



# Bad UFOs: Skepticism, UFOs, and The Universe

Reflections on UFOs, skepticism, and practically anything else by Robert Sheaffer, author of the book "Bad UFOs," plus the "Psychic Vibrations" column in The Skeptical Inquirer).

Wednesday, July 31, 2019

## A Skeptic at MUFON's 50th Anniversary Symposium, Part 1

This year's MUFON Symposium returned to southern California, in Irvine, so I signed up. Other than it being MUFON's 50th anniversary, there was no over-arching UFOlogical theme, like the much-derided "Secret Space Program" theme in 2017 (although the idea of "time travel" seemed to come up a lot in the talks). I didn't attend the Friday evening banquet with longtime MUFON director John Schuessler, whose theme was "MUFON at Fifty - A Fantastic Journey."



Jim Penniston spins his Tales from the Rendlesham Woods.

The first speaker on Saturday morning was Jim Penniston, whose talk was titled "Rendlesham - Days of Future Past." Penniston's story of encountering a landed craft in the woods outside the U.S. Air Force base at Rendlesham, U.K. in 1980 is well-known in UFOlogy. This case is sometimes referred to as the "British Roswell." The British skeptic Ian Ridpath provides the best **summary and analysis** of this extremely complicated case.

Penniston opened by asking how many people had heard about the Rendlesham case? Practically everybody. "Half of what you know about Rendlesham is wrong!," he claimed. This is obviously a swipe at certain other individuals enjoying the Rendlesham spotlight, and whose tales are incompatible with his. For example, John Burroughs says that he and Penniston were abducted by aliens in the forest, and Larry Warren claims to have seen aliens scampering out of the craft. Penniston related a tale about chasing "the airman" (presumably Burroughs) over a fence and across a farmer's field, for reasons that escape me.

Penniston claims that he saw a landed craft in the woods that night. He paced off its size, it was 9 feet long and it was about 7 1/2 feet tall.. He showed pages from his "real-time response notes" supposedly describing the incident. (Unfortunately, that supposedly "real-time" notebook didn't surface until many years after the incident.) When he approached the craft and placed his hand on

it, he perceived a blinding white light, "and I began to see ones and zeroes." Later he wrote about 16 pages of the binary code in his wonderful notebook. The craft supposedly lifted off silently, and disappeared. Penniston claims to have been required to attend debriefings and special meetings for "containment" of the story, and for "witness control." That's the UFO cover-up, you understand.

Penniston was not a very inspiring speaker, and there was much fumbling with A/V issues. He said that the scribbles of binary in his notebook have been analyzed, and supposedly represent the locations of various UFO-related and mystical sites around the world. He concluded his talk with the idea that the beings in the craft are not extraterrestrials, but somehow are our future selves (who must actually be quite small to fit into the dimensions that he gave of the craft, unless like Dr. Who's time-traveling TARDIS, "it's bigger on the inside").



Clas Svahn

The next speaker was the Swedish researcher and archivist Clas Svahn, who has been studying UFOs since the late 1960s (as have I). He has investigated over 1,500 UFO cases ([here is his very interesting interview of Betty Hill](#)), and has published 30 books. His talk was titled "The Real X-Files and the Mystery of the Ghost Rockets."

The first part of the title refers to the vast UFO and Fortean-related archive Svahn and his colleagues have long been assembling, the [Archives for the Unexplained](#) (AFU). It contains four separate libraries, has 20,000 UFO reports from Sweden, and files from many countries, in addition to books, papers, news clippings, microfilms, films, DVDs, and UFO-related toys ([they even have a store](#) selling surplus materials from their collections). His soon-to-be published book will illustrate the contents of the archives.

