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Editor: Barry Greenwood

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EDITORIAL

1996 will be remembered as a year of extraordinary progress in the quest for the history of the UFO phenomena. Thousands of pages of new information have been added to the already immense data base that has been built. It is expected that more will be discovered this coming year due to a slowly increasing volume of new researchers and the declassification of millions of pages of documents that have yet to be mined for early UFO information. We will soon know more about the 1947 UFO wave than has ever been known before. Knowledge of other UFO waves in 1950, 1952, 1954 and beyond has increased dramatically. It is no mystery that this editor has not been pleased or comfortable with the public image of UFOs lately but I did not want to let the year go out without pointing to what has been pleasing.

At the moment there is a huge backlog of material that will probably keep things busy into the next century. I plan to reexamine at least two classic UFO photo cases with government connections, along with new stories and research articles.

Lastly, I have several old bumper stickers left from a ten-year-old printing (maybe more!) with the blurb "UFOs Are Real - Ask the Government." For three dollars each, one per address, I'll send them out. Funds will be used purely for research.

UFO COVER-UPS AND THE MARTIAN METEORITE

What a year 1996 was for advocates of life in space! First, scientific evidence was revealed for the existence of planets around other stars early in the year. Then there was the "Independence Day" movie blitz of the summer, which instilled flying saucer fever in the public once again. And with little pause from this, NASA stunned everyone by announcing that small, fossilized life forms had been found inside a rock that had somehow made its way from Mars to the Antarctic continent.

This now-famous meteorite, ALH 84001, was found on the Allan Hills ice field in Antarctica in 1984 after having been deposited there 13,000 years ago and after having been blasted from Mars some 16 million years ago. The rock was unrecognized as Martian until about two years ago when a researcher at the University of California reexamined its composition and found it to be consistent with what is known about Martian geology.

Now here's where the story gets interesting. Scientists over the last

Is anyone out there?

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — U.S. scientists yesterday said they had discovered two new planets that may be able to support life.

The giant planets, 35 light-years from Earth, are believed to have conditions that would allow the formation of water, vital to the development of living organisms.

Physicists Geoffrey Marcy and Paul Butler, San Francisco State University astrophysicists, discovered the new planets in the Virgo and Ursa Major constellations.

Both are bigger than Jupiter and visible to the naked eye from Earth.

One of the planets is thought to have a surface temperature of 185 degrees — cool enough, Marcy said, for it to have rain, or even oceans.

Reuter

two years accumulated compelling bits of evidence suggesting that life had once existed in the rock. Photography of the rock showed what looked like tiny worm-like structures which resembled earthly bacteria, only much smaller. They found that these bits of evidence, detailed in the August 16, 1996 issue of *Science*, were difficult to explain by other than life forms on Mars having created them. Apparently the research was going to continue quietly but at one point information was leaked to a weekly publication, *Space News*, based in Washington, D.C. NASA, rather than allowing themselves to be scooped on their own information, decided to proceed with an information release on August 6th.

A firestorm of publicity ensued on August 7th with the press announcing "Signs of Life Found on Mars," "Life Found on Mars," "Martian Fossils May be Proof of Bacteria-Like Forms of Life." NASA held a press conference on the afternoon of August 7th with members of their scientific team discussing their results. Unlike the definitive conclusions expressed in many press reports, the scientist who directed the investigation, Dr. David McKay, a geochemist at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, stated that the results were "not conclusive." NASA's Administrator, Daniel Goldin, said that the researchers were not claiming ultimate proof of life beyond Earth, but that circumstantial evidence that is "highly suggestive" did exist.

This certainly falls short of proof of life on Mars but even more so this sounds uncomfortably like the

rationale used by UFOlogists to substantiate claims of flying saucer evidence. Why was a press conference held if this wasn't proof? It is almost as if the scientists were forced to participate in an ill-advised extravaganza to engage in a company promotion for fund raising. A grave risk was taken because if, as Dr. McKay expressed, the evidence was not decisive and if another group of researchers did begin to punch holes in the information, the credibility of NASA's scientists, the credibility of NASA's administrator and the credibility of NASA would eventually lie in a pile of rubble.

