

'Close encounters' said common

By Martin Neary

Sometimes aircraft are called flying saucers and sometimes UFOs, or unidentified flying objects, when their origins and purposes are unknown. The idea is basically the same.

When one hears the term UFO, pictures of little green men or the motion pictures "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" and "E.T." may come to mind. The subject is mysterious and controversial, and also was the subject of a speech presented by the University Program Council's Talks and Topics Committee Thursday evening in the Nebraska Union Ballroom.

J. Allen Hynek, director of the Center for UFO Studies in Luna, N.M., and former consultant to the Air Force, spoke on the "latest findings in the UFO phenomenon" to a crowd of about 150. Hynek, former chairman of the astronomy department at Northwestern University and now professor emeritus, said the UFO phenomenon is worthy of serious scientific study.

"When the solution to the UFO problem comes, I think it will be much more exciting than, say, our visits to the moon," Hynek said. Throughout the speech, he cited "unexplained UFO experiences" and rated each case as a close encounter of either the first, second or third kind.

A close encounter of the third kind is when the witness actually sees or comes into contact with a "creature," while a close encounter of the second kind leaves evidence behind. Hynek said a close encounter of the first kind occurs when a UFO is sighted.

Encounters of the second and third kind can and do happen, Hynek said, and are very physical. For every example given, there are hundreds of others, he added.

Only those things that remain unexplained after a due process of investigation are considered UFOs, Hynek said, adding that the UFO phenomenon seems to be isolated in space and time.

He cited one case of a silvery football-shaped object sighted in central Illinois and a classic case in Loveland, Texas, where two witnesses reported a glowing, orange, egg-shaped object that stopped their car engines.

The Center for UFO Studies examines many cases and receives reports of an average of three to four new experiences a day, he said.

The greatest chance of seeing a UFO is late at night while driving, Hynek said, and he told of several encounters across the country and in foreign countries.

Hynek said investigators are faced with "the fundamental question" — "can we believe?" He said he was a complete skeptic at first.

"It was the caliber of the witnesses that convinced me that something was going on," he said.

Hardened skeptics can't deny reports from all over the world for more than 35 years, Hynek said.

Hynek will speak Saturday on East Campus in a program that will include speeches on the legendary Big-foot and cattle mutilations.

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RHA supports appeals change

Richard McKinnon, Residence Hall Association advisor, discussed a change in freshman housing procedures at Thursday night's meeting in the Harper Multipurpose Room.

Currently, freshmen who want to live off campus must fill out an application, and the request is either accepted or refused by three administrators of the department of housing, McKinnon said.

McKinnon proposed a new process where one administrator would be allowed to make the decision, and the person could appeal the decision if the request is denied.

The appeals board would be composed of a group of administrators and also some students from the residence halls, he said.

"This would have the students involved in the decision-making process," McKinnon said. "Right now, the appeal is made to the people who made the decision."

McKinnon said that about eight students he requested to live off campus this year, and three of them were refused.

Students who have lived in a residence hall for one year or are sophomores do not need the housing department's permission to move off campus, he said. However, McKinnon added that if the student is under the age of 20 on Oct. 1, the student does need parental permission.

RHA passed a resolution made by member Richard Burke to support McKinnon's proposed change in freshman housing procedures.

A motion made by RHA member Bill Wisell to form an ad hoc committee to investigate proposed street closings also was passed.

The committee may propose alternatives such as traffic lights or speed bumps, to slow traffic until the city decided upon a solution, said Melba Petrie, RHA president.

RHA passed a resolution to organize town-hall meetings to discuss residence hall food quality and service. The first meeting will be held at the end of November.

Petrie proposed that the Residence Bill of Rights be revised so that students can understand them.

McKinnon said he would help with the revision. He added that it must be approved by the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic.

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