

UFO INVESTIGATOR



NICAP ■ SUITE 23, 3535 UNIVERSITY BLVD. WEST ■ KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 29795 ■ (301) 949-1267 ■ FOUNDED 1956

NICAP COMMEMORATES 20th ANNIVERSARY

NICAP is twenty years old this month.

The occasion marks NICAP as one of the oldest and largest UFO organizations still in operation.

In retrospect, the Committee's struggle from a small body of workers to its present status as a world-wide membership association is a story of intense personal commitment. Untold man-hours have been devoted to winning public acceptance of the UFO problem and opposing government suppression of official UFO records and files. In addition, NICAP has collected sighting reports, conducted field investigations, and disseminated information on a scale unsurpassed by any other group.

NICAP's achievements during its twenty-year history span a wealth of activities, including such highly publicized efforts as its role in the University of Colorado study and its engagements with the Air Force. In addition, it has lent support to many scientists, provided extensive assistance to schools and students, and published material not previously available to the public.

It has also developed a nationwide system of volunteer field units to conduct on-site investigations and promote the organization through public contact. These units have functioned as an integral part of the Committee.

As anyone familiar with the history of science knows, new or unexplained phenomena invariably attract attention from fanatics and scoffers, but only rarely from reputable investigators. Certainly, in 1956 when NICAP began, respectability for the subject of UFOs was minimal, despite a great deal of popular curiosity.

As it happened, UFOs were not fated

to succumb to the fanatics and scoffers, thanks in large measure to people like Major Donald Keyhoe, whose third book on UFOs, *The Flying Saucer Conspiracies*, appeared in late 1955. The book called attention to the government's policies and cited multiple examples of Pentagon attempts to cool the fires of '52.

During this time other forces were also at work trying to solve the UFO mystery, among them a scattering of small groups who actively corresponded with each other and held meetings to discuss what was happening.

One theme frequently heard at these conclaves was the need to somehow coordinate the activities of people interested in UFOs, and mount a program to offset the efforts of the Air Force. None of the groups had any firm ideas in this regard, but a lot of talk went on about how a decently funded, large-scale venture might be initiated.

One of the places the idea surfaced from time to time was a little group in Washington, D.C., called the Flying Saucer Discussion Group. Started in the spring of 1956, the group met on a more-or-less monthly basis at the Y.W.C.A. and invited well-known figures in the UFO field to speak. Its moving power was Mrs. Walton C. John, a 67-year-old widow who sporadically published a mimeographed tract called *The Little Listening Post*. Clara John, as everybody called her, was interested in virtually anything novel or topical. One of her favorite subjects was UFOs.

For several years she had been corresponding with an Ohio man named Thomas Townsend Brown, who came to Washington from Cleveland in the 1950s

to seek government funding for a project he called Winterhaven. Winterhaven was to be a study of "electric space propulsion," based on ideas Brown had been developing for a number of years. Since the subject of flying saucers fitted in this spectrum, he had followed the UFO controversy closely and from time to time pondered its possible implications for his propulsion theories.

If any one event can be regarded as the genesis of NICAP, the July 20 meeting of the Flying Saucer Discussion Group is probably it. Although no records are available on what actually transpired, a consensus was reached that a new Washington-based agency was badly needed to investigate UFOs, and should be undertaken as soon as possible. Brown offered to draft a preliminary proposal in time for the next meeting, and to see what could be done to get legal and financial support. Mrs. John said she would help too, by spreading the word and rounding up people who might be interested in the new "concept."

From this point on, events moved very quickly. Brown got to work on a formal organizational plan and by the first week in August had developed a "Tentative Prospectus" for what he called the "National Committee for the Investigation of Aerial Phenomena." At the same time, he took inventory of the resources available to him and the people he knew who might be persuaded to lend assistance.

On August 16, the Flying Saucer Discussion Group met for the fifth time, and Brown presented his prospectus.

At the meeting, Brown had no trouble convincing his fellow saucer "fans" (as

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

Clara John called them) that the prospectus was the blueprint they had all been waiting for. Everyone endorsed it and vowed their support for the project.

On August 29, less than two weeks after the Flying Saucer Group Discussion had given him their endorsement, Brown filed the necessary papers for incorporation of NICAP in the District of Columbia.

On October 24, 1956—NICAP legally came into existence. That day, the D.C. Superintendent of Corporations fixed his seal to NICAP's Certificate of Incorporation and assigned it a permanent number in the Office of Deeds. Brown's dream had finally become a reality.

