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CONTENTS

The Baker Sighting: Richard Bonenfant	2
The Cyrus Case: G. Cattiau	7
The Twilight Side of a UFO Encounter: Brent M. Raynes ..	11
The Maine UFO Encounter: Shirley M. Fickett ..	14
Psychiatric-paranormal aspects of the Maine encounter: Dr. B.E. Schwarz ..	18
Book Review: Flight towards Reality: C.H. Gibbs-Smith ..	22
Is the Earth a Culture Medium: Dr. B.E. Finch	24
On the Sirius Mystery: Sir Victor Goddard	25
The Editor goes West: Charles Bowen	26
'Snails' are still around—II: Ernst Berger	29
Mail Bag	32
World Round-up	iii

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page ii of cover

WE'RE ALL AMATEURS

OUR valued contributor Mrs. Ann Druffel has taken exception to "...Scientists prominent in the field of ufology" who take it for granted that "scientists" and not "amateurs" have the innate ability to seek the truth [and presumably to recognise it when they find it]. The implication, therefore, being that that is bad luck for the subject because it is the "amateurs" who have handled most UFO research during the past three decades [irreverently we cannot forbear the comment that perhaps we should thank God for those amateurs when we consider the mess the U.S. Air Force professionals and some of their hired university professionals made of it]. Indeed Mrs. Druffel — a busy Californian housewife who has somehow found time to raise a family and carry on research in the UFO field, and many of whose excellent reports have already appeared in our pages — feels so strongly about this that we have found space in this issue for her to let off steam.

There may be some who will think Mrs. Druffel a little over-sensitive. Your Editor, however, feels a degree of sympathy for his charming contributor, for quite recently he too has been called "over-sensitive" — admittedly in the nicest possible way — a fault which could well have been nurtured during the last twelve years by those other far less pleasant things he has been called. And all too often those brickbats have been aimed at him by "professionals" and others who know the answer to the UFO mystery without even having studied the problem. In view of this we know just how frustrated she must feel when, after all her sterling efforts, she is prompted to "have a go" at the insensitive ones.

So, well said, Mrs. Druffel! We, — and that includes those among us who are professionals although, be it noted, in other fields, — are *all* amateurs in the realm of the study of UFO reports. However, as has been printed in our pages, and as has been said at the recent Chicago meeting of the Center for UFO Studies, we clearly need the skills and talents of the dedicated, high-powered band of devotees who are Scientists in other fields. It is they who can help us the easier to check on the validity of many of the claims which are made by witnesses or, for example, to help us study everything that makes the witness "tick," and why he or she "ticked" in that particular manner at the time of the incident.

Nevertheless, the Scientists among us should resist any temptation to set themselves aside from the others, from the "amateurs," the historians, archaeologists, theologians, anthropologists and linguists. We all have a part to play in this fascinating study, and the subject under study might well be bigger and more complex than anyone considered likely only a few years ago.

All in all we feel that that study requires not only the application of the cold logical approach of scientific reason, but also the understanding that comes of long acquaintance with the humanities.