

McMenamins UFO Festival Features Hills' Abduction

Many lectures, events and free family activities this weekend in historic McMinnville

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

After New Hampshire residents Betty and Barney Hill were forced by circumstance to publicly recount their story of being abducted by extraterrestrials, their lives changed forever.

As an interracial couple during the Civil Rights era, they were already familiar with stress and public pressure. But the unexplained incident in 1961 triggered their even deeper fear that people would think they were "crazy" — after all, theirs was the first alleged alien abduction ever publicly reported.

Hear the couple's story from their niece Kathleen Marden this weekend at the McMenamins UFO Festival, which runs Thursday through Sunday, May 14-17, at the extraterrestrial-themed Hotel Oregon in McMinnville.

The event is held there to commemorate one of the most famous incidents in world UFO history — the

snapping of two black and white photographs of what look like a flying saucer, taken in 1950 by a Willamette Valley farmer named Paul Trent.

In addition to ticketed lectures, the weekend features free, family friendly live music, the famous tinfoil hat parade through McMinnville's old town, contests, a fun run and a movie.

Featured speakers include Marden, one of the most famous alien abduction researchers in the world; Canadian historian Grant Cameron — an expert on US Presidents' knowledge of UFO activity — speaking on the question of whether UFOs can affect human consciousness; Stanton T. Friedman, "the godfather of 'ufology,'" and UFO Reporting Center Director Peter Davenport.

A former nuclear physicist, Friedman was the first "civilian" to investigate the Roswell, New Mexico site where a UFO was believed to have crashed in 1947 (US government officials now say it was a string of high



Betty and Barney Hill with their dog Desley

altitude balloons equipped with microphones to detect suspected Soviet bomb tests, called Project Mogul).

For enthusiasts, Friedman's lecture this year is extra important because the 80-year-old scholar is set to speak for the first time about "the Majestic 12," allegedly a panel of scientists convened by the US

government in 1947 to investigate UFO sightings.

Hills says the Saturday night panel discussion will be a key event for anyone with questions about UFO phenomena because all the experts will be on hand to answer questions from the public.

The Skanner News spoke with Marden about her aunt and uncle and why their story is important.

The Skanner News: What were your aunt and uncle like?

iting Niagara Falls, they drove up to Toronto and then on to Montréal the following day. They had been sightseeing for the afternoon and decided to head back to New Hampshire to their home on the seacoast. They heard there was a hurricane coming and so they wanted to put it where their lawn chairs and get the house ready for this hurricane they might have.

They were driving home through the night, when at about 10 o'clock Betty saw a light in the sky. She continued watching it, it grew larger and larger and it was traveling along beside the car. They got out and they looked at this thing three separate times. On the third time it came down so low that it actually stopped about 200 feet about their vehicle. It was just right

just drove home. When they arrived home they realized that they were later than they anticipated, and they discovered that there was some physical evidence that shouldn't have been there. Betty's dress was torn, and Barney's shoes were deeply scuffed though he was a meticulous dresser.

Their watches had stopped working. There were shiny spots on the trunk of the car that hadn't been there.

This started to bother Barney especially, and he was eventually referred to Dr. Benjamin Simon, who is a very prominent psychiatrist in Boston. He and Betty underwent hypnosis separately for a period of six months. At the end of each session Dr. Simon instilled amnesia again for this two hour period of missing time

The Saturday night panel discussion will be a key event for anyone with questions about UFO phenomena because all the experts will be on hand to answer questions from the public

We honor the many accomplishments of African Americans.

It is our primary goal as a labor union to better the lives of all people working in the building trades through advocacy, civil demonstration, and the long-held belief that workers deserve a "family wage" - fair pay for an honest day's work.



A family wage, and the benefits that go with it, not only strengthens families, but also allows our communities to become stronger, more cohesive, and more responsive to their citizens' needs.

Our family wage agenda reflects our commitment to people working in the building trades, and to workers everywhere. In this small way, we are doing our part to help people achieve the American Dream. This dream that workers can hold dear regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, creed, or religious beliefs.

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters

Representing more than 5,000 construction workers in Oregon State.

Do you want to know more about becoming a Union carpenter?



Go to our website at www.nwcarpenters.org

Offices in Portland
1636 East Burnside
Portland, OR 97214
503.261.1862 • 800.974.9052

Headquarters in Kent, WA
25120 Pacific Hwy S, Ste 200
Kent, WA 98032
253.945.8800 • 800.573.8333

Marsden: Well, they were the most unlikely experiencers if you could ever meet. Betty was a social worker for the state of New Hampshire; Barney worked for the post office. But both were very actively involved in community affairs and the civil rights movement. They helped to set up the Rockingham County Community Action program in New Hampshire. Barney was first chairman of the executive board for that organization. He was given an award by Sargent Shriver (a statesman and diplomat, the brother in law of President John F. Kennedy and first director of the Office of Economic Opportunity) for his work. They were politically involved in this state. He was appointed to the US Civil Rights Commission State Advisory Committee. So they were very politically active and socially involved.

Also they were very active members of the Unitarian church, and they event went to the United Nations with their church. That is what they were interested in. They had no interest in UFOs.

They were good, honest, down to earth individuals.

TSN: What actually happened to Betty and Barney?

Marsden: What happened is Betty and Barney took a few days off from work to go on a short trip to Niagara Falls; Betty had never been there. After vis-

over their head.

Barney took his binoculars — remember they were sightseeing so they had binoculars in the car — and he stepped out and looked up at this thing as Betty sat in the passenger seat looking at it. They could see that it was a large silent hovering disc just sitting there in the sky above them.

Then it shifted location to an adjacent field and it descended about 100 feet from Barney; he walked toward it. He looked up through the binoculars and he saw figures inside that craft that he stated to Walter Webb, the original investigator from NICAP, were "somehow not human." They frightened him terribly. And he ran back to the vehicle because he feared he was going to be captured. And he got into the car and started speeding down the highway. He shouted to Betty to look up and see if she could see the craft, because as he was running back to the car he noticed that it appeared to be following him.

The next thing they knew they were 35 miles down the road and they had no idea how they had gotten there. They didn't remember driving that stretch of road. They had spotty memories of encountering a roadblock somewhere along the way, of observing a fiery orb on the ground. But nothing else.

They heard another series of buzzing sounds, they didn't see the UFO. And they

that they had. Then he let them listen to each other's statement at the end.

What they discovered is that they told precisely the same story of being stopped, of being taken aboard a craft, being given a very strange kind of examination and then released by these nonhumans that he had actually seen for the first time when he looked up at that UFO as he was standing in the field in Lincoln New Hampshire.

Dr. Simon's recordings helped relieve Barney's anxiety about all of this. But it was all to remain a secret. Such a weird story — You don't want anyone to think that you're crazy. So it was going to remain with some scientists, with some investigators with the family, and not be told to the public.

Marden's book is "Captured: The Betty and Barney Hill UFO Experience." Read more about her at www.kathleen-marden.com.

A made for TV movie about the Hills, "The UFO Incident," starred James Earl Jones and Estelle Parsons; the X-Files episode titled, "Jose Chung's From Outer Space" includes part of their story; and a television series based on their lives that aired in the mid-1990s was called "Dark Skies."

Find out more about the McMenamins UFO Festival at www.ufofest.com.