

ELKTON REVIEW

Bill Sprague

1-59

Volume 2 No. 5

THE ELKTON REVIEW, THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1958

Single Copy 10¢

THIS 'N THAT by the Editor

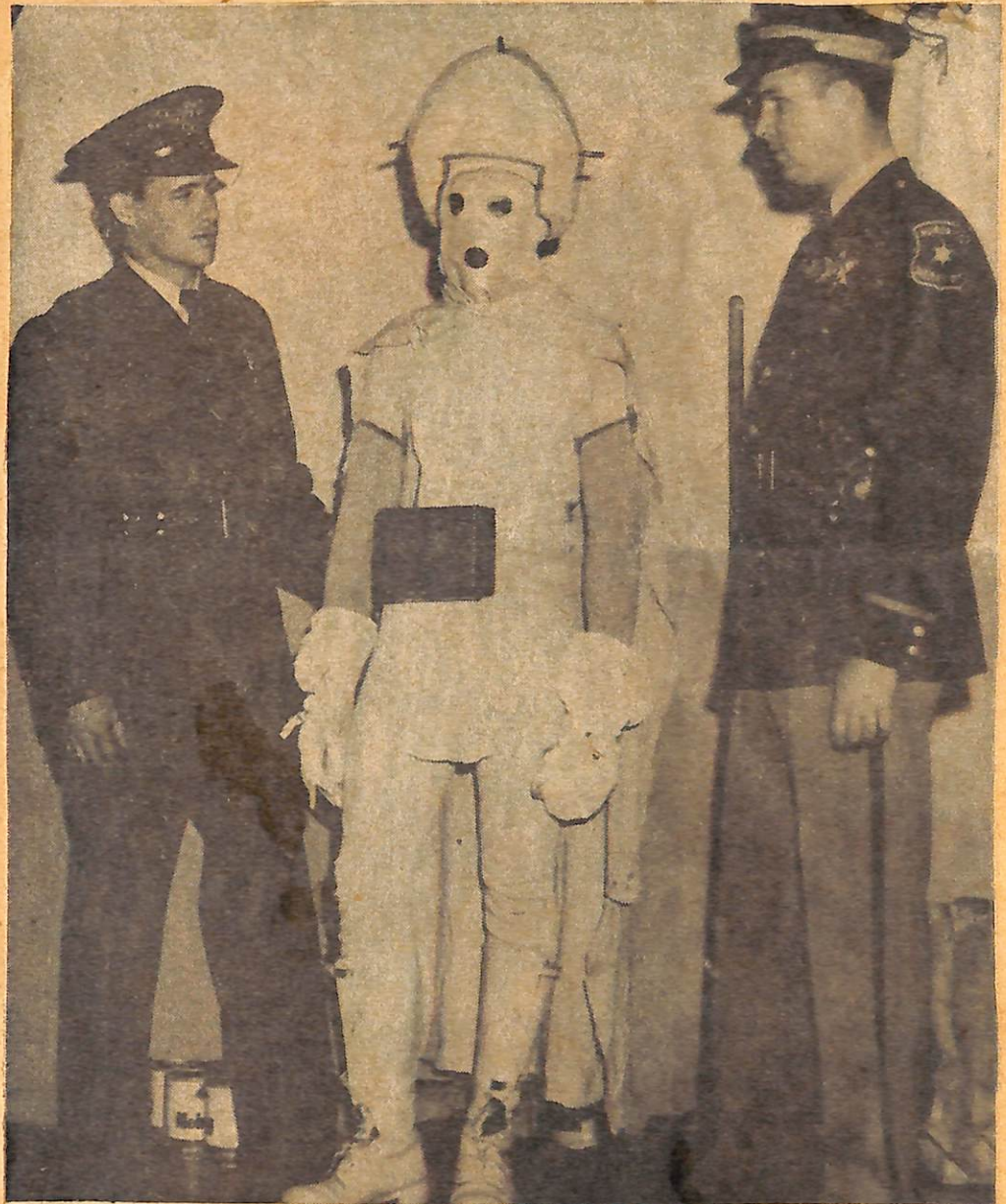
Since the middle of last week, there have been all kinds of stories around town about a "green man" being seen here and there, moving at fantastic speeds, half floating through the air, sitting on top of telephone poles, etc. It seems he was all green, had two green lights in his head, varied in size from 2½ to 10 feet tall, and was seen only in the evening or at night. All in all, it was quite a figure, and succeeded in frightening a lot of children as well as some adults.

But, no need to worry anymore. We are not being scouted by green men from outer space, (though some seemed to think so), nor was this creature even from outer space, (although some claimed to have seen the space-ship), but only a mere human, dressed up in a green out-fit, helmet, and flashing bow tie, having a lot of fun for himself at the expense of others.

On truth or consequences the other day, the M.C. showed a serial number of a dollar bill to one person, who was to whisper it to another, etc., until five people had heard it. When the fifth person repeated the number, it was absolutely nothing like the original.

That's the way stories go until they are all out of proportion.

SAY—Did you hear about that spotted leopard that was seen in Bad Axe the other night ? ? ?



HURON SPACEMAN GROUNDED

GARBED IN HIS baby blue spaceman's suit which he wore to startle Huron County motorists by leaping into view before their headlights is Jerry Sprague, 22, Elkton. Flanking him are the officers who cut short his career by capturing him

Wednesday night, State Police Trooper William Collins, (left), and Huron Deputy Robert Quinn. Arrested with Sprague were two companions who admitted being in on the hoax. The space suit is made up of a suit of long underwear, dyed blue, a

plastic helmet with flashing lights and a superman cape. The spaceman and his companions were released after telling their story to the County Prosecutor, James M. Umphrey. No charges were filed.

HURON



DAILY TRIBUNE



SPACEMAN FROM MARS — No, not quite. Huron County Sheriff's Department and Bad Axe State Police solved the case of the Elkton Space-man Wednesday night. Three men told Sheriff Merritt R. McBride and Prosecutor James Umphrey that they were responsible for the hoax. Umphrey is shown above looking over the space-man's outfit. The outfit also included big hip boots which were also painted luminous light blue like the long underwear and the helmet. The space-man carried a battery on his belt to light up lights on his helmet.

