

OZI: multi-witnessed large boomerang.

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Unusual objects sighted in Houston - Smithers area

Contributed

A day's shopping in Smithers behind them, three women drove down Highway 16 on that Friday, chatting casually about goings on in Houston, their hometown and the trip's destination.

After they passed through Telkwa, around 8:45 p.m., a light in the sky ahead of the car slowed their conversation. Even though the woolly sky reflected back moonlight glancing off the snow, this light stood out oddly in the luminescent, northeastern night sky.

And when it poked through the cloud cover and descended in their direction, they knew it was not the moon.

The light travelled down from the clouds, levelled off at the tops of the trees and moved in their direction as they continued down the highway at 90 kilometres per hour.

The woman driving slowed the pace of the car to 50 kph. What was this thing? They had to get a better look. But, when the intensity of the light increased as it neared the car, the image of some

sort of craft also began to take shape, startling the driver, causing her to step harder on the gas and propel the car forward.

A boomerang-shaped craft with seven, bright, white lights and two orange lights at either end, appeared. It took a few seconds for the car to pass from under the craft but soon the silvery glow of a winter night sky in the Bulkley Valley closed in around the three women.

That episode ignited one of the most active months of unidentified flying object sightings in the Bulkley Valley in some time. In fact, with 11 reported sightings from 19 different witnesses, the area drew national and international attention from ufologists, said Brian Vike, a ufologist and UFO field investigator based in Houston.

He has been besieged by calls and requests to provide supporting documentation and insight into phenomena. George Filer, the top ufologist in the United States and publisher of the Filer's Files, a weekly newsletter

for sightings, has had him as co-guest on National Public Radio's Jeff Rense Show frequently — particularly in the last month since the Bulkley Valley became the crossroads of interstellar traffic.

The Feb. 1 sighting is on file with the Smithers RCMP but, although they aren't ruling out a craft of some sort, they feel it might be something less glamourous than a UFO.

"Whether it was an aircraft or not hasn't been confirmed," said Cpl. Claudette Garcia.

Each of the reported cases Vike has investigated is unrelated. No sightings have been recorded in March so far; in the same time last month Vike had four already.

"So what happened in February? There was definitely a flap here," he said, using the ufologist term for a proliferation of objects being sighted. "We've had this big flap going on, it's just went through the roof. What is it they're seeing?"

The three Houston

women, all 30-something married adults, were credible witnesses, Vike said, but he could not reveal their names due to his intent to retain the confidentiality of the witnesses.

"With UFOs, people have a funny way of looking down on [witnesses]. A lot of people get made fun of," said Vike. "People start coming up with some alien idea."

Credibility is something which Vike has struggled with since he dedicated himself to investigating UFO sightings four years ago. Working in a field which most rational people consider to be populated by dreamers, charlatans and daft fellows wearing multi-coloured beanies with a propeller affixed on top, he quickly established a name for himself internationally for the thoroughness and detail of his investigations.

And living in a province where people are considered the most likely in the nation to witness an UFO-sighting—according to a survey done by Winnipeg-based ufologist,

Chris Ruskowski, in February—gave the retired Houston Forest Products worker plenty to do.

In the month since the Feb. 1 sighting, Vike has been narrowing the possibilities. Some explanations for the lights were: airport lights; helicopters; small, fixed-wing planes; ski-doos on mountain sides; stars—all

of which he has ruled out for different reasons.

"What I'm working on here, I can't come up with an explanation for it," he admitted. "I've talked to guys across Canada and they can't come up with

anything. Right now, it's unknown, but I've got to try and figure it out for myself or it'll go down as unknown."

Seven federal government and five military hits to his Web site have been recorded since the beginning of February. There was the odd hit to the Web site by

government previously, Vike said, but so many

hits during a time of an inordinate amount of sightings is peculiar.

"So why are they all interested in it if they are not really interested in UFOs to begin with, as they say?" Vike asked.

Some recent sightings in the Bulkley Valley:

- Houston (July, 2001): A fellow walks into the Houston Food Mart telling of an object hovering approximately 500 feet above a transmitting tower on Mount Harry Davis. The object was emitting sparks off its bottom side, shooting down towards the tower.

- Houston to Smithers (Aug., 2001): Husband and wife watched a large white light (object) east of Telkwa. It was reported to be very large and glowed brightly before disappearing rapidly to the north.

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