from the Elmwood library, five thousand from a retired Elmwood resident who, in his younger days, had dreamed up a lot of inventive farm machinery and now held the lucrative patents; and they were able to get a meeting with Muhammad Ali—almost.

It was a tribute to Tom Weber's doggedness that, after reading that Ali had once had a sighting, he was able to track down the former heavyweight champion. And not only was he able to find out where Ali lived, Weber told his cadre with unrestrained excitement, but he was also successful in getting Ali on the phone. Ali himself! Not some manager or gofer. And the great Ali had said that he was interested. Sure, Ali had agreed, come on down to see me in Chicago and I bet we can work something out. I'd like to hear some more about what you're doing. Maybe I can get involved. And so with visions of an endowment dancing in his head, with Rob Kreibich of WEAU-TV in tow to record the historic moment, Tom Weber set out for his meeting with Muhammad Ali. Except when he got there, Ali was not at home. The champ had to leave for Indonesia, an unexpected trip, Ali's wife apologized. The long ride home to Chippewa Falls was a rough one for Tom Weber.

But he bounced back. There were other celebrities out there, he told himself. Maybe Steven Spielberg or Donald Trump would return one of his calls. In the meantime, money, a bit, was coming in. So the Site Center rented a two-room suite just down the hall from an accounting firm and a psychiatric clinic in a small brick office building in Chippewa Falls, bought a folding table and four metal chairs, and began to concentrate full-time on the serious business of planning the landing field that would change the world.

Forty-five miles to the northeast, over in Elmwood, Larry Feiler and the town board were also busy making plans. Only the mood here was not at all like the somber plotting going on in the Site Center's dim

two-room suite. The Elmwood city fathers were nothing less than gleeful. What an opportunity the UFO Landing Field had turned out to be! Elmwood—quiet, isolated, 991-person Elmwood—was about to become a boomtown.

Now that the news had been announced, now that the phones were ringing off the hook, the prospect of Tom Weber's building a \$50 million UFO airstrip in a town where the annual budget was \$283,411 had created a frenzy of eager and greedy anticipation. "This town is looking at considerable impact in terms of jobs and the local economy," Mayor Feiler predicted. He estimated that as many as a hundred scientists and professionals would be working at the Site Center—and, though it went tactfully unsaid, all living and spending in Elmwood. "We're just thrilled with it," effused Wayne Nohelty, the town's banker, trying hard, it might be imagined, not to count his money too soon.

But even though the landing field and its two fifteen-foot hand-shaking welcomers were still, literally, on the drawing board, there was real cause for immediate celebration. "This town is digging in for what may be one of the longest tourist seasons in its history," Mayor Feiler had announced. Everyone in town, it seemed, had great hopes for this year's UFO Days celebration.

Ten years earlier, back in 1978, the town had decided that its annual Stars and Stripes Festival was not working out as had been anticipated. While other nearby Wisconsin towns with their Cucumber Days or Mosquito Festivals were attracting their share of free-spending tourists, Elmwood wasn't getting very many visitors. Only a handful of tourists had been willing to drive out of their way to see another American Legion parade led by another bunch of ragtag, flag-carrying veterans. Desperate, the Elmwood Community Club decided to sponsor a contest to rename the event. The five-dollar grand prize went to a farmer who had suggested a theme based on the town's major preoccupation—UFOs.

UFO Days, always celebrated during the last weekend in July, were an immediate success. The Community Club and local merchants could count on as many as three hundred visitors clogging up Elmwood's Main Street on those two festive days. But crowds like that were before all the hoopla about the UFO Landing Field. Now, prospects were looking better. A lot better.

Jeff Martina, executive director of the Pierce County Economic

"UFO-y feel to it." And to prove their point they shared the official "lineup of events":

- A UFO medallion hunt beginning at 7:00 P.M., Friday.
- Sidewalk sales offered by Elmwood merchants.
- A splatter ball shooting contest.
- A basketball camp and softball tournament.
- A pancake breakfast beginning at 8:00 A.M., Saturday.
- A double-elimination volleyball tournament all day Saturday.
- A 10:00 A.M. Kiddie Parade on Saturday followed by children's activities conducted by Bob Afdahl and members of his Elmwood wrestling squad.
- A horseshoe and cow chip throwing contests.
- A paper plate drop beginning at 1:00 P.M., Saturday.
- An amateur talent contest beginning at 6:30 P.M., Saturday.
- The UFO Grand Parade beginning at 2 P.M., Sunday.