Elkton area residents have been scared during

the past few weeks when the spaceman would appear along side of the road and glow in the dark. When they would go back to see what was there the man would be gone as one of his accomplices would pick him up in another car. McBride said that Donald Weiss, 23, LeRoy Schultz, 23, and Jerry Sprague, 22, were the three men. The men said they made the spaceman uniform when they were laid off from work.

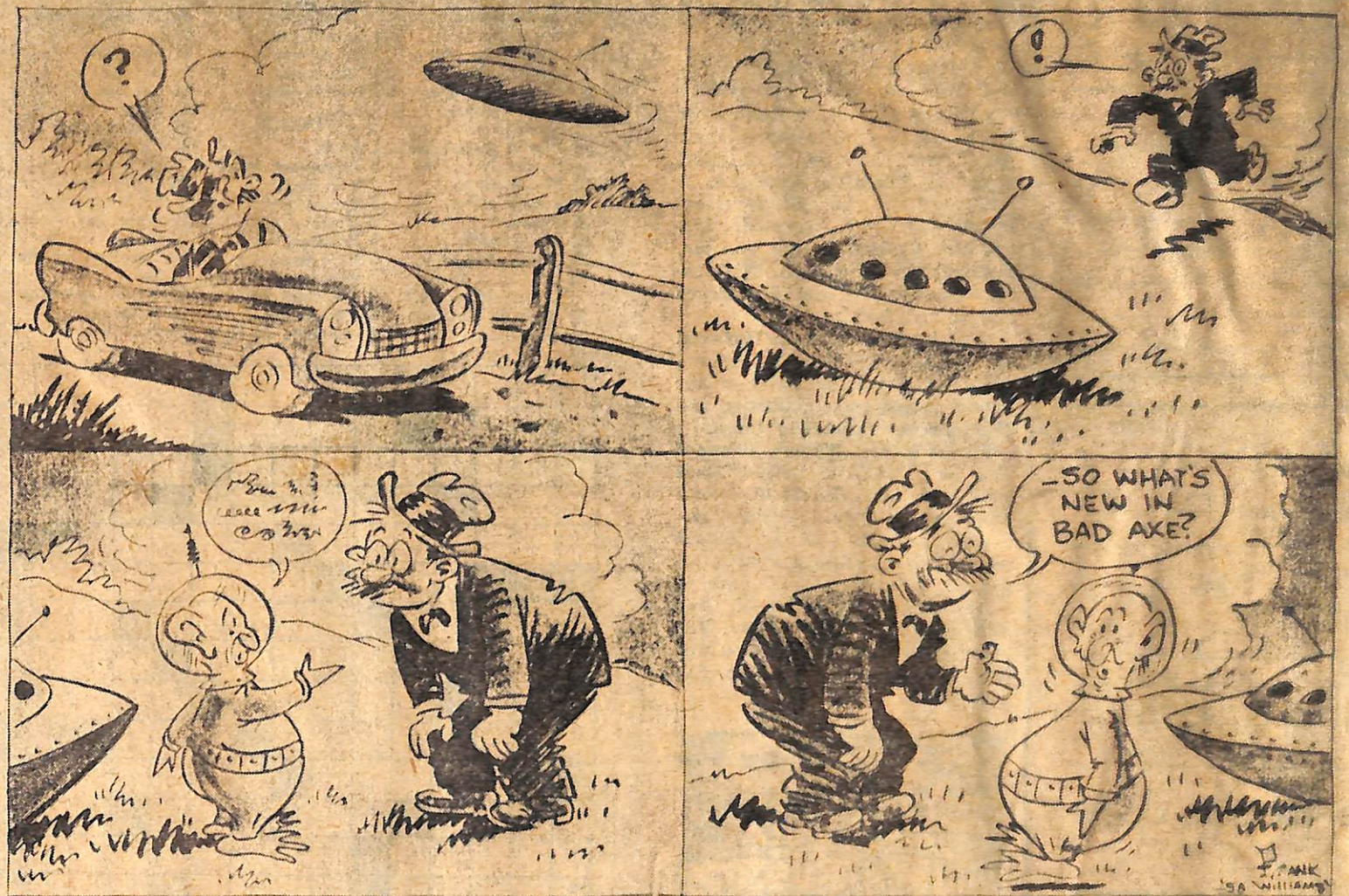
Who is in the space outfit in the picture above? Sheriff McBride donned the outfit to show to the Huron County Board of Supervisors this morning.

Daily Tribune Photo

Spaceman Story Went Almost Around World

Circuit Judge Arthur M. Bach of Bad Axe received clippings from two Chicago papers which carried stories and pictures of the space-man from Elkton. The clippings were forwarded to Bach from his sister, Mrs. Hannah L. Wright of Barrington, Illinois.

Word also was received here by Deputy Robert Quinn that a paper in Korea carried the article and picture and also a friend in California wrote to Quinn saying they saw the picture in a California paper.



Through the courtesy of the Detroit Free Press, the Daily Tribune is reproducing a cartoon which the Detroit paper published on Monday of this week. The cartoon, by Frank Williams, brings to light the tremendous publicity Bad Axe and Huron county received on the Blue Martian suit which three Elkton men used to frighten

residents from that area. Photos of the suit have been published in most all dailies in Michigan plus many throughout the country. Reports have been received that Life magazine may run a story and picture on the suit. Funny thing in the whole incident is that Bad Axe has been getting most of the publicity instead of Elkton.



in today's issue...
A TOP STORY
about
YOUR COMMUNITY!

THE SAGINAW NEWS

April 25, 1958

Blue Man, Satellites Told To Stop Playing Space Man

BAD AXE, Mich. (AP) — The little blue man from outer space and his two satellites have been grounded.

Huron County Prosecutor James M. Umphrey released Jerry Sprague, 22, Donald Weiss, 23, and Leroy Schultz, 23, all of Bad Axe, Thursday on condition they stop playing space man.

