

# Dutch psychic spends time searching for area ghosts

By LINDA REED

When John Oosterdag was a baby in Holland his mother often felt a "presence" when she went into the nursery.

The household he knew as a child was steeped in strange Allan Spraggett occurrences. His great-grandfather was a seer. He would waken sad and accurately predict a death before sundown.

As John grew older he had a few odd experiences. When Dutch society was afire with the news of a birth of a baby in the Royal family young John predicted the correct sex and birthdate of Princess Beatrice.

As a high school student he went with a youth group on holidays to a rural castle.

## TOMBSTONE

There was a 200-acre woods surrounding the castle which the youths explored. Local folk told them it was haunted and said ghostly apparitions had been seen at a grave in the woods. Others heard the sound of an old pump beside the tombstone.

"Well, what a thing to tell some boys. That night we snuck away from our leaders and stole into the woods in pajamas. We found the grave which was enclosed in a thick concrete structure. While we stood around trying to scare each other we heard the creaking of a pump handle. I turned and saw an old man with a fluorescent dress standing at the pump. We froze and then screamed and started to run but there was no place to go because the woods was too thick. Two police constables on patrol sent some dogs into the woods which leapt up and knocked us down. I don't know why I didn't die of fright."

After that psychic phenomenon didn't often present itself to John. A rather meaningless incident occurred at 18 when he was working as a senior technician. He dreamt that a co-worker was sweeping the floor and suddenly put his broom through the window.

## DREAM

"I thought it was a stupid dream because my co-worker

was a senior technician and neither of us had swept the floor for many years. That morning when I went to work the junior technicians were at a conference. Near closing time I was up on a ladder working with a cable and the co-worker started to sweep the floor. I flicked the cable at him and he poked his broom through the window. I realized I had dreamt it all. It makes you wonder if there is any sense planning anything or if you have any control over your life."

As a youth he often played games with friends interested in parapsychology. One day his friend said he'd send mental messages at 9:30 p.m. John closed his eyes and concentrated and came up with a piece of white paper, pretzel, hammer and a bucket of water. When he met his friend he discovered the objects were a peppermint, a woven chair, an axe and a kettle of water.

## ERINDALE

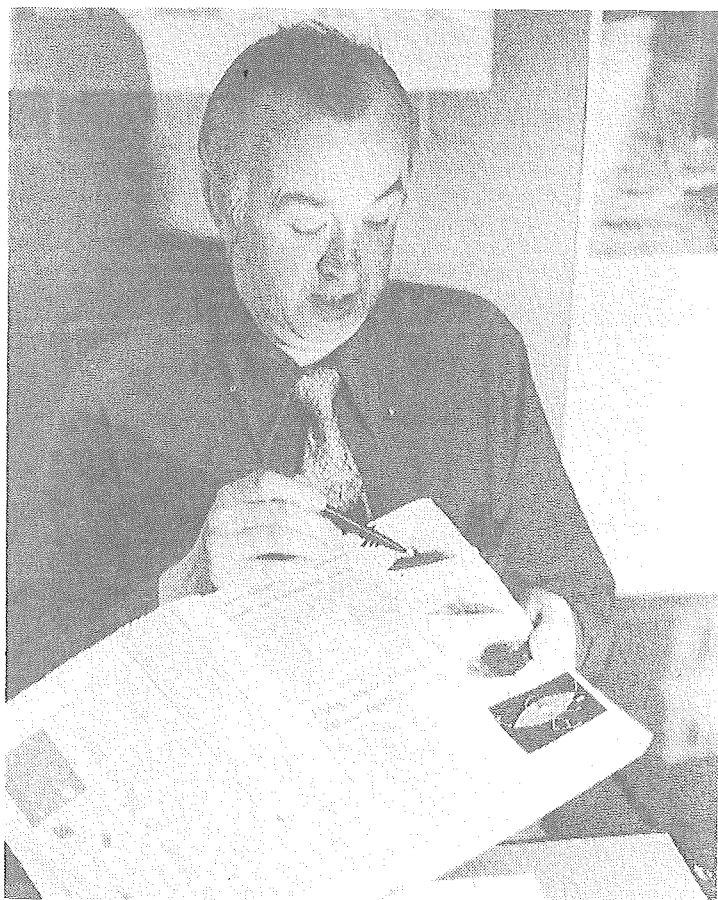
Twenty-five years later John Oosterdag is a technologist in the psychology department of Erindale College. He spends his working hours with exacting machines and electrical equipment but he still collects psychic phenomena. His desk drawer contains a scrapbook of Unidentified Flying Objects. Occasionally he goes to Flying Saucer Conventions in Buffalo and knows hundreds of stories.

"I can't understand why scientists ignore UFOs and parapsychology when so many examples have been written about them," he said.

## PLANE CRASH

One of his favorite tales is about a wife who dreamt continually of a plane crashing through a roof. It was so vivid that she could see P 41 printed on the wings. She always woke up screaming. Her husband, a practical man, took her to a hotel 50 miles away. They stayed there for several days. The dream recurred. One night a plane crashed into their hotel and they woke up and saw the letter P 41 on the wings.

"That sort of thing fascinates me. Would the plane have crashed on their house if they



John Oosterdag of Mississauga becomes indignant when anyone scoffs at psychic phenomena. He says there's too much evidence to shrug off ghosts and unidentified flying objects. Above, he shows some of the clippings he has saved on his favorite subject.

hadn't been in a hotel or would it have crashed there anyway? I guess it had to crash at the hotel because she saw it happen before and she'd have to be there to see it," reasoned Mr. Oosterdag.

## CHERRY HILL

When a security guard claimed he saw a swordwielding ghost at the 1820 Cherry Hill house Mr. Oosterdag was delighted. Here was something in his own hometown. After gathering some information he camped there for five hours one evening. He saw a young tree which resembled the ghost and "thousands of cats."

Mr. Oosterdag says one of the cats jumped on his shoulder and gave him a fright. He claims he saw cats roam that area in groups of five and six. Throughout the night he says he

saw hundreds even thousands.

## GHOST SHIP

Next fall he wants to visit Merigomish in Nova Scotia. During the fall equinox (Oct. 21) all the people in Merigomish camp out along the shores to see the Merigomish Ghost Ship. It is an old rig with three masts. At the closest point to the shore it bursts into flames and the crew can be heard screaming and running around on deck as it sinks into the water.

"Then everybody finishes their coffee and says 'see you next year'," says John who is aching to get down there.

## ANIMALS

He says animals can sense the dark shadow of a forthcoming disaster. When a dam broke on a European river about ten years ago no animals drowned because they moved away.