

UFO INVESTIGATOR

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UFOs EXIST BUT NOT HERE, SAYS PHYSICIST

ETI Has Same Problem We Do: Too Far To Go

An aerospace scientist says he does not doubt the reality of UFOs, but he does question whether they would attempt to cross interstellar space to reach Earth. Quoted by newspaper columnist Bob Considine, Dr. Nicholas Der, a California physicist, says that any voyage through space, regardless of the propulsion technology used, faces the insurmountable problem of time delay in communications between the voyagers and their point of origin.

This means, says Der, that a spacecraft attempting to travel from one solar system to another must wait days, years, even centuries before being able to receive or reply to messages. Such interminable waits, he submits, would jeopardize or wreck the mission. Emergency decisions could not be made, either by the astronauts or mission control, because information could not be exchanged in sufficient time. An accident on board the spacecraft, for example, could doom the astronauts to a suicidal drift into oblivion. Even if communication equipment were working perfectly, it would be pointless to seek help from mission control, since by the time the SOS had been radioed and the needed information sent back, the spacecraft might not even exist.

It is even within the realm of possibility, says Der, that during the time gap when a transmission is racing at the speed of light to overtake the far distant spacecraft, events on the home planet might render further communication impossible or unnecessary. Time on the spacecraft would stand still (almost literally, if the spacecraft were traveling near the speed of light), but life at the launch site would continue to evolve normally. Over the course of 100, 500, or 1000 years, the language in which the original message was broadcast might change drastically (or cease to be used), making the return message virtually meaningless when finally received from the astronauts. Or, any number of other equally serious changes could occur, in any sphere of activity: political, scientific, social, psychological, or some other.

No, says Der, it is not realistic to talk about exploration of our galaxy, either by ourselves or by an extraterrestrial civilization. Even if the technology existed to make the trip feasible, the inability to communicate with the spacecraft in a reasonable time interval would negate the value of going.

"Our chances of reaching the distant star systems inside our galaxy are practically nil," concludes Der. "For this very reason, I do not worry about flying saucers, although I firmly believe in them. What gives us the right to arrogantly assume that we are the crowns of creation, the only intelligent beings in the whole universe? I have a pretty sure feeling that out there are many millions of cultures, 'people,' some less, some much more advanced than we are. But all have the common trouble: they cannot break through the barrier of the absolute and ultimate velocity (of light) either. The decisions of their 'Houston Control' are either obsolete or too late; that is, if

Einstein was right and his theory is valid for the entire universe. As a physicist, I do not see any fault in it. So far, all the pieces have fallen in the proper places. Mathematics does not allow exceptions."

FOREIGN UFO INTEREST APPEARS HIGH

Press Queries Keeping NICAP Busy

A series of recent inquiries to NICAP from various foreign news media representatives indicates continuing interest in the UFO problem in countries beyond the United States. Part of this interest may stem from the press itself, which does not appear to share the reluctance of American journalists to provide coverage of UFO sightings. But equally important is the desire of people outside the U.S. to know what this country is doing to further investigate UFOs now that the U.S. Government has declared them officially dead.

In January NICAP talked with an aviation writer for European publications who is planning a series of articles on UFOs for international syndication. Also that month, a West German journalist approached NICAP for help with research he is doing on the present status of UFO research. "Interest in UFOs," he said, "is very high in Germany today."

Scheduled for this month are two interviews with the Voice of America, which says it has received a variety of queries on the subject of UFOs. One letter, in fact, from a listener in Malaysia, specifically asked for information on NICAP. One of the interviews will be broadcasted to the Soviet Union, where interest is reportedly still strong.

SIGHTING ADVISORY

Preliminary information on new reports. Details and evaluations will be published when available.

February 1, 1971 -- Two women, driving near Kingston, Tennessee, observed a phenomenon in the night sky described as "saucer-like," with flashing lights. Other people supposedly saw it too.

January 27, 1971 -- Citizens in Boise, Idaho, reported seeing an unusual "cloud" in the morning sky. It had an elongated "base," a dome-shaped "top," and was "brilliant white" in color. Without changing shape, it moved slowly away until lost from sight.

January 26, 1971 -- A light that changed colors and appeared to hover and move at low altitude was reported near Jackson, Ohio, by a young couple who were driving on a country road. The light seemed to follow their car and at one point was an estimated 100 feet away.

January 22, 1971 -- A strange "plane" was reported over Huron County, Ohio, by multiple witnesses, including a man and wife who claimed to have seen it at close range. The couple said it had white lights and what appeared to be exhaust jets.