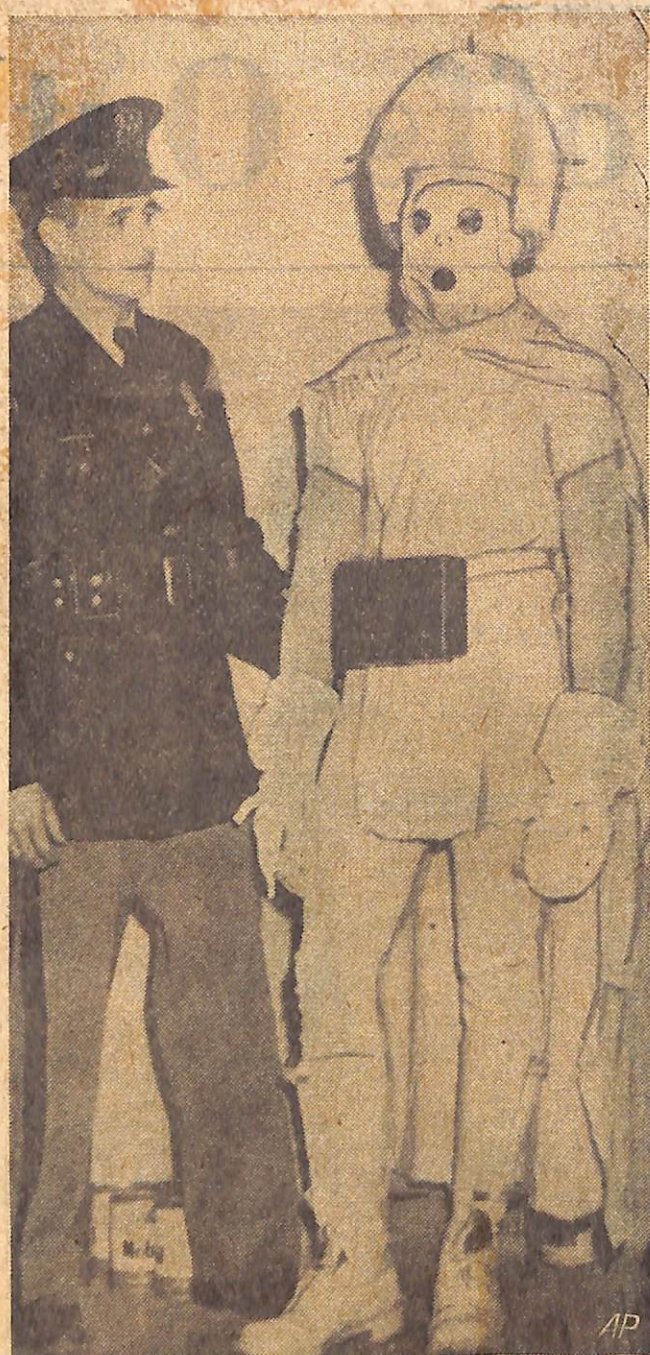
Umphrey said Sprague had admitted he was the man who has been bounding out of roadside ditches in recent weeks and into the path of approaching autos on lonely rural roads.

Umphrey said numerous motorists reported a man dressed in long blue underwear, a blue cape, blue boots, and a blue space helmet had a habit of bounding in front of their cars just after dark. They said that when they stopped to investigate the blue man was gone.

The prosecutor said Sprague had told him he and the others decided to play space man as a prank with Sprague taking the leading role because "it was my underwear, and I was the only one it would fit." His two friends drove Sprague to and from the spots where he dashed into the road.

Umphrey turned the three loose after they had promised to behave in a more down-to-earth manner.

LIFE



GARBED in a spaceman's suit that he wore to startle motorists by leaping in front of their headlights is Jerry Sprague, 22, of Elkton, who confessed the hoax to State Trooper William Collins (left). The space suit is made up of long underwear dyed blue, a plastic helmet with flashing lights, and a superman cape. *Detroit Times - Apr 25, 1959*



CAPTURED SPACEMAN

Motorists around Bad Axe, Mich. suffered unearthly scares when a figure in space helmet, long cape, skintight uniform and boots loomed before their headlights, then disappeared. Police arrested Jerry Sprague, 22, who confessed to pulling the prank in a suit of underwear.

'Blue Spaceman' of Elkton Is Apprehended

Special to The Times

ELKTON—The career of the Blue Spaceman of Elkton who has been frightening motorists on rural roads in recent weeks came to an end Wednesday night when he was taken into custody by Deputy Robert Quinn and Trooper William Collins.

The officers began their investigation after several drivers reported seeing a weird little man who leaped from a roadside ditch and danced before their headlights as their cars passed. They reported the little man was all blue and was wearing a space helmet with several flashing lights.

The spaceman turned out to be not one but three earthlings, all young men from Elkton, Jerry Sprague, 22, Donald Weiss, 23, and Leroy Schultz, 23.

Picked up with them was a suit of long underwear which had been dyed baby blue and a styrofoam space helmet which could be worn over a football helmet. Several battery operated flashlight bulbs were attached to the helmet.

Huron county Prosecutor James M. Umphrey said the spaceman was inspired by the song, "The Little Blue Man," and was the result of three young men having time on their hands.

Umphrey said the spaceman had appeared along roads near

Elkton, Bad Axe and Fillon. The apparition had been sighted only on Thursday nights.

The officers said Sprague admitted he was the only one to wear the suit. He told the officers that was because it was his underwear. All three admitted helping to build the flashing helmet.

Sprague's accomplices, the officers said, would drive him to a lonely spot on the road and then pick him up after he had lunged at a passing car. The appearance of the spaceman usually ended with his collapse along the edge of the highway just as the astounded motorist passed. He was always gone when anyone stopped to investigate.

The case was brought to a climax after Elkton school Supt. Robert Davis reported the spaceman had made an appearance in front of a school bus. After the report by the superintendent, several motorists came forward to report having seen the little blue man from outer space. They admitted that they had been reluctant to report the occurrence for fear they would not be believed.

The three young men were released after telling their story to the prosecutor. Umphrey said no formal complaint had been filed against them. If a charge is made it will probably be for disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor, he said.