One headline may have summed up the reason for the extraordinary display. "NASA Gets a Big Boost from Furor over Mars" said the Vancouver Sun of August 10th. NASA's risk could be justified if the combination of the threatened leak to an outside publication plus the chronic funding cuts that NASA has been forced to endure for many years, created the situation that NASA had to use the possibility that the meteorite contained life evidence in an effort to increase interest in NASA activities and thus increase the likelihood of an expanded budget to further programs which seemed in danger of more cuts or even elimination. The claims about the meteorite may be diluted or entirely punctured in the near future but the funding will already have been approved. The Vancouver Sun added, "NASA appears to have struck a chord with the public unparalleled since the era of the moon landings." Based on reaction like this, the risk exercised in presenting inconclusive evidence of life in space may have been justified after all! The notion, cynical as it seems, of NASA exploiting the situation for financial purposes was not lost on many pundits, particularly scientists, and most particularly biologists. Many were horrified at the haste with which this event was presented as it didn't seem to allow much time for a peer review process.

All of this leads to another question. We haven't heard one thing

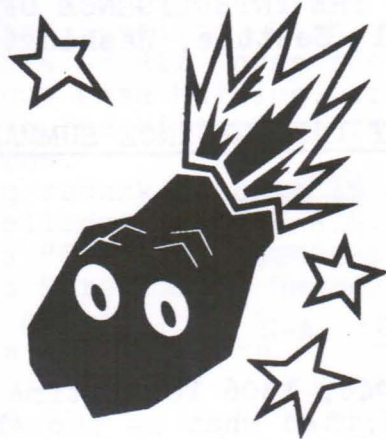
Life on Mars? Let's Not Jump the Gun

To the Editor:

Unnamed National Aeronautics and Space Administration scientists claim that a meteorite containing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, called PAH's, iron compounds and bacteria-like particles indicate "unequivocal" evidence of life having existed on Mars, and that this represents one of the most stunning discoveries in the solar system (front page, Aug. 7). This incredible assertion demands rigorous investigation of every conceivable possibility, including fraud.

The Piltdown hoax in 1912 involved a fake fossil skull of an ape-like human, and it was the most famous of many historical scientific deceptions. However, a life-on-Mars hoax (possibly perpetrated by a brilliant chemist with a warped sense of humor) that could pass NASA's top scientists, high-tech equipment and repeated careful analyses would go down as the ne plus ultra scientific ruse of all time.

NASA will now examine the Martian meteorite for signs of amino acids, basic life chemicals that presumably would cinch the case for past life on Mars (front page, Aug. 8). However, amino acids and PAH's as well were detected decades ago in the Murchison and Murray carbona-



Jim Matese

ceous chondrite meteorites. These organic compounds also originated early in the solar system's history, and are considered to have formed nonbiologically.

If life did exist on Mars (as I think, but do not know), its proof will have to await more specific discoveries than those made thus far from the Allan Hills 84001 meteorite. JULIAN KANE
Great Neck, L.I., Aug. 8, 1996
The writer is a micropaleontologist and professor of geology at New College, Hofstra University.

anniversary national celebration for one UFO crash (Roswell) which will certainly receive intense media coverage. The "secret" on this appears to be way out of the gate. Would NASA have blown the opportunity for such a wide array of benefits amounting to untold millions in funding just so they would not make a group of UFO advocates look good? To quote a common slang phrase today, "Not!"

So therefore I await the great UFO announcement. It should be any day nowsoon.....just around the corner.....a new dawn is awaiting..please?

PROJECTS SIGN AND GRUDGE RECORDS RELEASED

Yet another large document release of early Project Sign and Project Grudge records have been made available. Sign and Grudge, for those unfamiliar, were the Air Force's first organized UFO investigations beginning in 1947 through the early 1950s. Nearly one thousand pages of documents were released from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri. They are amongst the records mentioned in the General Accounting Office's report on Roswell as having been consulted by the GAO in the process of their crashed-disc inquiry. The release was cleared by the National Air Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio on November 20, 1996.

About two-thirds of the records concern Project Sign activities in 1948, the rest dealing with 1949. It is a mixture of case material and

about the long-predicted revelation of UFO reality that the government was supposed to make decades ago. This would have been a prime time to do it. Imagine the publicity that NASA would have had with such an announcement. Why didn't it happen? If NASA knows UFOs are real, which some have claimed, and Roswell is real, which many accept as a given, why not use that evidence to verify life in space rather than evidence which is "not conclusive" by the words of its own advocates? With this there is no risk and NASA's funding would undoubtedly fly through the roof. In such a scenario the positive publicity would usher in a new era of exploration in matters that would surely distract the public from a plethora of governmental problems which currently exist. The announcement of possible Martian life did not collapse society, close churches or do any of the dire things predicted by philosophers. People were thrilled with the news.