The second part of the title refers to the legendary "Ghost Rockets" reportedly seen in Sweden beginning in 1946, the year before Kenneth Arnold's famous sighting. A Ghost Rocket sighting begins with an object in the sky that looks like a rocket. It might fly around and change directions, but then it always crashes into a lake, and disappears. The Swedish military has investigated over 1,000 reports of Ghost Rockets, yet despite numerous searches of lakes involving divers, metal detectors, and sonar, nobody has ever recovered a single artifact from any supposed "ghost rocket." Hence the name - like all ghosts, ghost rockets simply disappear. Svahn showed some photos of an expedition he went on to a very remote, difficult-to-reach lake in Sweden, into which a ghost rocket had been reliably witnessed to plunge. They had to walk miles carrying their tents, supplies, and equipment. Their first few attempts didn't find any fragments, but they plan to go back again with better equipment. If they find any strange metamaterials, [they can always send them to "To The Stars" for expert analysis!](#)



UFO artist and violinist serenades the Symposium attendees

Next to speak was the Brazilian researcher A. J. Geveard, whose title was "UFOs in Brazil - An Official Matter." He has been a full-time UFOlogist since 1985. He said that Brazil's government has an official UFO investigation program, all of whose documents are unclassified and available to the public. Argentina also has government-run UFO investigations, but it is run by skeptics. This is disgraceful, he says!

In Brazil, UFOs seem to want to attack people. Some of the crafts would "suck blood and energy" from people. The only place people were safe was in the church; apparently the aliens recognize the ancient principle of religious Sanctuary. The most dramatic incidents occurred in Varginha, where at least two creatures were captured while still alive. The Military Policeman who captured one of the creatures carried it on his lap to the hospital. He died three weeks later at the age of 23. The dead creatures were taken to Campinas University, presumably to have an alien autopsy. The army and the government, of course, still deny that anything happened at Varginha, but Geveard insists that Varginha was "ten times better than Roswell."

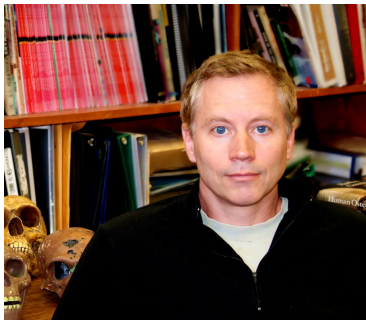


A. J. Geveard.

Next to speak was Paul Stonehill, who was born in the Soviet Union, on "The Turbulent History of Alien Visitors to Russia and the USSR." He told of numerous encounters between the Russian and Soviet military, and aliens. Indeed, UFOs have shot down military jets. **I had heard Stonehill speak before, at the UFO Congress in 2013,** and this sounded much like that same talk:

He explained that there were all kinds of UFOs in the Russian territories, ancient and modern. UFOs are depicted in ancient rock carvings, and there are "out of place" artifacts in ancient rock strata. The KGB was very interested in UFOs and paranormal phenomena, but Stalin had the records destroyed. Later there was an official Soviet military program for recording and studying UFO reports. In 1982, a UFO almost started World War III by initiating a nuclear missile's launch sequence for 15 minutes. Unlike UFOs in the U.S., which are reported to be peaceful and try to interfere with nuclear-tipped ICBMs, in the USSR UFOs apparently are warlike, and try to launch such missiles.

Stonehill also talked quite a bit about USOs - Unidentified Submersible Objects. Soviet divers have found themselves next to underwater humanoids working on recovering something, wearing no breathing apparatus.



Michael P. Masters

The final speaker of the afternoon was anthropologist Michael P. Masters, PhD, who lectured on "[A Multidisciplinary Scientific Approach to the UFO Phenomenon](#)." He is selling not just a book, but T-shirts and such for his "Multidisciplinary" approach, so I guess it must be very important. He started out talking about bipedalism and how significant that was in human evolutionary history. It initiated the brain/behavior feedback loop, he said. This is rare among mammals, and is likely even rarer on earthlike exoplanets. Bipedal animals are constantly fighting gravity, he explained, and since earth is [reportedly] small compared to known exoplanets, which would have stronger gravity, he suggests that bipedalism

would be unlikely to develop. And hence intelligent life. Of course, it's likely that many smaller earth-sized exoplanets exist, but we don't see them because it's easier to detect the larger ones. Also, a creature with six or eight limbs wouldn't need to worry about becoming bipedal. Masters tries to deduce aliens' evolutionary history from witness descriptions, suggesting that he takes such accounts far too literally.