LAST
EDITION

PORT HURON TIMES

THIRTY PAGES TODAY

PORT HURON, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1958

HIGHWAY SPOOK UNEARTHED

Blue Spaceman Of Huron Orbits Into Arm Of Law

Elkton, April 24—The career of the Blue Spaceman of Elkton who has been frightening motorists on rural roads in recent weeks came to an end Wednesday night when he was taken into custody by Deputy Robert Quinn and State Police Trooper William Collins.

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The investigation was brought to a climax after Elkton School Superintendent Robert Davis reported the spaceman had made an appearance in front of a school bus.

After the report by the Superintendent, other motorists came forward to report having seen the blue man. They admitted that previously they had been reluctant to report the occurrence for fear of not being believed.

The three young men were released after telling their story to the Prosecutor. Umphrey said no formal complaint had been filed against them. If a charge is made it will probably be for disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor, Umphrey said.

BAD AXE - The blue man from outer space and his two satellites have been grounded.

Huron County Prosecutor James M. Umphrey released Jerry Sprague, 22, Donald Weiss, 23, and Leroy Schultz, 23, yesterday on their promise to behave in a more down-to-earth manner.

Umphrey said Sprague admitted he was the man who has been bounding out of roadside ditches in recent weeks and into the path of approaching autos on lonely rural roads.

The prosecutor said Sprague told him he and the others decided to play space man as a prank with Sprague taking the leading role because "it was my underwear and I was the only one it would fit." His two friends drove Sprague to and from the spots where he dashed out into the road.

After Elkton School Supt. Robert Davis reported seeing the blue man in front of a school bus, others also told of seeing the strange creature.

They said a blue man, dressed in a glowing blue suit and a plastic space helmet with flashing lights, leaped from ditches on rural roads and

danced in front of their headlights.

"It got so that mothers wouldn't let their children out at night," said Sheriff Merritt R. McBride.

Investigation by Sheriff McBride and State Police of the

Bad Axe Post led to the arrest of the three earthlings.

Sprague produced the suit, a set of long underwear soaked in luminous blue paint. A bedsheet cape — also blue — a mask and a football helmet fitted with battery-powered flashlight bulbs over which a bubble plastic space helmet was worn.

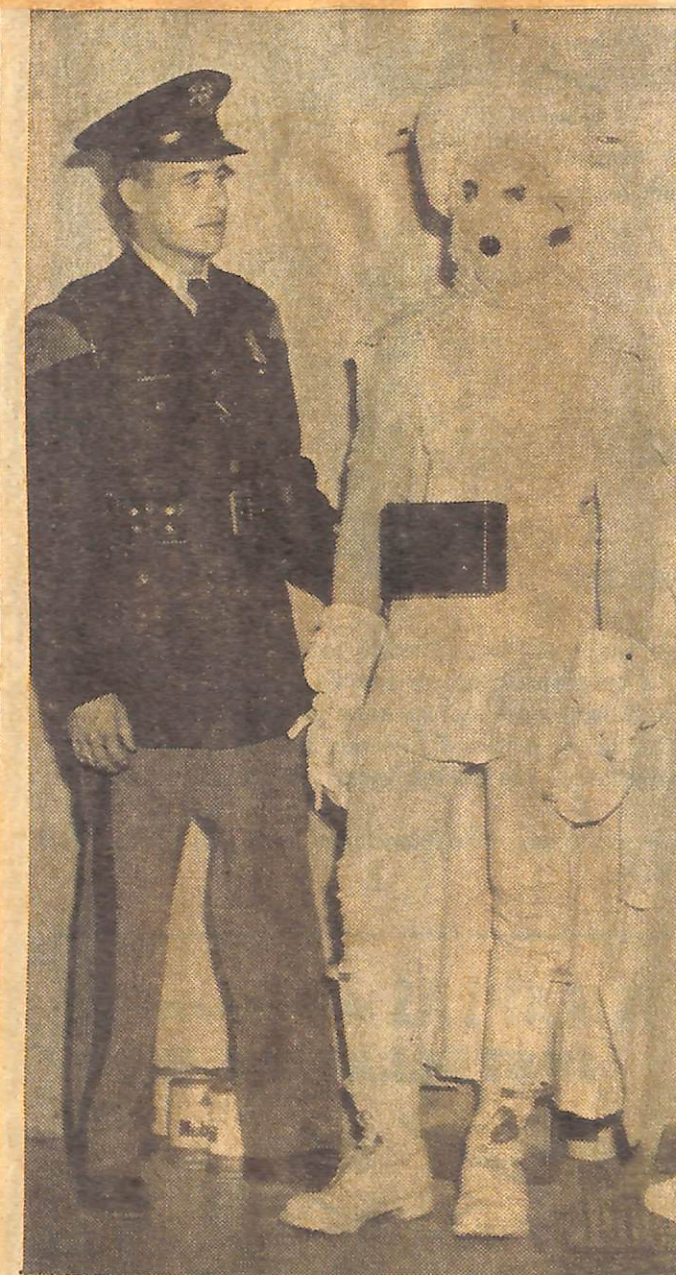
Armed Forces

Elkton Soldier Ends Army Typist Course

Fort Knox, Ky. (AHTNC) Pvt. Jerry E. Sprague, Elkton, recently completed the eight-week clerk typist course at the Army Armour Training Center, Fort Knox, Ky.

Sprague, son of Mr. and Mrs. Willard M. Sprague, Elkton, entered the Army last July and completed basic combat training at Fort Knox.

The 22-year-old soldier attended Central Michigan College. He was graduated from Elkton high school in 1953.



'SPACEMAN' GROUNDED — Jerry Sprague, 22-year-old Huron County youth is shown here with Trooper William Collins of the Bad Axe State Police Post, as he models the "spacesuit" in which he scared the daylight out of a number of Huron County residents as they drove along rural Huron County Roads. This picture was made by a Bad Axe Daily Tribune photographer. April 25, 1958

AS OTHERS SEE IT

Detroit Free Press - May 1, 1959

A Word from Outer Space!

WE ARE writing concerning the articles which appeared in the Free Press the past few days on the matter of the space man which terrorized Elkton. It seems you were misinformed on a few of the details of the true story.

