

THE CHANGING FACE OF UFO RESEARCH

APRO is now in its 31st year of existence. We have published the Bulletin continuously since the summer of 1952. After a temporary setback (which we blame on the depressed economy) membership is on a definite up-swing.

Many of those rejoining after a short absence tell us that they have found that the Bulletin is the best source of objective UFO news reporting that is available today. Such response makes clear the priority that must be accorded our publication in order to best serve our membership. . . .

Apparently the priorities that enable us not only to survive but to lead in a field where leadership is recognized rather than chosen, still prevail. Most meaningful progress in the UFO field has been accomplished by "moonlighters"—individuals who expend substantial amounts of time and other resources in an effort to supplement the body of UFO knowledge and/or to increase public awareness of the *realities* of the UFO Phenomenon and its many connotations. We commend and support them as always.

There are, on the other hand, a number of "limelighters" who are attracted to the UFO subject chiefly because it is an easy road to notoriety. Such individuals are prone to statements or postures designed to attract attention—scientific responsibility and intellectual honesty being of no particular consequence to them. The UFO mystery is confusing enough without the addition of deliberate confusion. With friends like these, objective research needs no enemies. Most serious students will agree that propagation of misinformation from these sources is a serious obstacle in the path of truth and can be quite damaging to the field's public image. Still, the "limelighter's" success depends largely on a sin of omission where many of us fail to "bite the bullet" and take a stand on the matter. It is all too easy to provide tacit support for these elements when political expediency dictates. Appearing on the same program (for example) lends such tacit support.

A couple of years ago I suggested to Dr. J. Allen Hynek (over dinner at the Doubletree Inn in Tucson) that one of the crying needs of the UFO field was a system of accreditation for bonafide UFO researchers. We recognized that many of the field's most prolific contributors were without impressive academic credentials and that a system should be developed based on protocol of ethics and merit independent of academia.

Hynek has since called for "those in each organization, as well as those not affiliated with any organization, who appreciate and are capable of adopting a professional stance, to close ranks and unite—as individuals—in a sort of spiritual bond to set up a code of professional standards, a code of ethics, for investigators, researchers, and writers on the subject. A general code of procedures." (1981 MUFON Symposium this past July in Cambridge, Mass.)

In response to that call, Barbara Shutte has proposed "a new concept in UFO Research" called *UFO Clinical Services* (UFOCS). Though it is undoubtedly the result of a conscientious and painstaking effort, it seems to us that implementation of Ms. Shutte's proposal would impose burdens of a financial and clerical nature that no existing UFO organization could shoulder at present. Additionally, it would in effect give the rabbits a share in guarding the lettuce patch and could easily become yet another barrier on the path to the goals it espouses. Calling on "buffoons" to eliminate Buffoonery does not work.

A current watchword in the manufacturing industry is *productivity*, designated generally as the ratio of product to the resources utilized to produce that product and market it.

We in the UFO field need to monitor our productivity carefully. Our survival may depend on it.

It is considerations such as the foregoing that must be weighed when deciding whether or not to participate in public symposia. While we appreciate the implied endorsement of past achievements that such invitations embody, it should be realized that non-acceptance should not necessarily be read as "isolationism but rather as a tendency to put our money where our mouth is.

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