From this beginning, NICAP still had a long way to go before it achieved its position of preeminence in the field of UFO investigations.

Brown made a good selection of members for the first Board, some of whom were later to play important roles in the work of NICAP. Elected were:

Rev. Albert H. Baller, Congregational minister; Brig. Gen. Thomas B. Catron, retired Army officer; Frank Edwards, radio-TV personality; Col. Robert B. Emerson, physicist; Rear Adm. Delmer S. Fahney, retired Navy officer and pioneer in missile development; Rev. Leon C. LeVan, Christian minister; Charles A. Maney, physics professor; Abraham M. Sonnabend, hotel executive; and Talbot T. Speer, businessman.

None of the men on the original board still serves as a NICAP Governor, although several retain an active interest in NICAP and continue to have contact with it. The last man to resign was Reverend Baller, who left in May of 1971 to devote more time to his profession.

Townsend Brown was unable to get NICAP funded and operating on the scale he had envisioned for the organization, and in January of 1957, he resigned.

Major Donald Keyhoe assumed effective day-to-day control of the organization at the direction of the Board, and finally had the organizational structure to continue his challenging of the Air Force. By the time Keyhoe assumed the directorship, he was already well known to those interested in UFOs as the author of three books on the subject. Keyhoe's plans for NICAP differed from Brown's,

and the organization's emphasis shifted to that of a pressure group to force disclosure of Air Force records on UFOs. This emphasis in effect placed the Air Force in the position of being expert in the field and to some extent forced NICAP to react to the Air Force instead of acting independently of Air Force policy and whims.

NICAP, with Keyhoe in charge and influential people on the board, skirmished with the Air Force from 1957 to 1969. The pressures applied contributed to the government's decision to hold public congressional hearings on the subject in 1968, to declassify UFO reports in 1969, and to place UFO reports in the National Archives for public viewing in 1976.

Throughout NICAP's early history funding of organization programs was a major problem. By mid 1969 the funding problems had reached a crisis stage, and NICAP was on the verge of bankruptcy (see UFO INVESTIGATOR- October 1971). The board of governors met in emergency sessions and decided that NICAP must be reorganized if it was to survive. Major Keyhoe resigned from the director's position which he had held for twelve years and remained in the influential position as a member of the board of governors.

As part of NICAP's reorganization, the board elected to its membership, John L. Acuff. During the later part of 1969, Acuff had been advising NICAP's staff on problems of association management and although not a known figure in the UFO field, he had a solid background in assisting struggling organizations. Mr. Acuff joined the board in January 1970 and was elected Chairman of the Board and President of NICAP in May 1970. By early 1971 the funding crisis had passed, and NICAP was able to return to its chartered goal of conducting scientific research in the UFO field.

Experience has shown that the Air Force does not have the answer to the UFO problem. The 1970 reorganization called for many structural changes within NICAP. Foremost of these changes was the hard and fast policy that a totally scientific approach be followed in the investigation of UFOs. Concurrently with this approach, NICAP was to be operated in adherence with sound business manage-

ment principles. Mr. Acuff, a scientist/businessman, has been responsible for carrying out the directives of the board. In a recent interview he stated that, "With all of the resources at the disposal of the Air Force, they failed to properly use these materials and therefore failed to find the answer to the UFO mystery. NICAP does not have these resources, but they are using what resources they have without being influenced by bias or politics. The answer to discovering what UFOs are lies not in debunking every report as the Air Force did, nor in accepting every report as valid. It lies in utilizing available resources to conduct scientific investigation. NICAP will continue to direct its energies along this line."



T. Townsend Brown



Donald Keyhoe



John L. Acuff

MULTIPLE WITNESSES SIGHT THREE UFOs

CB OPERATORS VERIFY

A research director for an Ohio industrial firm was driving from his office to his home in Michigan, when he noticed a very bright light in the northern sky. The time was approximately 7:30 pm on the evening of September 24th, and the sun was still above the horizon. The object was brilliant to view and appeared at first as an exceedingly bright star. After viewing the object for about twenty minutes, the witness used his CB radio to request information. He soon found that numerous CB'ers were also observing the same phenomenon. No radio interference was noticed by any of the operators.

Upon arriving home at about 8:00 pm, he found that at least six of his neighbors were also observing the object. When binoculars were used, the witnesses could see two spots on the disk which were much more brilliant than the disk itself. These brighter spots were described as being, "Spaced approximately where one's eyes would be on a disk." No movement of the object had been observed from the time it was first sighted.