In a cartoon drawn by Frank Williams and feature articles placed in your paper, the story was built mainly around Bad Axe. Actually the only thing concerning Bad Axe was the fact that the picture was taken there and also it is the county seat.

The whole story was centered around Elkton, although it did effect the entire state. You also mentioned that we were arrested, but we were merely questioned and released.

This is from a very reliable source, the Blue Martians of Elkton. It would please us if proper corrections were made.

LeROY SCHULTZ
DONALD WEISS
JERRY SPRAGUE

Bad Axe Captures Little Blue 'Martian'

He's Nabbed in His Underwear After Month of Escapades

Special to the Free Press

BAD AXE—"The Little Blue Man" from outer space has been brought to earth.

His space helmet, long blue cape and skintight blue uniform and blue boots are going into storage.

"Space Man" has promised to stop scaring Huron County farmers and school children.

For the last month on Thursday nights, the blue-clad "Space Man" was seen in remote stretches of country roads around Bad Axe.

He would appear in front of passing automobiles just after dark. When the cars stopped, he would disappear.

RUMORS ran wild, including one that he was 2½-feet high and ran faster than any human being.

Last Thursday, Space Man showed up in front of a bus taking Elkton school children to their homes.

The driver whispered the story to Elkton School Supt. Robert Davis. Davis called the State Police.

Police checked rumors for a week. Wednesday night they arrested Jerry Sprague, 22; Donald Weiss, 23, and LeRoy Schultz, 23, all of Elkton.

All three admitted participating in the plot.

They said they were inspired by a song, "The Little Blue Man," popular among the Huron County high school crowd.

SPRAGUE admitted he was the man in the blue suit.

"It was my underwear," he said, "and I was the only one it would fit."

He told Huron County Prosecutor James M. Umphrey that he and his friends played space man as a prank.

Umphrey said the "space helmet" was an old football helmet covered with plastic and the flashing lights on it were Christmas tree lights hooked up to flash alternately.

THE SPACE MEN were turned loose after they promised to be good boys.

Umphrey said they might be called in again if someone comes forward to sign a complaint.

So far, no one has.

Detroit Free Press - April 25, 1958
IN HIS UNDERWEAR

Bad Axe Captures Little Blue 'Martian'

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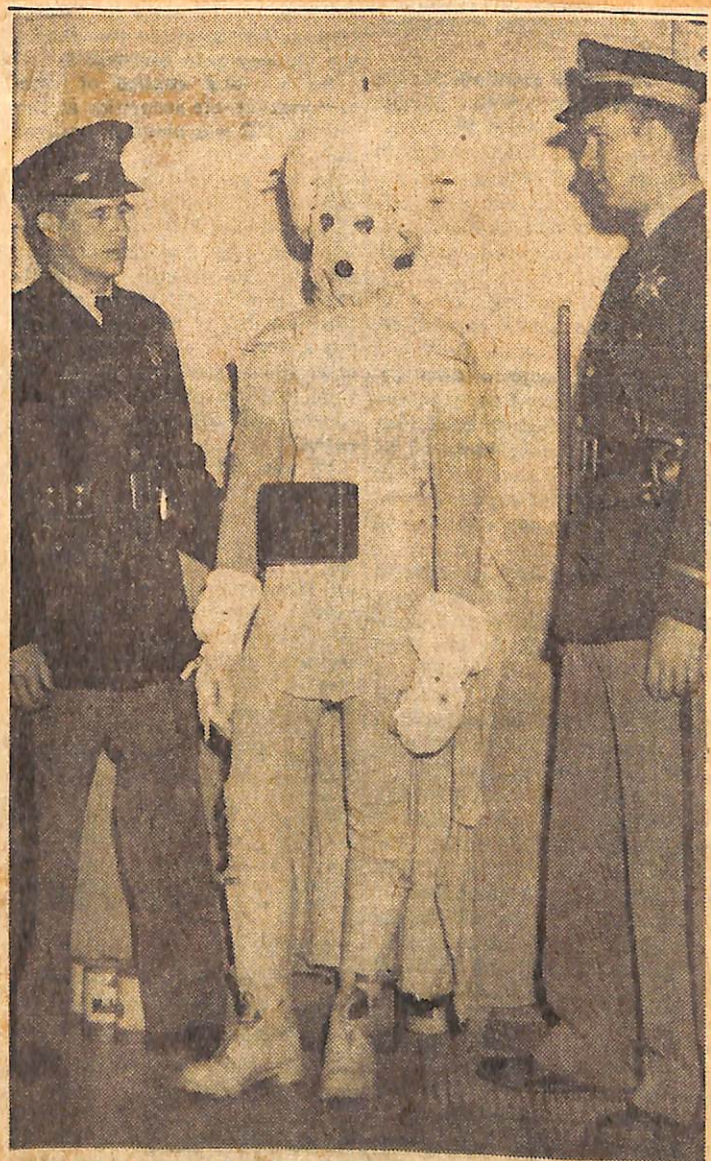
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GROUNDING "SPACEMAN"—Clad in the baby blue space-man's suit he wore to startle Huron county motorists by leaping into view before the headlights of their automobiles is Jerry Sprague, 22, of Elkton. Flanking him are the two officers who cut short his "Little Blue Man From Outer Space" career by grounding Sprague after capturing him Wednesday night. They are State Trooper William Collins, (left) and Huron County Deputy Sheriff Robert Quinn, both of Bad Axe. Arrested with Sprague were his two companions who admitted being in on the hoax. The space garment is made up of a suit of long underwear, dyed blue, a plastic helmet with flashing lights, and a Superman cape. Sprague and his companions were released after telling the story of their prank to Huron Prosecutor James M. Umphrey. No charges were filed. *Detroit Free Press April 26, 1958*

IT'S STILL A GULLIBLE

Sneaky Saucer, Blue Man, Eerie Injun Led '58's Foolery

WORLD

Whoppers

Up in the tall timber and tall tale country of northern California, Big Foot is still at large. Trackers measure his 16-inch footprints (A) after dusting them with flour. He's either a hoax or a wild Indian playing footsie. "Little Blue Man" from outer space who scared motorists in Michigan by dancing on road is brought to earth by cop (→). Spaceman was hoaxer in glowing blue underwear. Mock wedding (V) ends scholastic career of California high school's Kilroy-like student who didn't exist but was carried on school rolls for a year and even passed exams.