Can you travel backwards in time? Masters thinks that you can. Rotation, he says, creates relativistic frame dragging, warping spacetime. This can ultimately cause light cones to tip over, enabling one to travel to the past. This might, he suggests, give rise to "time tourism" surrounding major historical events. Noting the serious problems with the extraterrestrial hypothesis - the extreme distances between stars, and the supposed difficulty in evolving bipedalism, Masters suggests (like Penniston) that the beings in UFOs are not aliens, but our future selves. He calls them "extratempstrials."



In the vendors' room: the Earth isn't flat - it's Hollow!!

[More to follow]

Robert Sheaffer at [10:01 PM](#)

Share

**5 comments:**

**Clas Svahn** July 31, 2019 at 11:37 PM

It was good to meet you, Robert! And thank you for your book!

Reply

Replies



**Robert Sheaffer** August 1, 2019 at 3:14 PM

Good to meet you, too, Clas. We will stay in touch!

---

Reply



**Ness** August 1, 2019 at 5:31 AM

Is this silly or what? No mature talks on any NEW UFO sightings (are there any?). The presenters are always talking about the 'oldies but goodies' cases! So this is present day ufology? We can't always depend on all those old cases, can we?

Reply



**hurtken** August 1, 2019 at 7:17 AM

LMAOOOO, the usual Charlatans selling their snake oil, and some even get high on their own supply !

Reply

Replies

**Clas Svahn** August 1, 2019 at 3:03 PM

Well, calling me a charlatan does not really sound like an intelligent comment. In what way am I a charlatan? Did you hear my talk?

---

Reply

Enter your comment...



Comment as:

Unknown (Goog ↕)

Sign out

Publish

Preview

☐ Notify me

Keep your comments relevant, and keep them civil! That means no personal attacks will be allowed, by anyone, on anyone. Commenters are welcome to disagree with me, or with other comments, but state your arguments using logic,



and with a civil tone. Comments in violation of these rules will be deleted, and offenders banned.

Comments should be in English, although quotes from foreign-language sources are fine as long as they're relevant, and you explain them.

Anonymous postings are not permitted. If you don't want to use your real name, then make up a name for yourself, and use it consistently.

## Links to this post

[Create a Link](#)

[Home](#)



[View web version](#)

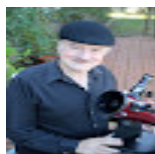
## Your Guardian Ange name

**Do you want to know it now?**

Discover the message he has for y  
Free so do not wait any longer.  
[guardian-angel-messenger.com](http://guardian-angel-messenger.com)

OPEN

### About Me



#### **Robert Sheaffer**

Robert Sheaffer is a writer with a lifelong interest in astronomy and the question of life on other worlds. He is one of the leading skeptical investigators of UFOs, and wrote the "Psychic Vibrations" column in The Skeptical Inquirer for almost 40 years. His book *Psychic Vibrations* reprints some of those columns. His most recent book is *Bad UFOs* (2016), which is also the name of his Blog that casts a skeptical eye on claims about UFOs. He is also the author of "UFO Sightings" (1998), and has appeared on many radio and TV programs. His writings and reviews have appeared in such diverse publications as OMNI, Scientific American, Spaceflight, Astronomy, The Humanist, Free Inquiry, Reason, and others. He is also a founding director and past Chairman of the Bay Area Skeptics, a local skeptics' group in the San Francisco Bay area. Mr. Sheaffer lives near San Diego, California. He has worked as a data communications engineer in the Silicon Valley, and sings in professional opera productions.

[View my complete profile](#)

Powered by [Blogger](#).