Sixth of a Series**MAN AND NON-MAN****What Impact the Discovery of Extraterrestrial Intelligence?**

The following is a continuation of the NICAP interview with Dr. Richard S. Young, Chief of Exobiology for NASA, on the search for extraterrestrial life. The interview began in the September issue.

NICAP: You indicated a moment ago that some thought had been given to questions of reaction, of public impact.

YOUNG: Yes, we've considered it. I have advisory committees that I've worked with over the years, and on occasion this question has come up. I would have to look back through the records to see just when, but I recall on at least one occasion that I discussed with this advisory group whether this is something we ought to look into. The conclusion was no, that it wasn't, but at least it was considered.

NICAP: Was it thought that the mass media have so exposed people to the whole realm of science fiction, as well as science fact, that people would not tend to react hysterically to almost anything at this point?

YOUNG: No, I don't think we looked at it in that context. The question that was being asked was: Is it important or worthwhile for us at this time to look seriously into the question of what public reaction might be. I don't think we speculated on what it might be. The question was whether we should spend much time looking into it now, and we decided no simply because there are too many other things to take up our resources. And we didn't feel that we were likely to be contacting extraterrestrial intelligent life in the near future.

NICAP: How much thought was given to the possibility that the astronauts, when they landed on the moon, would in fact stumble on the proverbial beer can, left by someone else?

YOUNG: Beyond speculation that they might stumble on a remnant of an earlier Russian spacecraft, which had been known to hit the moon, I would say practically zero. To my knowledge, I never heard any serious discussion of the likelihood of an astronaut encountering evidence of intelligent life. No, other than the speculative kind of articles that Sagan and others have written, I think not.

There are a few people who have considered the possibility of finding artifacts of intelligent civilizations on Mars. In fact, some of our advisers feel that unless there is some evidence that intelligent life exists on Mars, Mars isn't a very interesting place. They're not interested in the question of the origin of life; they only want to find evidence of intelligent life, which I think is a strange point of view, but it's held by some people.

NICAP: It seems somewhat surprising that no one thought about the possibility of finding an artifact on the moon.

YOUNG: I'm not saying that nobody did; I'm sure people did. All I'm saying is that most of the people that I deal with did not expect to find anything like that on the moon; they didn't give it much thought.

NICAP: But apparently this feeling was shared at a higher level, because there was no policy formulated; no official concern was expressed; no precautions were taken.

YOUNG: Precautions?

NICAP: Precautions in the sense that the astronauts would find something significant. Say, for example, analyzing the Surveyor pictures for evidence that the astronauts might encounter something unusual.

YOUNG: Well, sure; these pictures were analyzed in detail. I don't know what each investigator who looked at the pictures had going through his mind; he may not have been looking for ruins of cities at the same time he was looking for cliffs. That I can't say. But I don't think it was given a great deal of serious consideration. I'm sure anybody looking at those first close-up pictures of the moon couldn't help not thinking about, well, now could that be a road, or could that be some other kind of artifact. We tried for awhile to read all kinds of things into these pictures; we always do that when we look at a picture. We do that when we look at pictures of the Earth - which is another interesting phenomenon, you know. It was many years before any evidence of life on Earth was detected by photography. Most satellite pictures show no evidence of life on Earth.

NICAP: How close to Earth do you have to come with a satellite-borne camera to detect life, or signs of life?

YOUNG: It isn't a question of closeness; it's a question of resolution of the camera system, which is also a function of distance. I don't know the numbers, but you've got to get down to resolutions of a few meters before you really see things. There are pictures of the Earth taken from Tiros satellites with resolutions of a few hundred meters on a side, and you can't see cities like Los Angeles with that kind of resolution. You can't see Bombay, India. You can only see outlines of continents and oceans. You can see long lines, like rivers, and that kind of thing. But you don't see any evidence of life. So it takes fairly high resolutions, and I'm not a good one to tell you what the numbers are.

NICAP: In the Gemini photographs of Arizona, which were taken from about 100 miles, you could just barely make out a road.

YOUNG: That was the Hasselblad. I don't remember the resolution of the camera.

NICAP: In the movie "2001," when the astronauts stumbled on the obelisk, Clarke was speculating what would happen, what official policy would be. Well, official policy was to hush the discovery up instantly and put up a smoke screen.

YOUNG: Why?

NICAP: It does seem curious. Would that kind of policy strike you as reasonable?