What is the point of keeping any crashed saucer tale, or any other for that matter, under wraps. We are about to see a 50th

(Sample Project Sign
Record from Recent
Release.)

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HEADQUARTERS
375TH RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (VLR) WEATHER
OFFICE OF THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
APO 731, Seattle, Washington

ANNEX I TO SEMI-MONTHLY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY:

FROM: 16 April 1948

THRU: 30 April 1948

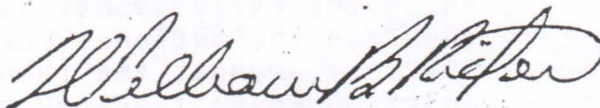
SIGHTING OF FLYING DISC: A-2

1. On 18 April 1948, 1306 local time, (EX 66
of this organization sighted what he thought was a flying disc.
The sighting was made over the city of Fairbanks, Alaska.

2. The report was made to Lt. Clarke, the Base Intelligence Officer of Ladd Air Force Base. Lt. Clarke immediately sent the information of the sighting to the proper commands concerned.

3. The following is a description of the object sighted as was reported to the Intelligence Officer of this organization the following day.

- a. The object was at an altitude of about 2000-3000 feet.
- b. The object moved at a rapid rate of speed, estimated at about 250-300 miles per hour.
- c. The object was in sight for only a few minutes before it disappeared from view.
- d. The object was oscillating at a rapid rate and the only time it could be seen was when the flat side was toward the observer.
- e. The object reflected a high intensity of light.
- f. No sound or any other distinguished noise could be heard coming from the object. (CONFIDENTIAL) (U)


WILLIAM B. RIDER
Captain, USAF
Intelligence Officer

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Encl # 2'

administrative handling of the investigations.

Most notable so far is that once again, as in the case of the 4602nd AISS records for the mid-1950s obtained from the National Archives (Just Cause, March-June 1996), we see that missing cases from the Project Sign years are surfacing through this release. For example, the San Acadia Dam, N.M. case of July 17, 1948, listed as missing in the Project Blue Book inventories at the Archives, is listed here. Same with Columbus, Ohio, July 8, 1948 and Sterling, Utah, October 16, 1948. The long-suspected extra copies of Air Force records, kept aside from the Air Force's main Blue Book case holding, are beginning to surface, repairing some of the damage to the historical record thought to have been created by the missing records.

An interesting remark appears in a June 23, 1948 document from the Acting Chief of Intelligence, Col. R.D. Wentworth, enclosing corrections to a draft copy of a "Special Report-Project Sign." Relating information from the Air Force's Director of Research and Development, Wentworth revealed that a "vast majority of the objects" were similar to flying wing-type aircraft of low aspect ratio (i.e. thin or flat) and that reference should be made to this fact and such past experiments by the Air Force's Engineering Division and to present experiments by the Navy. In other words many of the reports might have been caused by the sighting of experimental vehicles by the military. We can relate this to modern reports of strange aircraft near places like "Area 51."

So as late as June 1948, high level thinking tilted towards UFOs largely being experimental, low aspect ratio aircraft, not alien ships. At this time we would have had the Roswell "vehicle" for about a year. If we already knew that UFOs were alien and had the proof, why this tremendous amount of wasted energy chasing high-altitude reports? Wouldn't the Air Force's Director of Research and Development have had his hands full doing research on the in-hand alien vehicle instead of being concerned with sightings of distant objects which were often not clearly reported or which contained little useful detail for an engineer?

If we are to accept stories about the "Estimate of the Situation," the reported Air Force Project Sign document that allegedly concluded that flying saucers were extraterrestrial vehicles, then what had happened between June 23, 1948 and the writing of the Estimate, said to have occurred in the summer of 1948? Major Dewey Fournet, one of the few remaining witnesses to the existence of the Estimate, has said that the document's conclusion was based upon the existing case material of that time and that the conclusion was an "extreme extrapolation" from those reports, and that physical evidence did not figure in the conclusion. The only major story after June 23, 1948 to the end of the summer was the Chiles-Whitted incident of July 24, 1948. The sighting at 2:45 AM by the Eastern Airlines pilots was of a 100-foot, torpedo-shaped object with a double row of glowing windows and a blue glow of light underneath. It took place in the air near Montgomery, Alabama. And indeed it has been said by a former head of Project Blue Book (Edward Ruppelt, Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, 1956, page 41) that the sighting had a profound influence on Project Sign personnel, to the extent that it led them to conclude that UFOs were interplanetary. This one incident can be argued to be the single most important sighting in the Air Force's records, according to the influence it had on Air Force thinking.