And, members of the Community Club pointed out, their voices loud with indignation, that list didn't even begin to reflect just how "UFO-y" the events really were. Take, one of the club directors suggested quite randomly, the cow chip throwing contest. It wasn't your ordinary chip throw. When the competition took place to see who could hurl a piece of dried dung the farthest, the judges called it "The Flying Saucer Event."

Throughout the weekend, Tom Weber was stoically determined, regardless of whether the activities were UFO-y or not, to remain aloof from the hoopla. He stayed, along with his wife and a few loyal supporters, in the relative isolation of the second-floor Village Hall auditorium. "Puts us above the fray," someone, perhaps Lee Horne, the Site Center treasurer, had joked. To which Weber, never one to treat things lightly, agreed, but in his own way. "We're here because we want to address the serious aspects," he reminded all who asked. Besides, he was confident that anyone who was sincerely interested in his UFO Landing Field and the future it promised

would take the trouble to come in from the street and climb the two flights.

And he was right. For the entire weekend, the auditorium was jammed. People listened to Weber's plan, studied a mock-up of the two handshaking intergalactic greeters that would welcome the arriving aliens, and bought Site Center T-shirts, many of the visitors putting on the shirts right then and there. A cigar box with the word CONTRIBUTIONS labeled on its lid was filled by the end of the first day. It was very exciting.

Not everyone, though, was completely enthusiastic. Susu Jeffrey, for example, thought there really was no need to build a fifty-million-dollar landing field in Elmwood. She had, she told a skeptical Weber, already built one next to her home in Minneapolis.

Her field, she explained, was eighteen feet in diameter and had a twelve-inch-thick base of pebbles she had salvaged from the Mississippi River. All told, she estimated, she had spread at least three tons of pebbles to protect the ground from the hot blast of a UFO's takeoff or landing. "It's scorch-proof," she bragged.

Weber, though, was unimpressed. "Like comparing a child's toy to the real thing," he scoffed.

Anyway, there was no point in getting into a debate. There were too many others to meet and to persuade. Throughout the entire weekend, there was always a long, steady line of inquisitive visitors snaking its way up the narrow Village Hall stairwell to the auditorium. And among the curious were two men who claimed to be NASA engineers, which, when he found out, surprised and thrilled Weber some. But, no doubt, he would have been even more surprised (and conceivably more thrilled) if he had known that their impressive occupations were just a bit of cover, and that the two men were in reality CIA operatives gathering information for the UFO Working Group.

TWENTY-EIGHT.

Each session in the Tank had a character of its own. There were meetings of the UFO Working Group where cosmic mysteries swirled about the soundproof room and the infectious excitement of being part of the hunt of a lifetime was at hand. Other days, the mood was more rigorous. Science, its strict and countless facts and formulas, set the tone; and at least a couple of the participants found they were soon lost, pushed out way beyond their depths of knowledge as the parade of nuclear engineers, physicists, and astronomers droned on. While on still other occasions, the meetings would be sheer bureaucracy, detailed accountings of all the assorted nuts and bolts that would need to be carefully tightened before a specific investigation could go operational. But, it was generally agreed, the discussion of the "Elmwood affair" was the most frustrating session in the committee's history.

Colonel Phillips summoned the meeting to order by throwing a T-shirt on the conference table. It was sky blue and the words UFO SITE CENTER were in bold block letters just below the neck; while toward its hem, in a more cheery script, was the suggestion, LET'S MEET. In the middle of this circle of copy stood the landing field's official greeters—the jumpsuited, big-headed alien and his squeaky clean Homo sapiens buddy. They were, like the forever panting lovers on Keats's urn, near to but never quite shaking hands. A few of the people in the room studied the shirt and had a small laugh, which they might have expected was the required response.

They were mistaken. This was no laughing matter for Colonel Phillips. He was exasperated to the point of anger. He had produced the T-shirt, he explained testily, because it was the only tangible product the Working Group had to show for all the time and energy that had gone into its investigation of the Eau Galle River Valley sightings.

A question was asked: "So the people in that town were simply making things up?"

The colonel said he didn't think that was the case at all. After reading the CIA's report, he was convinced the residents of Elmwood sincerely believed they saw *something*.