Last April, police in Huron County received frequent reports about an apparition in a glowing blue space suit and flashing space helmet. The spaceman was mostly described as small, down to 2 feet in height, as a matter of fact. But as the number of sightings grew, so did the spaceman. His height was approaching 6 feet 6, and mothers in isolated rural homes were keeping their children indoors when police at last captured the Little Blue Man.

He turned out to be a medium-sized, 22-year-old earthling named Jerry Sprague. Two friends were also picked up by police. Jerry, though, was the only Blue Man among them, because his space suit was really his union suit, painted with luminous blue paint.

Jerry also wore a blue cape, made from a bed sheet; a blue cloth mask and a football helmet covered with a plastic bubble and equipped with battery-powered Christmas tree lights hooked up to flash intermittently.

A blue hoax from head to toe, Jerry would leap out on lonely country roads and dance in front of approaching cars. He said he was inspired by a song, "The

Little Blue Man," which was popular at the time.

Jerry was released by the authorities, who frankly didn't know what to charge him with. He immediately came back to earth by first marrying and then volunteering for the draft. The ex-spaceman is an infantryman now.



THE BAY CITY TIMES

BAY CITY, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1958



Little Blue Men, Beware, Beware

Martian invaders can take a warning lesson from the story of our own home-grown Blue Spaceman from the Thumb.

An extraterrestrial visitor to earth had better come well stocked with food and drink, to tide him over until he can convince the people of earth he's real—and not just any old hallucination.

It seems in the Thumb area that quite a few motorists had seen the wild apparition in blue underwear, jumping up and down with lights flashing off and on the space helmet he was wearing.

But only a few stopped to investigate,

and it wasn't until a public school official notified authorities that police moved in for the capture, and found a young earthling up to high jinks.

Seems the majority of motorists, once over their initial fright, just keep on driving and trying to forget the whole thing—for fear somebody would tag them as 1) drunks; 2) overimaginative neurotics; 3) just plain bats.

It's liable to be a real frustrating experience for the Martian—until he can get proper identification from the nearest police station.

AS OTHERS SEE IT

A Word from Outer Space!

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This is from a very reliable source, the Blue Martians of Elkton. It would please us if proper corrections were made.

LEROY SCHULTZ
DONALD WEISS
JERRY SPRAGUE

P. H. WEIERBACH
605 N. 8TH ST.
ALLENTOWN, PENNA.
HE 3-3457

May 4, 1958

Dear Spaceman:

As soon as all the legal tangle is over and you are free to do as you please, I shall be glad to hear from you. I am very busy now making preparations to return to Wyoming as soon as I can break away from my duties and responsibilities here.

The photo in the local paper was a very hazy one and only in LIFE did I notice the boots such as I wore in Kansas and England during World War II. We had to put a spit and polish shine on them after saddle soaping them. Only then, however, could you see who really loved boots and those who wore them only because it was regulation.

Since you may not answer this letter or may not be allowed any **fan mail** I shall not go further into detail at this time. All the best to you and feel no guilt for your Orson Wells trick or hoax. If you have the same opinion of the average intelligence of the so called human race as I do you will chuckle under your breath for years and know that the only people who really count are those who dare at least **once** in their lives to do something out of the way, off beat, different which indicates the most supreme courage of all **the ability to think and act independantly of the herd or the clan.**

With sincere interest,

Paul H. Weierbach



Camp Roosevelt

The Birthplace of the Civilian Conservation Corps

MASSANUTTEN MOUNTAIN
EDINBURG, VIRGINIA

1 May 58

Leroy Schultz
Donald Weiss : The Blue Martians of Elkton
Jerry Sprague :

Greetings:

I have read with interest about you in the Detroit Free Press. I am constantly looking for...hoping for...youth who have imagination and initiative. I think that you have both. Congratulations.

Lack of time-space does not permit me to express what I should. I encourage you to capture and allow yourselves to be captured by "a great idea". Then your youthful intelligence and energy will advance a socially-intelligent cause in an era when comfortable, senile, adult society desperately needs youth initiative, when youth, minus purpose for life, purpose for good citizenship, starve for sense of belonging.

1958 is the 25th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps(deceased). This was the greatest youth program in the history of mankind. You should learn about it from your parents...from your teachers. You should visit...if you happen to be in Detroit between April 25 and June 15...the CCC camp life exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum. I hope you will sense how other youth were engaged in a program directed to "a great idea" and that you and your youth associates will wish to be as significant to community and nation in your youth as were the CCC boys in theirs.

Enclosed are literature that should interest you.

Best wishes and Happy Days.

Sincerely

Clarence C Case

1820 Ford Bldg
Detroit 26, Mich

♦ "Bring Me Men to Match My Mountains" ♦

Home add:
RR 2
Freeport, Ia.

DIS, SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1958

FREEPORT

We Aim to

Develop and maintain local, state, national and international programs and projects for the advancement of the ideals and principles of conservation of human and natural resources.

Promote projects of community betterment and to develop public understanding of and need for wise use of resources.

Engage in research to further the above objectives.

Stimulate similar programs and projects by local communities and other organizations.

Receive and accept by gift money, property and other things of value, to hold and disburse this money and property in a manner consistent with the purposes of this organization.

Engage in other activities related to and not inconsistent with the objectives set forth above.

We Welcome into our Membership all who will dedicate themselves to the objectives of the organization.

Annual dues for members \$ 3.00

Supporting members 5.00

Community Beautification

Hi Jerry -

You got a lot of publicity.

Saw your pic in Shereport. La & then a couple more things are enclosed from an local



BE WISE AETNA-IZE

Let us help you keep your insurance program always in line with your needs.

paper. What do you look like see space man?

Max Martin Jr.

Home addi:
R.R. 2
Freeport, La.