But what about crashed discs and Roswell? Shouldn't that have had a more profound influence long before? Where does such fit into real history?

As researchers continue to gain insight into government UFO investigations, we continue to get the same message from the flow of early records. Physical evidence does not figure into the equation. The gov-

ernment was groping for solutions. We may be surprised by future discoveries but until that happens we must depend upon what we know to be real rather than imaginary events.

CARL SAGAN, 1934-1996

Speaking as one who has only known the public persona of Carl Sagan rather than the personal one, it is still difficult to discuss his passing. Dr. Sagan's ability to simplify complex ideas and teach the wonders of the universe to multitudes has been a personal inspiration to me to keep on with the quest of knowing what there is to know about the possibilities of extraterrestrial life. I remember his discussions on Boston public television in the early 1960s on whether intelligent life existed on planets around two stars, Tau Ceti and Epsilon Eridani (sun-like stars which were the targets of Project Ozma, the first detailed SETI radio scan in 1960). I wondered if something so extraordinary could really be true. Were the space fantasies, as depicted in the movies and on television, not so far from reality. Dr. Sagan made these notions plausible. It wasn't such a crazy idea to think that there were other intelligent beings in the universe, after all we were intelligent, thinking creatures on a small planet around an insignificant star, as Dr. Sagan was so fond of saying in his lectures. It was a joy to know that someone could make such mental explorations the food of rich thought.

Carl Sagan has also provided us with unforgettable imagery, from the wondrous cover photo of the surface of our planet from orbit with galaxies looming in the background in his Intelligent Life in the Universe to his walkthrough of the imaginary Alexandrian Library in his TV series "Cosmos," to his dominating authoritative visage in the various interviews that he has given. There are so many to remember.

To the UFO community he was not exactly a beloved figure for his largely negative views on UFOs. Dr. Sagan represented conservative science and his insistence that hard evidence be the deciding factor as to whether or not UFOs were vehicles from another planet rankled UFOlogists who insisted that softer evidence was more than enough to convince anyone of UFO reality. It is one thing, he said, to think that intelligent life exists in space and wholly another thing to believe that life forms are coming to Earth and interacting with the human species. It is ironic that many scientists believed that Dr. Sagan went too far in his endorsement of abundant intelligent life in space.

While unaccepting of the notion of aliens visiting our world, Dr. Sagan was responsible with a number of other scientists in proposing the UFO topic for the agenda of the 1969 American Association for the Advancement of Science symposium in Boston. He was heavily criticized for this by conservative elements of science led by Dr. Edward Condon, head of the late-1960s University of Colorado UFO project financed by the Air Force. The proposal was nonetheless adopted and the symposium proceedings on UFOs led to one of the finer books on the topic, UFOs: A Scientific Debate by Sagan and Thornton Page (also recently deceased). Sagan was quoted at the time (Philadelphia Inquirer, 12-26-69) as saying, "UFOs carrying alien visitors are not out of the question, no matter how remote the possibility." He added, "So long as scientists don't approach the problem, they look mighty silly."

Dr. Sagan's seeming charitability towards UFOs then might have remained that way had UFOlogy not gone off onto wild tangents. With the shift of modern UFO research towards contacts, abductions, crashed discs and wild conspiracies, there is little wonder why scientists do not want to waste their precious time pursuing questionable information and forging unholy alliances. Scientists' careers are built upon funding and given

that scientific fields are laced with politics and intrigue much the same way other fields are, it can be a dangerous, career-wrecking matter to become involved in controversial topics. One scientist that this editor knows (he shall remain nameless by his choice) was in much the same situation. He was a physicist. He had a sighting. He told a few people and no one else. I asked him why he wouldn't come forward as it would help the credibility of UFO research if sane, sober witnesses would come forth to discuss their puzzling experiences. He said, "Are you kidding? I want my research in physics to continue and coming forth would do nothing to help that." In his field of hard science, if you can't prove something you put it aside until you can.

