

UFO sightings reported on Acadian Peninsula

■ Witness describes a diamond-shaped craft flying approximately 50 feet above the ground

By ROD ALLEN
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Thinly mantled in crumbling asphalt, the *Chemin de Pallot* is a winding, bumpy strip of connective tissue between Inkerman and Highway 11 and — some say — between worlds, too.

Indeed, if an extraterrestrial explorer wanted to check out the planet Earth without attracting a lot of attention this is a pretty good place to do it, for it seems rather overlooked in the grander scheme of things. 'Greater Inkerman' consists of the three

"Nope, haven't seen a thing," grins Denis Savoie as he shovels out the driveway at his home along the Pallot.

Savoie works at the peat moss plant and has been living here for 22 years.

"People are talking about it," he says, "but mostly about what was in the newspaper. I've heard about a blue light hanging around and then going away, but that's about it."

Not everyone wants to talk about it.

"I look up in the sky and I see the moon and the stars," says a woman working in the kitchen at Le Manoir du Lac in Inkerman. "I haven't seen anything else and I don't want to, thank you."

She doesn't want to give her name, either.

Just the same, they're out there — the witnesses that is.

Most of the excitement originated with stories that appeared in the Caraquet-based newspaper *L'Acadie Nouvelle* last month.

"We got a call from (world-renowned UFO researcher) Stanton Friedman in Fredericton the last week of January," says reporter Sylvie Paulin. "He said he'd gotten a call from the RCMP that he had traced to a sighting in Inkerman and was just checking with us to see if we'd heard anything."

"As it happened my editor had also received a call and asked me to check it out. So I talked to the person who saw it and, after we published our first story, we had a lot more calls."

"There were 10 or 15 altogether and they came from all over, Inkerman, Six Roads, as far as Lameque; all saying more or less the same thing. No one wanted their name used, but they all talked about the same diamond shape, the blue lights, sometimes moving very fast but never making any noise."

Though these were her first UFO calls, Paulin says the newspaper probably would not have run the stories without the call from Friedman, the UNB nuclear physicist

tiny hamlets of Inkerman Ferry, Four Roads and Inkerman Centre, all situated about 25 kilometres (15 miles) due north of the Acadian Peninsula's retail hub of Tracadie-Sheila.

Founded in 1855, it bears the name of the principal land battle of the Crimean War for reasons which remain unfathomable, for Inkerman Parish bears little resemblance to southern Russia.

Bound by the Pokemouche River to the north and the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the east, it is a land of forest and bog, which supply seasonal work for the 150 families scattered sparsely along a webwork of roads connecting the villages. The big Fafard peat moss plant on the Pallot Road employs about 300 people about six months a year.

So it comes as no surprise that news of visitors from other worlds is met with both enthusiasm and amusement.

and prominent UFO researcher.

Friedman, an American and a contemporary of the late Carl Sagan in his university years, worked on several high-profile American research projects aimed at putting nuclear reactors in space before he moved to New Brunswick 20 years ago.

Credited with debunking some UFO sightings and crediting others, Friedman is one of a handful of 'UFOlogists' who have credibility with mainstream theorists.

Friedman has lectured on the subject of UFOs all over the world and at the end of his lectures, likes to ask his audience if anyone has seen a UFO.

"Some people raise their hands, and then I ask how many reported the sighting," he says. "Consistently, 90 per cent of the hands go down."

"People don't want to come forward because they're afraid of being ridiculed."

Friedman thinks it's important to spread the news about UFO sightings because more people come forward to talk about what they've seen, even if it's privately. He believes that even if people are worried about what others will think of them when they talk of seeing the unexplainable, most believe that UFOs exist. Learning more about them may one day lead to the "story of the millennium."

Friedman says the Inkerman sightings are not particularly spectacular as these things go, "but I think these are good, solid reports. Can anyone prove this was evidence of extraterrestrial critters? No; unfortunately they don't seem to carry licence plates. However, I do believe those people saw something totally unidentifiable."

There is no doubt this is the stuff dreams are made of.