Jerry Sprague
Captured Spaceman
Red Axe,
Michigan.
Elkton



DIS, SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1958

FREEPORT, ILLINOIS



FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

IS, SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1958

Blue scare

50 years ago, 'Little Blue Man' shook up Elkton

BY TRACI L. WEISENBACH
Tribune Staff Writer

ELKTON — Picture it — you're driving along a country road on a Thursday night in the early spring, and out of nowhere, something strange appears from the darkness alongside the road. An illuminated, bluish figure moving very quickly, perhaps even dancing.

Then, in the blink of an eye, it's gone.

You try to make sense of it, but your mind can't quite wrap around it. You've heard stories of UFO sightings, but...no...it can't be...an alien?

What would you do? Do you keep your eerie experience to yourself, not wanting to appear like you're in need of a straitjacket? Or do you tell others, as perhaps others have witnessed the same spooky sight?

While this scenario may sound like something from a science fiction show, it actually happened in Elkton in 1958. Once the mystery was solved, news of the "Little Blue Man" stretched across the globe, along with a photo of the "alien" and two policemen. Fifty years later, people still talk about this famous caper, and a local corn maze celebrates this tale that's almost too "out of this world" to be true.

The prank

The zany tale starts with three young men who had just returned home from serving in the military, one of those men being Don Weiss.

"We were 22 or 23 years old, and we were looking for work," Weiss said. "We had a little extra time on our hands."

Weiss said he and the other two gentlemen — LeRoy Schultz and Jerry Sprague — were best of friends and spent a lot of time together. They were known for being jokesters in town. Using this sense of humor, the trio devised the ultimate prank.

"There was starting to be flying saucer stories, and the idea came from that," Weiss said. "We wanted to take this idea a little further."

They decided it would be fun to have one of them dress as an alien and go out at night to surprise people. In a garage, they devised a costume, which included long underwear, Weiss's high school football helmet, Styrofoam attached to the helmet, large gloves, German combat boots with metal soles, a bedsheet with two holes cut out for the eyes and a button sewed on for the mouth, and blinking lights on the helmet and Styrofoam.

"They didn't have blinking (Christmas) lights back then, so we had to make the lights blink ourselves," Weiss said. "We had a battery pack attached to the costume."

The entire costume was spraypainted blue.

"The paint glowed a bit in the light, which added to the effect," Weiss said.

He said there was a song on the radio at the time called "Little Blue Man" by Betty Johnson, which inspired the blue color of their "alien" creation.

On one Thursday night in the early spring of 1958, the trio debuted their prank. Because the long underwear would fit only him, Sprague became the "alien."

During the trio's nighttime jaunts, Sprague would hide in the



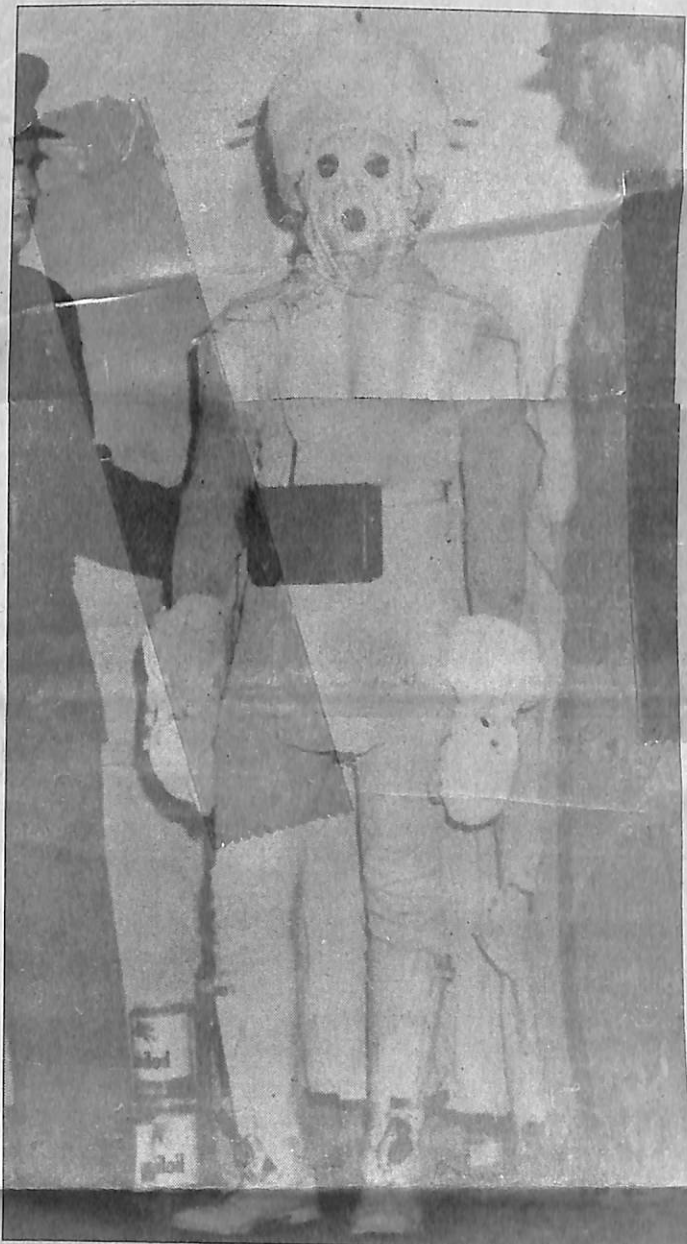
Don Weiss



Jerry Sprague



LeRoy Schultz



This photo appeared in the May 5, 1958 issue of Life Magazine.

trunk of "the getaway car," and Schultz would drive out to a country road and Weiss would let Sprague out. Sprague would run along a fence line or alongside a ditch bank so people could see him. After traveling a short distance on foot, Sprague would hop back into the car's trunk. Weiss said he was in charge of helping Sprague get in and out of the trunk.

"Jerry never jumped out in front of cars," Weiss said.

Because they didn't want to make themselves too easy of a target, the three friends only embarked on their capers on Thursday nights.

"We wanted to let people see (Jerry), and then we'd sit back and wait to see if people talked about it," Weiss said.