YOUNG: I can't imagine it. I would think that whoever was responsible for the experiment in which that observation was made would publish the paper as quickly as he could get it published. I can't imagine it being hushed up for any reason; I find that inconceivable.

NICAP: If such a contingency would in fact happen, there would probably not be live television coverage at the time.

YOUNG: You're talking about a manned mission? An astronaut goes to Mars and sees a city and then, for some reason or other, is muzzled?

NICAP: Yes, like in the movie. When the discovery was made, the area was fenced off and a security lid was imposed.

YOUNG: I find that very unrealistic. I can't imagine why that would happen.

Continued Next Month

NICAP PROBES CRASHED OBJECT REPORT

Search Still Hampered by Bad Weather

The mysterious object that appeared to impact the ice crust on Cape Cod's Scargo Lake (*UFO Investigator*, February 1971) may still be at the bottom of the lake, impervious to discovery until warm weather thaws the ice. The latest word from NICAP's man on the scene, astronomer Walter Webb, is that winter's cold has kept skin divers at bay and thwarted all attempts to determine whether the object is really there.

In the meantime, says Webb, the reports from the two boys who claim to have seen the object falling toward the lake, check out. Webb filed with NICAP the following comments, based on his investigation of the reports:

"(1) Although the two witnesses are only 12 and 13 years old, this investigator was impressed by the apparent sincerity of both. They appear to be independent observers viewing the same UFO at approximately the same time. I could detect no obvious reason for complicity or publicity-seeking.

"(2) The chief evidence for the boys' stories remains the hole in the ice. Even though neither witness said he saw the object actually disappear into the lake — and therefore the UFO and the hole cannot be positively linked — there is, in my opinion, strong circumstantial evidence indicating a connection. First, we have the testimony of three youths who arrived at the lake's edge very soon

after the object disappeared from view. All noted the hole. Two of them stated they saw steam rising from the hole, and one noted agitated water — implying a freshly formed opening in the ice. A wind was reported blowing at the time, but one can only speculate on the effect a 15-mph breeze might have in creating the observed wave action.

"In addition, we have the unanimous claim by uninvolved residents and skaters that there was no hole in the ice on the day before the sighting. No one could ever recall seeing such a large hole, or one of that shape, on Scargo Lake. After viewing the hole myself three days after the sighting, I believe the hole was formed by a rather sudden melting process. There was no evidence of radial cracking or scattered ice fragments. To this investigator, and to the skin diver who inspected the hole, it would appear unlikely that an underwater spring could melt away a three-inch layer of ice at the subfreezing temperatures that existed on the night before the sighting.

"(3) Using a topographic map of the area, I plotted my compass bearings and found that the lines of direction to the UFO from each boy's viewing spot converged exactly over the hole in the lake. Although each witness's elevation and time estimates differ somewhat — by several minutes in the case of the time of the object's disappearance — these are

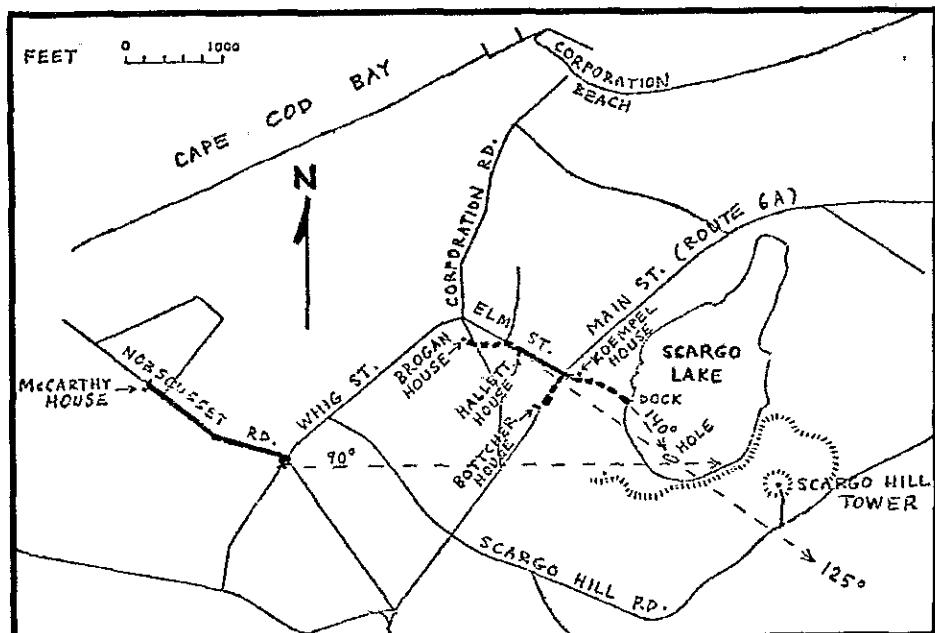
common uncertainties in any UFO report and unfortunately must be tolerated as subjective errors.

