

Subject: ARTICLE: Many spot 'alien boomerang'
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Many spot 'alien boomerang'
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Some say the strange, boomerang-shaped object seen recently in the Suncoast sky could have been an extraterrestrial spacecraft. Something out of Close Encounters of the Third Kind, perhaps. Others think more down-to-earth (or close to it) explanations are more likely.

Last month, a Hernando County sheriff's deputy and six other witnesses reported seeing the mysterious object over coastal Bayport and Pine Island. After the Times published articles about the sightings, more than a dozen people from Pinellas Park to Hudson called to say they saw something similar.

They usually described seeing an impossibly large and silent object, shaped like an Australian aboriginal weapon. A Stealth fighter, maybe? Swamp gas? Aerobatic planes flying in formation?

Linda Lawrence of Clearwater reported the most recent sighting April 27. About 8:30 p.m., she said, she stood in the driveway with her husband, Randy. She glimpsed a V-shaped object with bluish-white lights in the sky.

"It was moving pretty steady, kind of streaking through the sky," she said. "It was gone in a minute or two. I didn't know what it was. It didn't look like a plane or a helicopter. I didn't immediately think UFO. Tell people you saw a UFO and they think you're crazy."

Gary Posner, founder of the Tampa Bay Skeptics, said he doubts the unidentified flying object was a space hot rod capable of going from zero to light speed in nothing flat.

"I have no idea what the thing is," Posner said. "Maybe someone was playing a joke. Maybe it was a plane in the area for one of the air shows, creating a little UFO mischief. I consider that a much more likely explanation than beings from another planet deciding to hover over Bayport, Florida. "

Jim Greenen disagrees. To say the least. According to Greenen, the 51-year-old owner of what he calls "THE LARGEST UFO MUSEUM IN THE WORLD," the Bayport Boomerang proves extraterrestrials are coming to Earth.

Greenen's museum is on the second floor of a strip mall on tourist-thick International Drive in Orlando. Above a T-shirt shop. Two doors down from a travel agency.

The museum features photographs and stories of UFO sightings from around the world. A videotape called UFO: The Best Evidence plays repeatedly. The swinging restroom doors even have an Outer Limits sort of theme: A surprised, big-headed, big-eyed alien squats in an outhouse while the mother ship hovers above.

"We've got pictures, government documents and stories," Greenen said. "What we don't have is any actual physical evidence. If I did have that, I'd be YANKED OFF A STREET CORNER BY GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE."

He said humanoid aliens have been on Earth for more than 30 years, offering technology in exchange for SECRECY AND THE RIGHT TO MUTILATE THE OCCASIONAL CUD-CHEWER.

UFO investigators Eugene and Jean Brown don't refute the possibility the object is from another world. Alien ships may be attracted to our area by the Crystal River nuclear power plant in Citrus County, they said.

But they don't believe Greenen's theory that aliens live among us, galactic nannies spoon-feeding us technology.

The Browns are UFO investigators with the Pinellas County branch of the Mutual UFO Network. MUFON, a non-profit corporation based in Texas, serves as an international sightings clearinghouse.

Recently, the couple met with witnesses in Pasco and Hernando counties, seeking statements about the strange object. At least two, both fundamentalist Christians, REFUSED TO COOPERATE because they thought the object was the WORK OF THE DEVIL, Mrs. Brown said.

"I think these people are definitely seeing something real," she said. "I don't know about the devil, though."

One caller recommended a Times reporter check the December 1991 issue of Popular Mechanics for a possible explanation.

An article in that issue by Gregory T. Pope describes a top secret U.S. government plane, "a black, silent, boomerang-shaped vehicle that stretches between 600 and 800 feet across and performs circus pony maneuvers at air speeds as low as 20 knots."

Since 1989, the article says, witnesses have reported such an object passing over rural streets and desert wastes. It supposedly uses "constellation camouflage" - lights on the hull that simulate stars. It hovers and rotates in place.

And, of course, it doesn't officially exist.

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