Carl Sagan's involvement in UFO research was not profound. He did not investigate the phenomenon in as much depth as many would have liked. He made some errors in his UFO discussions because of his lack of familiarity with the subject's internals. Would Carl Sagan expressing his belief that UFOs are real have made a difference in the perception by the public of the phenomenon? Perhaps in a small way but the problems would still have been there. No, he served a much more valuable role in history by doing what he was doing: popularizing real science, to educate the public in critical thinking, to open our eyes to the grandeur of the skies. A great black hole has been created in the human race with the passing of Carl Sagan but the gravity of his presence will always remain to draw us to the cosmos.

INTERESTING STATE DEPARTMENT RELEASE

A follow-up release to researcher Rick Giordano on his obtaining documents from the National Security Agency (Just Cause, March-June 1996) involved a curious document from the State Department. The eight-page paper, titled "Southern Xinjiang Lights," detailed the travels of a pair of U.S. government officials in China's Southern Xinjiang province from February 19-24, 1991. Quoting the document: "Professor Olsen visited the Hetian Archeology (sic) Museum and discovered that the museum has also the local headquarters for the 'China UFO Research Society.' It seems that UFO sightings in China, but especially Xinjiang, are so numerous that the province decided to establish a UFO sighting society under the auspices of the provincial cultural research commission. Hetian's chief UFO-watcher, Mr. Li Yinbing, who also doubles as the Museum's curator, asked Professor Olsen for the names of similar organizations in the U.S."

Elsewhere in the document we are told of accommodations at a local hotel at one point where "as our luck would have it, we had activities scheduled most nights. Readers are free to draw their own conclusions."(!)

It would seem advisable that a new chapter be added to UFO field investigator manuals to deal with such a contingency, at which point said manuals might challenge to make the New York Times best seller list!

PLAN TO INDEX UFO DOCUMENTS

One of the major problems in UFO research has always been how to index the enormous volume of ephemeral material that exists. Ephemeral meaning correspondence, clippings and government documents. Letters and clippings are not as difficult as far as developing a plan for systemization; the problem is sheer volume. Meanwhile government documents exist in a finite supply so volume is not so imposing a task as the systemization of them. They can also be hard to decipher with the use of assorted jargon and acronyms, and they can be hard to read.

On the next page is a sample of an index developed by Edward Stewart, editor of two previously published indices (Just Cause, Sept. 1996). In this I see potential application to government papers. Comments?

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1952			
07/05	Langenskiold, Eric	Sullivan, Ed J.	(Letter) (1)
07/12	Green, Jack A.		"I Saw A 'Flying Saucer'" by Jack A. Green (Report) (2)
08/02	Lunetta, Katharine M.	Barnes, Harry G.	(Letter) (3)
08/02	Lunetta, Katharine M.	THE MAIL BOX, Editor	(Letter) (4)
10/03	Langenskiold, Eric	C.S.I.	(Letter) (5)
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02/27	Keyhoe, Donald E.		List of ATIC UFO sightings and other information secured from ATIC for DEK by Mr. Albert M. Chop, AF Press Desk (Memo) (6)
09/17	Keyhoe, Donald E.	Day, Hugh	First page only, unsigned (Letter) (7)
10/03	Chop, Albert M.	Keyhoe, Donald E.	(Letter) (8)
10/15	Hulsey, B.C.	Keyhoe, Donald E.	(Letter) (9)
11/16	Lorenzen, Coral E.	Keyhoe, Donald E.	(Letter) (10)
11/25	SAULT STE. MARIE EVENING NEWS		"Snow Flurries Hamper Search For Jet In Lake Superior", Kinross case (News Clip) (11)
11/27	SAULT STE. MARIE EVENING NEWS		"Search Continues Today For Missing Jet Plane", Kinross case (News Clip) (12)
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03/21	Nash, William B.	Keyhoe, Donald E.	(Letter) (13)
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07/28	Keyhoe, Donald E.	Stringfield, Leonard H.	1 page, no signature? (Letter) (22)
07/29	Bloecher, Ted	Davis, Isabel	(Letter) (23)
07/31	Stringfield, Leonard H.	Keyhoe, Donald E.	2 pages (Letter) (24)
08/09	Bloecher, Ted	Davis, Isabel	(Letter) (25)