

Through the years, the staff of APRO has sat back and modestly watched and listened while others tooted their own horns. However, at this time, as we look back on thirty years of accomplishments, it is time to take stock—and take credit.

APRO was established in 1952, the first civilian UFO research group in the world. The British Flying Saucer Review followed two years later. While many American UFOlogists regarded the UFOs as strictly an American phenomenon, APRO had taken cognizance of foreign reports and began to search abroad for those individuals dedicated and capable enough to gather and research information in other countries. That was the year 1954.

NICAP, formerly of Washington, D. C., and now, for all intents and purposes, defunct, was founded in 1956. At the time of NICAP's conception, APRO had begun to recruit scientific personnel to investigate and evaluate cases, rather than depend on newspaper clippings as source material. During those early years, APRO stood alone in its conviction that the Air Force Project, with its tiny "staff" (an officer, a clerk or two and Dr. J. Allen Hynek, a relatively unknown astronomer, as scientific consultant) was hardly an investigative body, and was most probably a public relations ploy or "front". Others continued to "tilt" with the Air Force, screaming "cover-up".

In 1968, with the able guidance of Assistant Director Richard Greenwell, APRO initiated the Field Investigator Network system, which was later adopted by both MUFON and CUFOs. In 1970 we published the first Field Investigator's manual (which was not updated for lack of funds). The first UFO Conference was held in Peoria, Illinois in 1970, sponsored by APRO and the Peoria Research Group (the prime movers of which were Laird Carter and Dale Dufelmeier). Coincidentally, MUFON surfaced the same year. Its "leader", Walt Andrus, had gotten his training with APRO—he had been a Field Investigator and State Section Director (yes, we initiated that, too) until he decided he wanted his own group.

APRO enjoyed considerable success (if numbers of members is any measure) during the late 1960s while UFOs were leading law enforcement officers and the general public in a merry chase which resulted in the appointment of the "Condon Committee", under contract to the U. S. Air Force.

When the Condon Committee closed its doors and issued its final report in 1968, the Air Force followed suit and announced its disengagement with the UFO problem in December 1969. It seemed that the U. S. Government, with all its fumbling and bungling, was finally out of the picture, and most of us sighed with relief.

The last, large UFO research group came upon the scene in 1973, when Dr. Hynek started the Center for UFO Studies. Between 1968 and 1973, Hynek had contacted the top men in the UFO field around the world and thereupon established the nucleus of the "Center".

Now, it would seem that, after 30 years, APRO could sigh with relief and retire. But in the existing field, we have not observed the emergence of any new individual or group of individuals with sufficient innovative talent to take the place of the pioneers who make up APRO's International Representatives or Scientific Consulting staff. MUFON and CUFOs are almost identical copies of APRO in their organizational structure and methodology. Allen Hendry's Handbook for the UFO Investigator is only an expanded version of the many guidelines set down by APRO for investigation of UFO reports throughout the years.

In closing, the staff and membership at headquarters (now approximately 50) would like to thank everyone in APRO for their cooperation and support in the past, and we look forward to years of fruitful association ahead. Our Tucson staff and volunteers include (in no particular order): Robert Marsland, Madeleine Cooper, Betty Scott, Jim McCoy, Vikki Davis, Evelyn Thompson, Robert Dean, Maxine McCoy, Sherman Bletchman and Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzen.

We all take this opportunity to wish all of you a wonderful, happy Holiday Season, and the very best in the New Year and the ensuing years ahead.