As the witnesses continued their careful observations they saw, "A very long red streak of a red dot with a trailing red flame, very narrow like a rocket, pass directly under the object." This red object traveled from east to west approximately ten degrees below the brilliant disk which was about thirty-five degrees above the horizon. By now dusk was falling, and the UFO was becoming dimmer as though the sun had been reflecting from the object. The sun descended at 8:14 pm, and the object was invisible to the naked eye, but could still be seen through binoculars. It started moving toward the east and became progressively dimmer until it disappeared from view at 8:24 pm. Immediately after the UFO disappeared from view (approximately 8:30 pm) all of the witnesses compared their independent views, and all agreed that they had identical observations.

While comparing their notes, the ob-

servers saw a very fast moving satellite-like object at 8:30 pm coming from the same vicinity where the first UFO had disappeared. This object traversed the entire sky from the northeast horizon to the southwest horizon in only one minute.

The witnesses continued their observation of the sky and at 8:45 pm, sighted the third and last unexplainable object seen that night. Another disk, brilliant white and star-like in nature was observed almost directly overhead moving at a very rapid speed toward the northeast horizon. When it reached a point about sixty degrees above the horizon, it turned and faded from view.

After the last sighting, the Wayne County Sheriff's Department was called and the officer on duty stated that other

reports had been received. The local city police department was also contacted. A lady officer stated that she and others at the department had also observed the brilliant object at the same time. However, they had passed it off as, "Being the sun reflecting on the north star." (Editor's note: The city police may be very proficient at fighting crime, but their astronomical knowledge does not match the same proficiency).

The Detroit News was called and after about ten minutes said that they had information from the National Weather Bureau that, "A gigantic balloon for special experiments was in the area." The first UFO was moving in the opposite direction from the wind and the other objects were moving much too rapidly to be balloons.

POLICE PHOTOGRAPH UFO

The Danbury, Connecticut Police Department received a report of a UFO from a local woman at about 11:00 pm on August 30, 1976. Her description of an object which was a brilliant white light with red, green, and blue flashing lights was soon confirmed by several patrolmen. The caller also stated that she observed several smaller objects gliding toward the UFO. These objects seemed to disappear into the UFO.

Officer Dodge was dispatched to the location of the observation. Upon his arrival he found seven people standing beside the road observing a UFO, Officer Dodge joined the group and saw several lights flashing in the northwest sky. The lights were red, green, blue and white in color. It was estimated that the object was about twenty to twenty-five miles away. At least three other officers, i.e., Patrolmen Chapman, Winter, and Paust confirmed by the use of police radio, that

they were also observing the object. Officer Dodge returned to his patrol car and moved to two other locations in order to get unobstructed views of the object. Throughout the period of observation, the object was motionless except when it appeared to move up and down and when it left the area moving towards western New York state. Even when viewed through binoculars, the officers were unable to determine the specific shape of the object.

Officer Peter Winter was called to the site by Officer Dodge who reported that, "The object appeared to be stationary with bright flashes of light consisting of the colors, red, green, blue and white being observed on or around the object." After several seconds the object began to move slowly toward the west. The officers present noted several stationary landmarks, checked the position of the object

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

against the landmarks, and continued their observation. It was soon apparent that the UFO was in fact moving. At this time, Officer Winter left the scene to secure a camera. When he returned the object was in the northeast sky, and it was confirmed by other officers that the original UFO had in fact moved across the sky from the northwest to the northeast. All of the officers agreed that the observed lights were not aircraft navigation lights nor were they from any object that they could identify. It was also agreed that the source of the lights was a considerable distance away. Officer Winter set up his camera (a 35mm SLR with a 600mm lens) using Tri-X film exposed at an ASA of 800. A series of time exposures were made. The photographs clearly show a stationary brilliant object (see Figure #1). During the filming the object started moving away at a slow rate of speed (see figure #2).



FIGURE #1:
Enlarged photograph of stationary UFO.
Streaks on time exposure are stars.



At this time each year, many members are considering tax planning for their 1976 income. May we suggest that you consider a tax-deductible donation for NICAP as part of your planning. NICAP's tax exempt status allows donors to deduct donations from their personal or corporate taxable income. When filing with IRS, note that your donation to NICAP was made to a 501(C) 3 tax exempt organization.

Any amount is helpful and will enable NICAP to start research projects which would otherwise remain undone due to lack of funds.

THINK CHRISTMAS: Give a NICAP membership to all those people on your list for whom you can never seem to find the right gift.



FIGURE #2:
Enlarged photograph of moving UFO.