

Mountain Fresh Rainiers Sighted Near Rising City



Dr. Heinrich Tschutter of the Platte River Citizens' Committee on Carbonated Phenomena displays a recent photograph of a Rainier seen near Wahoo.

SEWARD — New sightings of Mountain Fresh Rainiers across much of eastern Nebraska have now been confirmed by several unbiased sources, according to Dr. Heinrich Tschutter, chairman of the Platte River Citizens' Committee on Carbonated Phenomena. Tschutter told a hastily-called press conference in Swedehome yesterday that MFR's have been "positively identified" in the region to the south and east of the Platte. And, he added, sightings in Omaha itself "are just a matter of time."

Rumors concerning the imminent appearance of MFR's in the area have been circulating for months, and yesterday's press conference was obviously designed to dispel all doubts. Appearing with Tschutter were several eyewitnesses and independent experts, many of whom brought authentic-looking photographs.



Mary Elizabeth Welkins, shown here with her husband Leonardo, told newsmen: "All I know is I saw the things, and that's it."



Wally "Buzz" Entropo shows sketches of Mountain Fresh Rainiers he made along the Niobrara during 1974.

"This time they can be identified absolutely," claimed Dr. Tschutter. "Rainiers are of two distinct species — one that appears to be shiny and metallic, and is almost perfectly cylindrical. The other is dark brown, translucent, and also cylindrical, but with a protruding neck or cap."

Tschutter said that the markings of both species were almost identical: a large red "R" in script, followed by the word "ainier," the combination thought to refer to the mountain out in Washington State, traditionally considered the place of origin for all MFR's. But other experts challenged Tschutter's interpretation, several conjecturing that "ainier" is a reference to the light, fresh, golden, carbonated contents of MFR's. Arguing this point convincingly was Wally "Buzz" Entropo, an MFR-tracker for over 20 years, who claims to have lived among one group of Rainiers in the remote Niobrara region.

"I've even tasted them," stated Entropo, "and I'll tell you, they are friendly and extremely refreshing. But I found no evidence convincing me that the 'R' and 'ainier' together make up any larger word."

Tschutter had no comment regarding Entropo's remarks, but he dismissed as "insufficiently documented" the recent spate of sightings of a variant species marked "Rainier Light."

Other eyewitnesses who spoke included Leonardo and Mary Elizabeth Welkins of the Branched Oak Lake area. The Welkins claim to have seen as many as six Rainiers at one time. "It was just before dark," said the retired accountant. "We were walking next to this horse corral. Suddenly the horses began kicking and whinnying. Dogs began to howl. Mary Elizabeth shouted, 'I see it! I see it!'"

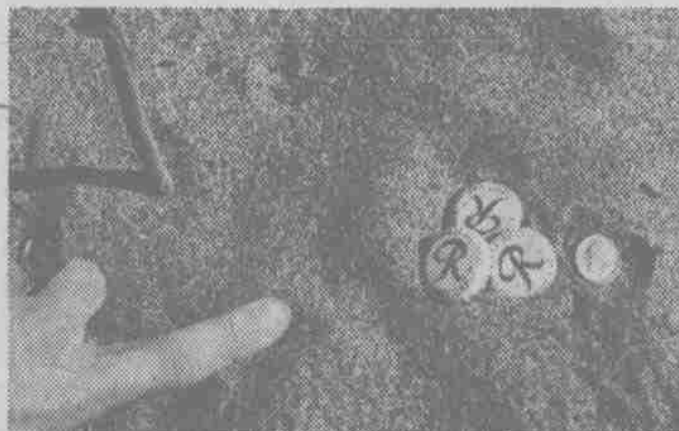
"As we got closer, we could make out six of them in very tight formation. They were the brown ones, and we could read the 'R's' on their sides clear as day. They made no sounds as they charged past us."

Dr. Tschutter visited the couple a few days after the sighting was reported. "When I left," he said, "I was more puzzled than when I arrived," because the Welkins were the first to report multiple MFR's. "But they obviously didn't make up the story."

Nonetheless, the Welkins took a terrific ribbing from their friends, they reported. "Even my mother scoffed at us," said Mrs. Welkins. "Things were pretty unbearable for a while, but all I know is I saw the things, and that's it."

All the speakers agreed that Rainiers are friendly to humans, and are even thought to impart a feeling of refreshment and well-being to those with whom they come in contact. Tschutter concluded by saying that multiple MFR sightings had since been verified by, among others, a 21-year-old college student and a law enforcement officer.

"We can all expect to see Rainiers throughout eastern Nebraska in the weeks to come, all the way from Kearney to Council Bluffs," said Tschutter. "And I for one am as pleased as I can be."



These remains, thought to be left by MFR's, were found near Palmyra.