Though it is broad daylight when I journey north for this story, I can't help but glance toward the heavens as I make my way.

The very isolation of the land seems to lend itself to landing-pad viability.

But can long, dark nights not

also lead to wild flights of the imagination?

Does sheer winter boredom wear away at that thin membrane between the mundane and the magical?

But whether synaptic or galactic no manifestation presents itself during this investigation.

However, it does land me in the parking lot outside the Polyvalente W.A. Losier in Tracadie, where I finally meet the "main man" in the Inkerman sightings, the original Paulin interview that brought the other callers forward.

Our meeting in Tracadie is not clandestine, but a matter of convenience. He's meeting his girlfriend here.

We agree — no names or photographs.

We shake hands, but I maintain my grip, and look him square in the eye.

"Are you making this up?," I ask him.

He looks me straight back.

"No I'm not," he says firmly. "I swear to God I saw something strange."

I see a man in his early 20s, a strong, square jaw, clear brown eyes. A bluff, honest face.

It was Jan. 12, about 9:40 p.m., he tells me.

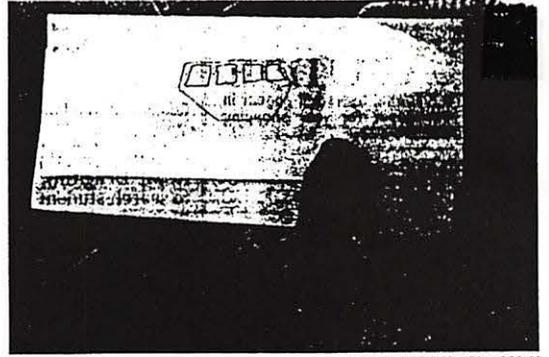
"Me and my girlfriend we were driving home from Shippagan, but we were heading into Maximum Video in Tracadie to get a movie before going back to my house in Four Roads."

"Along *Chemin de Pallot Road* we saw two lights coming down from the sky. My girlfriend says 'if that's a plane it's going to crash.'"

"We slowed down. It was coming down fast. So we're looking and then it's right there by the road. I stopped the car and got out."

"It never really stopped moving, but it crossed the road very slowly, it took about five seconds, and then it came right over our car."

"It was maybe four car-lengths long, and to me it was shaped like a diamond with no tips. On the sides there were four large square white lights, they looked like win-



ROD ALLEN/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

An eyewitness, who requested anonymity, sketched the unidentified flying object he saw in the skies over Inkerman in January.

dows, and between them were small blue lights.

"When it went over us there were four more lights, round ones, I guess on the bottom. They weren't bright. It was only maybe 50 feet above the ground but you didn't see any light on the ground. The lights looked just like putting a piece of paper in front of a light bulb, you know? Like a light shining through paper."

"It went over us, and passed over a house, then it turned 90 degrees and took off over the woods really fast. That was it. We lost sight of it. We wanted to follow it, but it was gone completely. We didn't see it again."

Out there standing on the side of the road as he watched it, he got the feeling it was watching him.

"I wasn't scared, though. I didn't get the shakes 'til I got to my father's house. Then my girlfriend was crying. By then, we were terrified."

He's talked to Friedman and Paulin, and now the *Times & Transcript*, but he hasn't yet decided if there's any point telling anyone else. Though others have called the newspaper in Caraquet no one has identified themselves and he will not be the first to step forward.

"I'm afraid people will say I'm crazy. My girlfriend doesn't want people laughing at us."

Perhaps someone will come forward in time.

After all, word has it the visitor is still around.

"I haven't seen anything myself," says Denis Landry as he pumps gas at the Shell station in Inkerman.

"But somebody said they saw it again just this past Saturday, just past the (Pokemouche River) bridge."

Meanwhile, Denis Savoie is probably like many other residents in Inkerman these days.

"Sure," he says, I go out and take a look up every night, just in case. I'd like to see to it, that's for sure."

"Hey, if you see anything, let me know!"

CEI: flying diamond (see attached).