"(4) It is improbable the object was a daytime fireball. Not only was it observed moving in slow horizontal flight for up to an estimated three minutes, but its appearance was not that of a fireball. Such brilliant phenomena normally leave a smoky trail in their wake, produce audible noise, and are of much shorter duration. Further, the clearinghouse for such reports, the Center for Short-Lived Phenomena in Boston, received no fireball calls for the time of the sighting.

"(5) Bright planets were checked out and their elevations determined from the artificial sky projected at the Charles Hayden Planetarium at the Museum of Science in Boston. The planets Venus (magnitude -4), Jupiter (-1.4), Mars (1.6), Mercury (0.7), and the star Antares were too far south of the UFO's position. In any case, the object's appearance and rapid azimuth change counter to a planet's diurnal motion all militate against the planet hypothesis. At the time of the sighting, just after sunrise, Venus (near maximum brightness) would have been barely visible as a stationary tiny white pinpoint if one knew exactly where to locate it.

"(6) A jettisoned wing tank, perhaps afire, from a high-flying jet aircraft represents a possible though weak explanation for the object. A flaming fuel tank might explain the appearance of the UFO as well as the oblong melted hole in the ice. However, there should have been a smoke trail and possibly evidence of burning fuel on the lake. Even if it were not afire, a dropped wing tank would probably tumble on a downward trajectory and not travel horizontally at low altitude for three minutes (unless we discount this part of the second boy's testimony). Of course, denials by the Air Force might be understandable if a wing tank were accidentally dropped into an inhabited area and no hardware found. I asked both witnesses if they saw or heard any aircraft during their sightings, and they said no.

"(7) In 1968 my wife and I observed a dart-shaped USAF tow target used for aerial radar and gunnery practice. Could the boys have witnessed a runaway tow target or drone? This is a possibility, but again aircraft should have been spotted in the vicinity, perhaps at low altitude, and it is extremely doubtful that a tow target of lightweight honeycomb construction could have melted a 100-foot hole in thick ice. Perhaps, however, there are heavier guided drones unfamiliar to this investigator."



John Brogan, 12, saw UFO as he walked down Elm Street to bus stop. Paul McCarthy, 13, west of Brogan's position, also saw object while going to catch school bus. Martha Koempel, 13, joined Brogan at lakeside dock to view hole in ice. Robert Bottcher, 12, also saw hole. Note that lines of sight for Brogan and McCarthy intersect over hole.



MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

NICAP'S NIXON TO LECTURE

The Presque Isle Amateur Radio Club (PARC) of Erie, Pennsylvania, has invited NICAP Secretary-Treasurer Stuart Nixon to give a public lecture on UFOs on Friday, May 21, 1971. Details on the time and location of the lecture will be announced in local news media.

FORMER MEMBERS TO GET PLEA

If you get a brochure in the mail urging you to rejoin NICAP, disregard it. As mentioned in the Secretary-Treasurer's Report for 1970 (see January's newsletter), we are preparing a direct mail promotion designed to encourage former NICAP members to rejoin and become active again. Theoretically, no current member will receive this appeal, but there may be a few exceptions due to errors in our old (non-computer) membership files. If you happen to be one of these people, you need not worry that you have been mistakenly dropped from our active membership list. If you were not on that list, you would not be reading this notice, because the only people who receive the newsletter are members on file in our new system. If you know anyone who used to be a NICAP member, urge him to take advantage of our promotional mailing and use the application form that will come with the brochure. We would like very much to have him back so that he can see the changes that have taken place since he was a member.

THANKS TO NICAP VOLUNTEERS

The direct mail promotion to former NICAP members would not have been possible without the kind assistance of the following NICAP volunteers: Isabel Davis, Judy Cox, Georgeann Pesa, Lynn Meushaw, Patty Heath, Patrice Malley, and Mary Schropp. We are grateful for the many late evening hours they put in to help us keep the cost of the mailing to a minimum. Thank you, girls.

