

M S M a i l

DATE-TIME 09 August 96 14:38
FROM Marsh, Thomas S.
CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED
SUBJECT I wonder what the rents are like.... [UNCLASSIFIED]
TO Alijanil, Leyla
Bakke, Kyle D.
Carter, Michael E.
Hasman, Thomas M.
CARBON_COPY NO CC's on THIS MESSAGE
TEXT_BODY

CRESTONE, Colo. (AP) This Shangri-la for New Age spiritualists, carved out of a failed subdivision, is having trouble with more earthly matters.

One of the directors has been suspended for throwing chairs at his colleagues on the Baca Grande Property Owner's Association board.

The dispute stems partly from how much governing there should be at all. Some residents are pushing for more controls on development, while some owners would like even fewer controls.

"There will always be trouble in any paradise. I expect all the normal human behaviors even in a community with spiritual aspirations," says Saguache County Commissioner Robert Philleo, who lives in the unincorporated area called the Baca Grande.

Religious groups began moving into the Baca Grande beneath 14,294-foot Crestone Peak in the Sangre de Cristo, or Blood of Christ Mountains, in the late 1970s when Canadian industrialist Maurice Strong and his wife, Hanne, began offering them free land for retreats, hermitages or eco-villages.

The land became available when plans for a huge subdivision fell through. Even now only about 330 of 5,600 lots are occupied.

Monks and nuns created a Carmelite Catholic Monastery. Zen Buddhists developed a Zen Center, monastery and retreat. Indian, Tibetan, Indonesian, Korean and other sects also built centers in the pinon pines high above Crestone.

The area soon gained a reputation as a holy spot, or power center, where the spiritual forces of the universe converge. Reports of UFO sightings and cattle mutilations brought more attention.

In 1993, a woman claiming to have talked with aliens by computer proposed building a 396-foot pink pyramid. Supporters of the pyramid, called the "Pink Pyramid People," flocked to the area.

The established religious groups joined with residents of the

town of Crestone, population 50, to oppose the plan, and nothing ever came of it.

But the area has become increasingly popular, both for New Agers and, as in many other Colorado mountain communities, people fleeing urban areas.

Saguache County's population grew 8 percent last year, and much of it was in Baca Grande or Crestone, elevation 8,000 feet, whose north-south streets are named after trees and east-west routes after minerals.

"There is a little animosity against people coming from Boulder, Santa Fe, N.M., and California. They disrupt us a little bit. They're swamping us," said Frank Snider, whose ownership of half a dozen businesses probably qualifies him as Crestone's tycoon.

"We never used to see the sheriff. Now there's a cop here every evening and he doesn't come without giving a ticket," said Snider, whose white beard nearly reaches his waist.

His wife, Katie, who is on the Crestone Town Council, said the New Age image attracts people not prepared to cope with bitterly cold winters or the lack of jobs. She says one man has been working on building an earth ship of tires for seven years but it still looks like junk.

Philleo said people come looking for a commune.

Mrs. Snider said, "They have that Crestone glow. They're going to sell everything they own and live in Utopia." She added: "This is a very normal place."

The Roadkill Cafe, in one of the buildings owned by Snider, promises "Same Day Service, No Extra Charge." Ostrich burgers are available until 4 p.m.

Though the Sniders argue Crestone is totally distinct from Baca Grande, the Roadkill's community bulletin board offers Moonlight Yoga Dream Group sessions, Sacred Passages, Tai Chi, a Gong Massage Center and Hypnosis Therapy, among others. An astrologer's business card is tacked next to one for Hangman Excavations.

A note in the unisex bathroom warns: "If you forget to unlock the back door when you leave tonight you will be abducted by strange reptilian extraterrestrials who will use you for bizarre sexual experiments (really)."

In general, the townspeople seem to get along well enough with the spiritualists. They also "make a wad of money off them," Philleo said.

Requests for welfare and other forms of assistance are lower in the Crestone area than other parts of the county, Philleo said.

"The quality of life in the area is enhanced by the quality of the people in the religious institutions," he said.

Richard Baker, roshi or teacher to those who come to the Zen center to meditate, said in theory what lies outside the monastery should make no difference. Yet, he adds, "Practicing here makes a difference. The beauty makes it satisfying."