"But now we know what they really saw, right?" the questioner persisted.

The colonel's answer took some time. He explained that the field teams had interviewed (using cover identities, of course; but that went unsaid) many of the townspeople who had claimed to have seen space ships; that the ground areas near where the "craft" were sighted were not only visually inspected, but also soil and geological analyses of the terrain had been undertaken; that there had been an effort to coordinate the exact dates of an alleged appearance of a flying saucer over the skies of Elmwood with any Flash abnormalities either NORAD or SAC might have in their records (the colonel, however, volunteered that this was less than a scientific exercise; memories in Elmwood of exact days and times had grown a little fuzzy with the passing of years); and that there had even been a study (again under arm's-length cover) of the medical records of certain Elmwood citizens who had had encounters with the "ships."

As the colonel made his report, his weary tone, the deeply disconsolate set to his face, was clue enough to some in the room as to what all these investigative efforts had produced. But the colonel, forever dutiful, seemed to take some comfort in reading from a thick, previously prepared script. He recited a long list of all the possible rational explanations for the sightings. It was a list that included such candidates as weather balloons, experimental Air Force jets, low-flying satellites, and even the old standby of swamp gas. Each one of these explanations, the colonel stated, had proved inapplicable to the situation in Elmwood.

Finally, he put down his pages and looked directly at the members of the UFO Working Group. "Gentlemen," Colonel Phillips announced rather forlornly, "we just don't know what's in the skies over Elmwood."

No. 8971 (Ashland UFO)
Pratt/staff reporter
For Cathcart
October 2, 1975

UFOs have shown a prolonged and mysterious attraction to northern Wisconsin and Minnesota this year, for months dazzling residents and at times frightening some.

UFOs have been seen in the western Lake Superior area for several decades but the current rash of sightings began in March and continued unabated into the fall.

The vast majority of them were seen zipping through the night skies but some UFOs came uncomfortably close:

① At 9 p.m. on March 13, a small glowing UFO landed on a road 400 feet from a farmhouse 4 miles east of Mellen, Wis., badly frightening a family of six.

② Two hours later, one of a dozen police officers who saw UFOs that night after the Mellen landing was startled when a huge bright object whooshed low overhead, lighting up the forest area where he was and momentarily blanking out his police radio.

③ Shortly after 3 a.m. on March 30, two city policemen were astonished when a similar bright white object passed low over their patrol car in Hurley, Wis., and then zoomed straight up into the sky, vanishing among the stars.

④ About 9 p.m. April 1, a Two Harbors, Minn., housewife and her two sons were terrified when a formation of UFOs--five glowing red objects and four white ones--drifted slowly and noisily over a field toward her house before vanishing toward Lake Superior.

MORE

● Shortly after that the same evening, a puzzling series of orange-reddish lights--sometimes four and sometimes eight--were seen blinking on and off in sequence over Lake Superior by half a dozen different groups of people over a 30-mile stretch of shoreline from Two Harbors to Silver Bay.

● At 12:45 a.m. on April 7, a veteran police officer in Elmwood, Wis., jumped out of his cruiser and dived into a ditch when a fiery red UFO as large as a football field came flying over a ridge toward him. He thought it was a plane that was going to crash and wipe out the whole town. Instead, the UFO flew on south for 5 miles where it hovered for a few minutes and then disappeared in a burst of speed.

● About 3 a.m. April 19, a young woman driving 25 miles south of Superior, Wis., found the road blocked by a huge green UFO that was hovering 10 feet above the highway. She turned around and sped away, only to be stopped a few minutes later for speeding at 90 miles an hour. The officer decided not to give her a ticket because she was so badly frightened & it took him nearly an hour to calm her down.

● At 3:59 a.m. on Sept. 9, the two Wisconsin cities of Phillips and Park Falls, 19 miles apart, experienced simultaneous power failures moments after a green-glowing UFO apparently landed midway between the cities. A policeman in each city saw the UFO go down. The next day line crews for the smcompany that supplies power to both cities inspected every foot of the company's lines and could find no reason for the failure.

● About 9:30 p.m. on Sept. 11, a triangular-shaped UFO hovered silently about 100 feet above the highway between Babbitt and Ely in Minnesota. The occupants of several cars stopped beneath the UFO and got out and watched it for about 5 minutes before it slowly moved away.

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