HOW TO LOSE MONEY

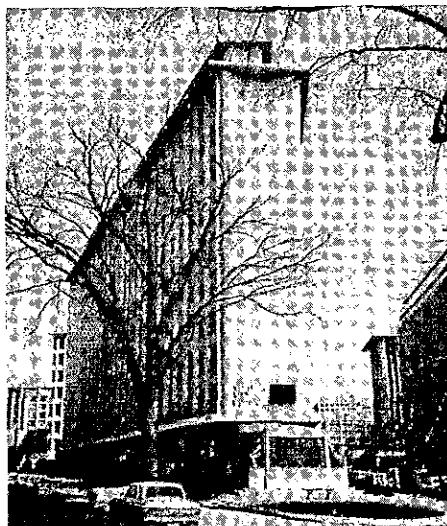
If there is one problem that plagues membership organizations more than any other, it is the problem of people who move without giving notice of their new address. These people apparently have a lot of money to throw away, because there is no way to send them what they paid for when they don't tell the Post Office or their correspondents where they're going. If you could see the amount of mail we get back marked "Moved, Left No Address," or "Addressee Unknown," you would wonder whether there really is tight money these days, since a great many people don't seem to mind spending it without getting anything in return.

NICAP: MOVING UP

NICAP is about to get a new lease on life — literally. With the wrecking crews soon to descend on the 1500 block of Connecticut Avenue, we have decided this is a good time to move into modern office space, away from the noise and confusion. Although our present address — 1522 Connecticut Avenue — is not slated for demolition, nearby blasting is already shaking the building, and there is worse to come as construction of Washington's long overdue subway gains momentum. NICAP's original address, 1536 Connecticut Avenue (pictured below), will be the first structure to be torn down, along with the former offices of a longtime NICAP neighbor, Ralph Nader.



As of April 1, 1971, NICAP will be located in the office building shown below. The address is 1730 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036. The building is two blocks south of Dupont Circle at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue, Rhode Island Avenue, and M Street. We will sublease from a consulting engineering company and will share their facilities. NICAP members who wish to visit us in the new space will find it conveniently located, with parking in the building. Our new neighbors will include the headquarters of the National Geographic Society, which is less than a block away. We will also have a new telephone number, set to go into effect the day we move. The number is: 202-833-2233.



FEEDBACK / Readers write

Gentlemen:

I'm sorry to hear that NICAP is still in financial trouble, but I'm not surprised. As I believe was pointed out in the *UFO Investigator* a few months ago, you can hardly expect people to place UFOs very high on their list of priorities when drug addiction, race relations, Indo-China, inflation, unemployment, crime, pollution, overpopulation, etc. all more obvious, immediate, and pressing problems, compete for their time and attention.

This doesn't especially lessen my interest in the subject; it just means I'm not at all upset when someone else doesn't share it. Let's face it; unless and until we come up with some kind of "hard," virtually incontrovertible evidence for ETI, we will be looked upon as a special-interest group. Our work could be the most vital research in the history of man, but until we can prove it, others have no reason to think so, and we have no reason to be at all annoyed when they think otherwise.

Barring the sort of miracle that is frequently the subject of our wistful daydreams, such as a UFO landing in the plaza of the UN Building or on the White House lawn, our only hope lies in hard, painstaking, long-term research. This is pretty much up to NICAP, since, for reasons of priorities like those I mentioned, no government agency is in a position to support the sort of massive study the subject really requires. Private foundations might be a different story; I don't know, but I doubt it. NICAP, of course, is not in a position to mount that kind of a study either.

The next best thing, however, as I see it, is exactly the sort of computerization project NICAP envisions. One of the reasons, if not the reason, that serious students of UFOs have been forced to turn to an examination of landings, contact stories, and other phenomena once passed off as the province of the lunatic fringe, is simply that there seems to be a dearth of useful evidence elsewhere in the more familiar areas. A report of a light maneuvering in the sky is such an exact duplicate of so many other reports that it is not only no longer "news" in the journalistic sense, it is also hardly helpful "data" in the scientific sense. Treating each such case more or less in isolation, as has been done so often in the past, can teach us nothing.

If, however, each such routine case is placed in the context of thousands of similar cases, meaningful patterns may begin to emerge. This, I gather, is what ACCESS is all about. A similar study was done, or was supposed to have been done, as a part of the Colorado Project, but the shortcomings of that effort are all too familiar.

ACCESS represents the kind of work I feel must be done, the kind of work whose results I am eagerly awaiting, the kind of work I am willing to support. My contribution is, I realize, minuscule, but I have been until recently an impoverished student. Now I am working, and I am somewhat less impoverished. Barring unforeseen circumstances, I am confident there will be more support in the future.

Yours truly,

Richard De Tar
Kalamazoo, Mich.