

Latest News on the HOAX Signal.

The latest news is that the net is buzzing with claims that a signal has been detected coming from the region of EQ Pegasi. These claims were posted on the SETI League's SETI net email list server towards the end of October 1998. The story goes that a private researcher in the U.K. using a 10m Antenna owned by his company was doing his own Seti project when he got a "Hit" from the region near EQ Pegasi. The "Signal" was supposedly a narrow band emission on a frequency just above the Hydrogen Line.

This person even provided plots from FFTDSP and other software as proof of the detection. Many of the SETI Leagues radio telescope operators use these software packages to display the noise band from the receiver and look for coherent signals that track across the screen. The thumbnail below is a sample of the type of picture we sometimes see on our screens. It is a "Waterfall" display that shows a track that betrays a signal detected by the system. This signal was in fact caused by some Radio Frequency Interference that just happened to be present near where our receiver was tuned.

Our SETI receiver and computer systems get many false detection's during the course of a normal weeks operation scanning the Hydrogen Line and nearby frequencies. To the untrained observer the track could be the sign of an alien radio transmission. The Hoaxer, who called himself Paul Dore, provided data to back up a "plausible" story about how he set up his equipment and software at work and eventually made the "detection" of the signal coming from the EQ Pegasi star system. As the story unfolded, many Seti specialists started to pick holes in the story. These holes were exploited by our group and the hoaxer dreamed up explanations to try and explain reasons why his data looked flawed. As we homed in on the fabricated data, the hoaxer introduced the Government. The Government is the Ace of Spades when it comes to further explanations . The famous MIB had told him to "shut up" about the detection. The rest of the story can be found on the ART BELL pages at www.artbell.com for anyone who wants to read more about this hoax.

The furore eventually died down but not without it's casualties. The real Mr. Paul Dore contacted me and said that he was going to track down the person who used his name in a fraudulent manner. The CSIRO's Mr. Ray Norris from the ATCA Radio Observatory in NSW Australia, was enticed into the hoax and provided some observational data and confirmed the existence of a satellite signal transmitting on a nearby frequency that the hoaxer claimed he got his signal on. This "confirmation" was used against Ray as proof of the "Government cover up".

We here at the SETI Research & Community Development Institute, wish to strongly point out that Australia's CSIRO is an organisation that is beyond reproach. It is one of the premier research institutions in the world. Its staff members are fine people and the quality of their research results are second to none. I personally know many of the CSIRO's researchers and the claims that

they have covered up the discovery of an alien radio transmission are totally false.

The real Mr. Paul Dore has been embarrassed with his name plastered all over the Internet and news media by person(s) whose morals are extremely questionable.

Why would anyone do such a thing?

The reasons for such a sham being perpetrated on the world can only do the cause of SETI harm. We can only think that we were the targets of this hoax in an attempt to discredit our work. The unfortunate inclusion of the CSIRO and Mr. Paul Dore are probably thought of as "casualties of war" by the hoxers, who, it seams, will go to any lengths to cause Seti harm.

The response to the hoax by the Seti community during the initial stages of this event were very professional and used scientific logic to analyze the claims. The fact that we were able to pick holes in the "data" at a very early stage of this hoax is to the credit of those involved.

The adoption of the SETI Detection Protocol policy by the Seti League and its members, allowed us to apply the rigorous question and answer system developed by the scientific community for such an event. We passed the test with flying colours. Good work Argus Participants.

As the events of this past few weeks die down, we here at Seti have got on with our work searching the radio spectrum for some real signals that we are sure must be out there.