He said it took three or four Thursday trips before they started hearing chatter about it.

"Then, people's imaginations started taking over," Weiss said.

He said some accounts had "the blue man" measuring 10 feet high while others said it was just two feet high. Another report indicated someone spotted him sitting atop a telephone pole.

"My favorite was an account that said 'It ran faster than any human,'" Weiss said with a chuckle.

Most of the time, the trio would do their pranks in the Elkton area. The farthest they traveled was the intersection of Filion Road and M-53, Weiss said.

The trio embarked on eight to 10 jaunts and no one suspected them as the culprits. Reports hadn't been made to the police until one night in April 1958, when Weiss, Sprague and Schultz involved a school bus in their prank.

"We were sitting at The Bean Pot in Bad Axe when we saw a bus of Elkton Junior High students drive by," Weiss said. "The students had been to a rollerskating party."

BLUE

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Because the costume was in the car, the three friends decided to drive ahead of the bus a few miles so Sprague could put on his "blue man" show.

"That's when all heck broke loose," Weiss said.

The next day, six police cars sat at the Elkton school. Someone had called the police.

"There was a little panic," Weiss said about what he and his friends felt as they saw the police cars. "I guess the school kids (on the bus) were genuinely scared and parents were concerned."

Weiss said he and his friends kept everything about "the blue man" a secret until one day, Sprague told a friend in Kinde and that person told other people.

"We knew it was just a matter of time before the police found out it was us," Weiss said.

One night in Elkton, then-Michigan State Trooper William Collins was patrolling and the three pranksters approached him.

"We said, 'I hear that you're looking for us,'" Weiss said.

Collins took Weiss, Sprague and Schultz to the Huron County Sheriff's Office, where they were questioned by then-Sheriff Merritt McBride and then-Prosecuting Attorney James Umphrey. Weiss said he and his friends weren't too concerned about getting into seri-

"We were told 'Take your underwear and go home,'" Weiss said.

Other than Weiss's football helmet, which still has a bit of blue paint on it and is on display at Weiss's barbershop in downtown Elkton, Weiss isn't sure what became of the costume. He said one of the German combat boots, which belonged to his brother, Harvey, is missing.

As for Schultz, Weiss said he moved away from the Thumb about 40 years ago. Sprague, who went on to own Elkton Roofing and Siding Co., died in 2006.

"He became very quiet in his later years," Weiss said, noting Sprague didn't really talk much about the "Little Blue Man."

Weiss summarizes the "Little Blue Man" as "a Halloween prank and it wasn't Halloween."

The aftermath

A photo of Sprague in the costume flanked by Collins and then-Huron County Deputy Sheriff Robert Quinn was taken by Bob Barrett of the Huron News, which is now the Huron Daily Tribune. That photo and the accompanying story took the rural, innocent prank and turned it into an international story. Soon after the photo and story appeared in the Huron News, other Michigan newspapers picked up the story. The Associated Press also picked up the story, and it ended up in "Stars and Stripes," the military newspaper, Weiss said.

"We got calls from TV stations around the country," he

"Huron County Blues," includes interviews — both phone and face-to-face — of those who were involved in the prank, including Weiss, and some eyewitnesses to the "Little Blue Man," including Al Hanson.

"I saw the 'Blue Man' three times," Hanson told the Huron Daily Tribune for this story. "The first time, it was quite a shock."

He said the first time he spotted the "Blue Man," he was driving to Elkton with his then-girlfriend Joan Bittner, who now is his wife.

"We were near the railroad tracks outside of Elkton by the golf course, and all of a sudden, here's this little blue guy walking along by the ditch, all these lights blinking," he said. "It scared the hell out of me at first. Joan and I looked at each other and she said, 'Did you see what I saw?' I said, 'Yes, but I'm not going to turn around.'"

Hanson said he told Joan Bittner's father, Herb, about the eerie sight, along with other people.

"They just laughed. They didn't believe me," he said.

Hanson said after seeing the "Blue Man" three times, he figured it was a prank, but he didn't know who the pranksters could be. He said when he found out who they were, he wasn't surprised.

"They were clowns, always joking around," he said of Weiss, Sprague and Schultz. "They were all good guys. They didn't want to hurt anybody."

Hanson said seeing the "Blue Man" was "an exciting experience."

For the movie, Depner obtained the actual police report given to the Michigan State Police after the school bus incident. Elkton High School teachers Ed Wichert and John Hamilton had filed the report. The two had been chaperones on the skating party trip and were on the bus.

Once the report was filed, Collins and Quinn were assigned to the case. More people started coming forth to admit they had caught a glimpse of the "blue man,"

according to Depner's movie.

The movie won first place in the 1994 Grand Rapids Film and Video Festival.

Depner is known not only for this movie, but for his corn maze on Griggs Road east of Caseville, which has become a very popular spot for both local and out-of-area tourists. This year, the maze has an alien theme, and Depner claims "friendly aliens" created the design. The giant alien maze is 8 1/2 acres and includes an "Alien Trivia" game. One of the questions is, "Who was the alien who invaded Huron County in 1958?"

"Few visitors know the story of the 'Blue Man,'" Depner said. "This question stumps the best of them!"

The "Little Blue Man" legend lives on

Time doesn't seem to lessen people's interest in the "Little Blue Man" story, Depner said.

"The more time that passes, the more popular this story seems to be," he said. "Many of the individuals involved are no longer with us; therefore, the documentary has turned into a collector's piece."

Depner called the "Little Blue Man" a "fantastic prank" that was well thought out.

"The timing of the prank couldn't have been better," he said, referring to people's sightings of UFOs.

Weiss said people are still curious about the "Little Blue Man." "Not a month goes by that someone doesn't mention it," he said.

Weiss said today, if three friends wanted to try to pull off such a prank, he wouldn't necessarily discourage them.

"I'd say do your thing, as long as no one gets hurt," he said. "We need more humor in our lives. Everyone is so serious these days."

Depner agreed.

"If this (prank) was to happen today, I don't think it would be nearly as effective," he said. "I'm sure the perpetrators would be finding themselves in hot water."