Lito Tjada-Flores, author of several books on skiing, moved here

from Telluride partly to escape the constant confrontations so common in Colorado resort towns.

``The real beauty is that nothing is happening here. The fact that there are religious groups existing side by side here compared to other places where they are at each other's throats," he said, as a Tibetan prayer flag or wind horse fluttered outside his picture windows.

Legend holds that when the wind horses flutter they send prayers out into the world.

``That's a good destiny (for this place) to be a retreat spot," Tjada-Flores said.

^End ADV for Aug. 10-11<

APW- 08/09/96 13:23:00

DIST:

M S M a i l

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FROM Marsh, Thomas S.
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^Alien Believers Think Missing Man Abducted By Supernatural Force<
^Eds: story moved previously on Arizona state wire; NOTE CONTENTS of
20th-21st grafs<

^By MARK SHAFFER=

^The Arizona Republic=

PHOENIX (AP) They came from outer space 20 years ago and
hauled poor ol' Travis Walton away from the pine woods of the
Mogollon Rim for five days.

Now, they're back, say some who study unidentified flying
objects. This time, they landed only about 10 miles, as the UFO
flies, from where phenomenon followers say Walton was beamed up by
a blue light and immortalized in the 1993 movie ``Fire in the
Sky."

In the latest incident, last year, Devin Williams was hauling an
18-wheeler full of lettuce and strawberries from Los Angeles to
Kansas on Interstate 40 in northern Arizona when something strange,
and perhaps tragic, happened to him.

Williams veered off the interstate at Winslow and sped 40 miles
down Arizona Highway 87 to the Blue Ridge Ranger Station. Then, he
barreled another 15 miles down a rough Forest Service dirt road, at
times menacingly circling campers or running other motorists off
the road, before getting stuck in mud near the edge of the Rim.

He got out of the truck, got on his knees and started talking to
a tree.

Later, he waved a \$20 bill wildly in the air and threw rocks at
people who tried to approach him. He pointed to a rock and said he
was about to start a fire with it.

But it wasn't as much what he did as what he said later that got
UFO enthusiasts all excited.

One man approached Williams and asked him about his bizarre
conduct.

``He said, `They made me do it,'" said Bruce Cornish, a

Coconino County deputy sheriff, adding that Williams didn't explain who "they" were.

Then, the 28-year-old truck driver disappeared, leaving behind his semi and two things he was said to never part with: a police scanner and his favorite hat.

He hasn't been seen for 14 months.

Some speculate that he lost his way while wandering in the woods and died of exposure. But that's not the type of scenario that has really loosened lips in Rim country.

Rather, more unworldly explanations have circled about Williams, just as they have about Walton, a Snowflake resident who wrote about his 1975 experiences with alien creatures in a book later made into the movie. Walton said the aliens took him away for almost a week before dropping him off near a telephone booth in Heber.

"This is really kind of a curious incident," Walton said about Williams' disappearance. "Of course, we've been having all kinds of weird things up here.

"Three different people told me they saw a big, orange object hit the ground right before that big forest fire started over near Pinedale last month."

In other words: a spaceship crash. The Forest Service blamed a lightning strike for starting the 1,800-acre Cottonwood fire.

But Charlie Green of Tucson, who says he speaks with more than a modicum of authority after having 16 "alien encounters" during the past 55 years, sees a lot of similarities between the Williams and Walton cases.

"The whole crazy thing seems to tie in to what happened to Travis (Walton), but the thing that baffles me is that they always bring their victims back within a reasonable time," said Green, a Tucson insurance salesman and a member of a Texas group called the Mutual UFO Network.

Not that Green doesn't see a reason why Williams wouldn't be taken away for a while. There is a reason, and it has to do with the birds and the bees, he said.

"He's the right age. This all has to do with pure ol' semen," Green said.

"They take the semen from the males and the ovaries from females, and mix it with alien juice to make a half breed.

"But I still don't understand why he wasn't brought back."

Tom Taylor of Tempe, state director of the UFO network, says he understands. That's because he said Williams was never taken by little green men.

"We had someone research this thoroughly, and that was the conclusion," he said. "Just because he said 'they' doesn't mean 'they aliens.'"

Then, what happened to Williams?

Taylor said, "Only the gods know."

^End Adv for Weekend Editions Aug. 10-11<

APW- 08/07/96 18:55:00
DIST: