

*The future –
the way it used to be!*

**Volume 3: A look at what it took to print
the first five Starman books**

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No chocolate chip cookies were harmed
in the production of this document.

THE STARMAN SERIES

by Michael D. Cooper

ASSAULT ON MARS
THE RUNAWAY ASTEROID
JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET
DESCENT INTO EUROPA
THE LOST RACE OF MARS
DOOMSDAY HORIZON
THE HEART OF DANGER
THE LAST COMMAND

The short stories—
The Flight of the Olympia,
The City of Dust,
SETI,
A Matter of Time,
and *Return to Europa*—
are available in the first five issues of the
Inter*Stellar, the fanzine for the Starman series.

A novelette outside the main storyline,
The Lost Tomorrow,
is serialized in “The Starman Chronicles.”

All items may be ordered through the
Starman web site at www.StarmanSeries.com.

*The Starman Team gratefully dedicates this book
to all of those who helped make it possible to
take our Starman manuscripts and turn them
into printed volumes on bookshelves everywhere.*

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Introduction

Well, my friends, here we are with another volume of the Starman Archives. As you may know, the first two volumes documented the story behind the first five Starman books: they explained where some of our ideas came from, how our ideas developed, and what part of the plot we struggled to perfect. Those two volumes tell a good story, but they don't tell the whole story: once you have a finished manuscript and artwork you aren't finished yet – you still have to find a way to get it printed.

Getting something printed is definitely not easy. It takes a lot of work to print something: you have to find people to sell it to, a way to pay for it, a company to do the actual printing, and you also have to set up the document just right. A lot of formatting goes into the books: tabs have to be set, chapter titles have to be put in place, page numbers have to be properly set up, and on and on it goes. Once the document is formatted, you have to make sure that the company you sent the manuscript to gets it right – and then you have to find a way to pay the bill, especially when huge unexpected costs crop up out of nowhere.

All of this is enough to make you want to pull all your hair out, but somehow it all gets done. The frustrations gradually melt away, and when the books arrive in the mail and look great you begin to think that it's all worth it, and the memory of the titanic struggle you just went through fades away (until it comes time to do it all again, that is!). Of course, if the books arrive and something is wrong (and something is *always* wrong) it's a different story, but that's part of life as an author.

The first two sections of this book take a serious look at what it takes to get a Starman book printed. A lot of ink has been spilled talking about the difficulties in writing a book, but I think that getting the book printed can be much more frustrating – and the whole printing aspect is often overlooked by the casual reader. This is where all of that changes: you, my reader, are about to get a glimpse at the joys and frustrations of the crazy world of printing.

The other sections of this book are intended to tidy up the loose ends not covered elsewhere. There were a lot of e-mails that discussed things that had an impact on the series and yet didn't really have a place anywhere else; those e-mails have been gathered here. Curious about why the Starman series has no fast food scenes? You can find out the story behind that here. Want to know who came up with our famous slogan *The future – the way it used to be*? That's discussed here too. There's quite a variety of stuff here, and it's all pretty interesting.

You will also find a section on the creation of all five Inter*Stellars. The Inter*Stellars were created as fundraisers; they were ways to raise the extra dollars we

needed to print the Starman books. They turned out to be fascinating documents: not only did they have short stories that expounded on important events in the Starmen's universe, they also gave the first peek at what it took produce Starman books. The story behind this fanzine can be found right here.

I've had a lot of fun putting together the first three volumes of the Starman Archives. It's taken a long time to go through thousands of e-mails and put pieces of them in various volumes, to properly format the e-mails, to footnote them, and to remove all the really boring stuff,¹ and part of me is glad that with the release of this volume I won't have to work on any more for a number of years. At the same time, though, I have loved doing this: it's fun looking back at what we've done and documenting it so that in our old age we can look back and reminisce about our past. It's a pity that more authors don't do this: I would love to have this sort of behind-the-scenes look at, say, the Rick Brant series. Maybe someone will read these Archives and be inspired to write volumes of their own! You never know what the future might bring: as another writer once said, the ending is not yet written.

¹ And believe me, there is a *lot* of really boring stuff that goes on behind-the-scenes...

Printing The Books

“Don't spend the royalties yet...”

Letters

DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1999 4:20 PM

- > *Nope, no one has said they wanted to reserve a copy.² In fairness,*
- > *though, nowhere on the site does it say you can reserve copies, or list*
- > *their possible selling price and so forth.*

Oops, right. We might be good writers but obviously poor salesmen. I think I did the figures a few months ago and guessed that we can let the books go for \$20. That will cover the cost of photocopying the pages and the dj, as well as the postage, and we ought to give Fred³ something for his material. (Rough estimate of actual cost of producing each book will be about \$8 to photocopy the pages, \$3 for the dj, \$3 for postage, and about \$2 for the envelope and other supplies—total, \$16.)⁴ So if we all take nothing except joy for our labor,⁵ that ought to cover the actual cost, and maybe leave us a bit over so we can get started on the next book. So far my father and I have put out all the cost for photocopying, postage, etc., and while it's only a little at a time, it can add up. And it will take a chunk of cash when we finally get to the production stage. Twenty books @ \$16 each is about \$320 initial outlay, plus the shipping for the lot to and from Fred's place in Tucson. We would need to get some advance orders, preferably prepaid.⁶ I suggest that when we get close to finishing the first book, we send out another mailing to people informing them that now is the time to order, providing a bit more teasing information (like new artwork and more sample text), and request a check from those who want a first edition. In the meantime, Jon can add a line or two now to the web site ask-

² of *Assault on Mars*, the first Starman book.

³ Fred Woodworth, the person who printed *Assault on Mars*.

⁴ At the time we weren't even thinking about having them printed. This was a small project – a hobby – and we thought that maybe 20 people in the world would be interested in what we were doing. Therefore we were thinking about making these by hand and having Fred bind them for us. As you can see we were not thinking big at this point!

⁵ That is all we have ever taken. We have never been paid anything for working on the Starman books – not even as much as a dime – and have instead funneled all the money we've received toward printing current and future Starman books.

⁶ Prepaid orders were always important to us. Usually when it came time to print a book we didn't have the funds needed to pay for it, so we'd make the book available via preorders and would then use the money people would send us to pay the book's printing bill. It wasn't the best way to do things but it was our only choice for the first few books.

ing people to let him know if they want to be informed when it comes time to order, and maybe even indicating that the asking price will probably be \$20 per book.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 01, 1999 1:57 PM

Don't feel badly about the money my father and I have already spent. We're willing to do it and it's only been a few dollars at a time. When we get into production, though, I'll need some help. And by then, we'll have an idea how many copies we're making and I'll be able to come up with an exact price.

An early-bird ordering discount at our "actual cost" is a good idea. It will encourage orders as well as advertise our actual cost.

> Just think: to buy all 23⁷ would cost 23 x 20 or \$460!

But it wouldn't happen all at once. \$20 at a time is not too bad. (Besides, the series will be worth it!)

> Could having Fred publish the books bring the price down? This could be something to think about.

You mean, if I send him a camera-ready original and then he prints from that? I don't know, maybe. But that's more work for him and we'd still have to cover at least the cost of his materials. We'd still want "up-front, paid" orders to go this route. Fred has said that any print run past 50 copies should be done by printing; fewer than 50, photocopying is best.⁸

*> we'll want to give something to Fred,
> something to you for writing it, and then still have some more set aside to
> finance the next volume...*

⁷ At the time we were thinking of writing 23 Starman books, and I was pointing out how much it would cost to purchase the entire series once all 23 were available!

⁸ At the time I found it hard to believe that we could sell more than 50 copies!

Nah, the joy is enough unless the project becomes a real moneymaker. We do need to finance the next volume, though. Other than that, we can't pay ourselves something, cover our production costs, and reduce the price.

> *We would need to get some advance orders, preferably prepaid.*

>

> *Yes, but that could be tricky. I'll post a notice on the Web site, but
> there is two things I need to know...*

Right. Let's not ask for anything concrete until we're ready to give them something concrete, like an actual price and mailing date. But we CAN ask for interest. Something like IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE, AND MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN ORDERING THE FIRST VOLUME, PLEASE CLICK *HERE* AND WE'LL KEEP YOU INFORMED.

I'll be leaving for a weekend vacation in a few minutes, so won't be back at the console until Tuesday afternoon. Making a lot of progress on the Tom Slade article already, though.⁹ Summary of AOM comes after that.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 06, 1999 7:54 PM

Jon and David,

Sorry for not e-mailing last couple of days...had mouse trouble...at one point I had the cover off the mouse, the ball out and was moving the wheels independently....a study in coordination. My substitute mouse was also not doing well...so I went and bought a new one.

About the cost of publishing....I would like to help out financially...especially if its just a matter of a couple of hundred dollars...just let me know.¹⁰

Mike

⁹ This was an article David wrote for Fred Woodworth. It appeared in volume 33 of the Mystery & Adventure Review that appeared in spring 2000.

¹⁰ All three of us were willing to donate financially to the series in order to make it happen. At times all three of us had to do exactly that, when there wasn't enough money in the bank to cover our expenses. The books were always printed, though!

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1999 6:55 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Actually, I had had a couple of thoughts myself about approaching some publishers, even Golden Press, with the Starman series some time in the future. I have some experience in preparing book packages for publishers, etc. and know how to do it. It would not be difficult and, of course, we have nothing to lose.¹¹

I have both used an agent and gone without one. Finding a good one is often more trouble than it's worth. There are benefits and disadvantages both ways. It's just a matter of taking a choice. With an agent, you have less work to do, but you relinquish a little control and 15% of your profits. Without an agent, you have total control and earn all the royalties, but you have more work to do. Also, depending on your agent, you may have more access to likely publishers.

Generally, however, neither having nor not having an agent makes a difference to the publisher (unless you're talking screenplays—then you need an agent; or if you're talking some big publishing house, in which case you need one too, Mike's radio guy's 1% figure of non-agent sales probably comes from this category).

But since we're considering children's books, we could probably make an effort ourselves to sell Starman to a small publisher. Waiting until we have two or three books completely written is a good idea, but not necessary. In the beginning, publishers are more interested in the book package than the book MS. The book doesn't have to be written. The material on our web site is actually a good start to a book package. Having the sample of "actual text" up there is the kind of thing you put into a package. In our case, we want to sell it to customers; in a book package, you want to sell it to the publisher.

If you both like the idea, then sometime next year, maybe after Book #1 is done,¹² we can put together a book package and send it out to likely publishers. I wouldn't mind at all. Don't spend the royalties yet, though. Even Hal Goodwin said he wasn't getting rich

¹¹ Throughout the first five years of the Starman Series' existence we contacted a number of publishers, and none of them were even remotely interested in what we were doing. We do keep trying, though.

¹² Notice that at the time of this e-mail we had not yet adopted the three-letter title acronyms that we later used! *Assault on Mars* was still called book 1, not AOM.

off of Rick Brant. There's not a lot of money in it unless you're Stephen King, Edgar Rice Burroughs, or somebody like that.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2000 11:12 AM

- > > *The plates, however, are not reusable—which is why he said*
- > > *make 250 to be sure you've got the number you want.*
- >
- > *Oh, really?? I didn't know that.*

Yeah—it's his¹³ antique plates he's using. They are much cheaper than the metal things most people use now, but once they have been inked they have to stay wet or something. If they dry out, they cannot be used again. Thus, they are good for one run only, but MUCH cheaper (less than a dollar each) than metal. This is why he has only committed to doing one book for us. He only has about 1200 of these plates and cannot get any more since they are no longer being made. If he uses 100 or so for us, he's diminishing his lifetime supply by a good chunk. What a generous guy!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2000 4:59 PM

One concern: if Fred can only print one book, we'll need to finance the other books. If we can get a profit of more than \$2000 per book, we'll be able to use the printer that Jon found¹⁴ and make 200 copies,¹⁵ but that's not something we can depend on yet. Failing that, the best we can do is probably photocopy about 50 books and bind them by hand. Possible, but more work for us and the potential audience is much smaller. But somehow, it will happen.

¹³ Fred Woodworth

¹⁴ Sheridan books.

¹⁵ 200 copies was the minimum print run that Sheridan would do, and Sheridan was the only company I could find that was willing to do only 200. We sure didn't have 200 customers at the time but we were hoping we could sell 200 copies, eventually!

Maybe if we consider this God's work and keep it in prayer, a way will open.¹⁶

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 03, 2000 6:06 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

I'll be getting the final illustrations for AOM from my father this weekend,¹⁷ then will be going to a three-day conference. Back home the evening of the 10th. On the 11th, I will prepare the MASTER COPY of the text with illustrations in place. Then I will make three copies, hand-bound, of *Assault On Mars* with full-wrap dust jacket. These will be our first personal copies.¹⁸ The Master Copy will go to Fred for printing 250 copies¹⁹ and binding 50 of them for our initial market.²⁰ Should be in the mail to him by the end of next week.

Now that the text for AOM is nearly finished I've been putting together the final form of the dust jacket. I realized that we had to have something printed on the endflaps. I've drafted the following, which will go over both of them. What do you think?

David

¹⁶ And it always has!

¹⁷ David Baumann's father, Bill Baumann, did the internal illustrations and cover art for *Assault on Mars*.

¹⁸ David always made these cool hand-made books for the Starman team so that we could have a copy of the book as soon as the book was done, instead of having to wait months to get a copy when the printer had finally produced them. They were always a lot of fun to get in the mail and often had neat features, like a unique cover or writer's notes bound in the back of the book. The last author copy made was for *The Lost Race of Mars*; after that book we just waited for our printer and got a copy of the book the same time our readers did. It was a sad thing! I miss those authors copies...

¹⁹ As you can see, we only wanted to print 250 copies of *Assault on Mars* at first. It was only at the urging of Fred that we printed 500, and boy am I glad he urged us: at the point when we sold our 250th copy we did not have the funds to reprint the book, and would have been in trouble.

²⁰ The first edition of *Assault on Mars* was special in that each copy of the book had to be bound by hand. Fred printed the pages and bound the first 100 or so (a titanic bit of work!), but we had to bind the rest and it was no easy task. David and other folks he got to help him bound most of them, and he was very glad when the last copy was bound – nearly two-and-a-half years later!

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 15, 2000 12:53 PM

- > I forgot to mention it, but my Dad wants to buy 30 copies of AOM: he*
- > made a list last night and knows 30 people here who want them. This isn't*
- > counting people from the Web who have contacted us; it's only people here,*
- > locally, plus family and so forth. So we've got 30 sold already of the first*
- > 50 bound...*

And I'm sure I can sell around 20 at least right off. There are a few people we will want to give copies too, I think. Ourselves, our partners, our initial readers in thanksgiving for their work (and hoping that they will then urge others they know to buy copies).

I'd think that [charging] \$15 per book would be fair, plus postage. Say \$15 in person and \$18 postage paid. And I think you're right—we should print up an initial run of maybe 500. That's how many Magic Talismans were run and it took 6 years to sell all of them—but they sold!²¹ We'll have some in reserve then for when they're needed.

> I don't think it will be that hard to sell these...

I hope you're right. But Fred has insisted several times that paper is cheap and urges us to print many rather than few, so a large run is a good plan.

David

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 15, 2000 9:45 PM

About the number of books published in the first run.....have we considered a sign-up list on the site?...possibly offer an "early release" for those who send a \$5 deposit. This would serve to both inform us as to the number of interested readers AND to help out with publishing costs.

Mike

²¹ With the customary errors and problems in the print run, at the end a total of 465 copies of first editions of *Assault On Mars* were bound. It took just under three years to sell or otherwise distribute them all.

DATE: TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2000 9:39 AM

Great. And maybe we ought to sell the books for \$17 in person, \$20 postage paid. Not too much for people out there, but with a lot of sales, it can make a significant difference to us. We can decide for sure later I guess.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 01, 2000 2:28 PM

Just got a postcard from Fred, in which he says, "Spent last several days on your book. Bought & cut paper, made all plates, & have printed 16 pages so far. More later."

We're getting closer to the first public offering!!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 06, 2000 6:16 PM

Fred W. wrote today and said he ought to have close to 100 copies bound by next week. ... We'll be ready to **MAKE OUR BIG ANNOUNCEMENT AND GO TO MARKET BY THE END OF JUNE!!**

I also talked to Jim Towey on the telephone today. He recommended that we contact Ameron, the guy who is doing the reprints Jim has put together. He said the guy might be willing to do short runs of even 60-80 copies. As you know, the quality of Ameron's binding is very good. I'll contact the guy and see what he'll charge for shorter runs, just in case we only need 100 copies rather than 200. I mean, if our total audience comes out to be only 100 and we can get 100 printed for \$1000, that's better than 200 copies at \$2200.²² Anyway, it's worth a look.

David

²² \$2200 was what Sheridan wanted to charge us to print 200 copies.

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2000 1:26 PM

Dear Jon,

Just got in after a three-day trip on church business, and will respond to the various emails you sent about the Starmen before too long.

Also Fred has filled me in on some of his work on AOM. He's doing his best to make it look like an old book, with thick pages and heavy boards. It's really going to be a fantastic production, but probably not something we could easily match in future books—or maybe we can, depending on who we get to do the printing! 100 copies of AOM should be ready at the end of this week. [Once I have them] I'll give my father the precise measurement of the book so he can get 100 dust jackets copied. Then I'll send them to you and we can start offering them for sale by the first week of July.

I'd also like to have Fred sign eight of them, then my father and I will sign them, then I'll send these to Mike for his signature, then he can send them to you for yours.²³ These can be distributed back to us and our helpers as the only copies signed by the entire team. Sound okay?

More later on this.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2000 11:49 PM

Dear Jon,

> *Fred is being very good to us; he is clearly going the extra mile and then*
> *some.*

²³ This became a tradition! For the first five Starman books (all of which were numbered – the later books were not since they were produced via print-on-demand), each of us received a specific number: David got #1, Mike got #2, and I got #3. We always had the major people who were involved with the production of the book sign them. The first book (which I still have) was signed by Fred Woodworth, David Baumann, Bill Baumann (the artist), Mike Dodd, and myself. Our personal copies of the later books were signed by the three of us and by the artist. They're very special copies!

He sure is. When I wrote to say that I had found one more typographical error, he stopped presses and wrote immediately to ask me where it was so he could fix it—including reprinting whatever pages were necessary! I couldn't find it and told him so. It was very minor and we ALL missed it when we were reading for errors.

But now that I read through the book after not looking at it for a month, I see places where it could read more smoothly. I think the secret is to read it aloud before the final draft—that helps you to see how the text flows better than anything else. So from now on, I'll do it that way.²⁴ More work, more time, but better result.

Fred's going to bind them in blue cloth and the endpapers will be midnight blue. It is REALLY going to be a fantastic-looking book. He said he's trying to make it look as close to an old Grosset & Dunlap book as he can.

> *why not go ahead and open them up for sale*
> *now? There are such a thing as advance orders.*

Right! Of course! Let's start taking orders now! If you write something, send me a copy so I can send the same information to my personal list of friends.

> *say we'll charge them \$15 postpaid*
> *while for everyone else it would be \$20 postpaid. I think that at that*
> *weight the difference between bookrate and priority mail is almost nothing.*²⁵
> *I could set up a separate bank account to deposit all the checks in...*

Perfect. If Mike's for it, let's go.

...

²⁴ Thus the Reading Group was born! David got a group of people together who were fans of the Starman series, and as he wrote more chapters for the next Starman book he periodically called the group together and read them to the group. It proved to be a very good thing for the series!

²⁵ This is where we decided to send out all the Starman books via priority mail, and we have never looked back. One thing that helped us make the decision was the fact that the post office offered free boxes to use for priority mail: we could simply take these boxes, drop a book in, and mail it out. If we had mailed the books via bookrate we would have had to purchase our own boxes, and given the tiny difference between mailing a book priority mail and mailing it bookrate, we figured that mailing them bookrate would cost us more in the long run. So the decision was made.

And having [Paul Greene]²⁶ write the introduction to the second book is a FANTASTIC idea.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2000 3:05 AM

I think that 17 orders²⁷ for AOM in a little more than a day is not bad at all. And I haven't even done any advertising myself yet to my friends around here. I'm sure some will order, and I will order some myself to give away.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2000 12:52 PM

Dear Jon,

> I'll get you their addresses as soon as they give them to me.

Excellent. Of course, I should only send to those who have paid and whose checks have cleared. You can just email me the addresses of those who are paid up as of the date I'm ready to mail, about the end of June. I'll let you know when I'm ready to begin packaging, and have been collecting boxes so I can send the books out whenever they're ready.

*> do we have a way to print, say, 1000 copies of this
> book *fast* if we need to?²⁸*

Maybe Ameron or SynSine Press, both of whom have done some publishing for series book people. I don't know how fast they can produce books, but small publishing houses—like the one you sent me information on before—are probably the way to go.

²⁶ The son of Joseph Greene, who was the author of the Dig Allen series.

²⁷ The number of orders we received the first day the book *Assault on Mars* was opened for preorder. The very first order came in from Steve Servello.

²⁸ Just wanted to cover all of our bases!

This is a new area for me too. Are you able to contact these places and see what they can do and what their terms are? I'm going to be real busy for the next couple of weeks. I only have one day next week when I'll be home and then when I get back I will be busting myself getting the dust jackets on the books and mailing them out. Not to mention the work I'm SUPPOSED to be doing for the sabbatical!

The Ameron information should be inside the reprints from Jim Towey, and SynSine Press is ...

- > *I have some publicity ideas that I'd like to*
- > *try, and if they work well we could get a *lot* of orders. I was wondering*
- > *what we'd do. Right now we're set up for only a small number of orders...*

I think being successful is a problem we won't mind facing.²⁹ Maybe we can judge just how much risk we want to take after we get the reviews in from our first edition buyers. If they really like it, let's take the risk. We should check with the above and maybe a couple of other printing houses to see about terms and speed. And if we like the terms, let's start with your publicity ideas and see who's interested enough to order a second edition.³⁰

- > *I did some more work on the Starman Appendix last night.³¹ It's coming*
- > *along fairly well; there is some interesting material on it.*

Terrific. This is the kind of thing that can be valuable for putting together a book package, too, when we try to sell the series to a publisher.

²⁹ Over the past five years the Starman team has tried all sorts of things to advertise the series. We've had front-page newspaper articles. We've had highly positive reviews in magazines (e.g. Analog). We've been covered in various series-book publications (e.g. *The Yellowback Library*, *Susabella Passengers*, *The Mystery & Adventure Review*, *The Blueprint*). We've been mentioned on many websites. Time and again we thought that a campaign would at last establish the major breakthrough we'd been looking for, but none of them have netted more than a couple orders. We're continuing to try, but so far our advertising has come very close to being a waste of time – it hasn't hurt us but it hasn't done much for us either. The odd thing is that many people have heard of the Starman Series and have a high opinion of it, and yet they aren't motivated to check us out or actually get one of our books. It's just a problem we're still working on!

³⁰ We did finally come out with a second edition – three years later. It took us that long to sell the roughly 460 copies of *Assault on Mars* that we had printed. We considered that to be pretty good, considering it was a new series and so few people had heard of us!

³¹ It took me a very long time to put together the first volume of the Starman Archives! I didn't release volume 1 until a full two years after this e-mail was written.

Fun, isn't it?

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2000 1:32 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

I noticed a post on the Starman Message Board today asking how to order the books. I took the liberty of updating Jon's posting on the Rick Brant MB and placed the message that is at the end of the email.

Fred W. has sent me four advance copies of *Assault On Mars*. They look wonderful! He has bound them in cloth that is kind of like a light-colored Rick Brant book. The endpapers are done in midnight blue. The binding is tight. It really looks like a classical series book, though inexpensively produced—i.e., glued, not stitched. It came out really well. It is just about the size of a Rick Brant or Tom Swift Jr. picture cover.³² He has designed the cover with some nice touches—the logo is on the front with the words "A David Foster Starman Adventure" surrounding it, and the spine has some beautiful curlicue designs around the listing of title and author, with a number 1 at the bottom.

I'll get ahold of my father today and give him the dj dimension (7 5/8" high) so he can get 100 color dj's made.

We owe Fred a big vote of thanks. ... He is hand-binding 100 books at a rate of 2 or 3 per hour—not to mention the time it took to print, collate, etc.

David

³² This was very important to us! We went to great extremes to make the first five Starman books resemble classical series books: we matched the size, the paragraph indentation, the chapter layouts, the chapter headings, position of page numbers, frontspiece, etc. We spared no pains to make the first five Starman books formatted identically to the classic series books of the past.

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2000 10:08 AM

About Fred and what we owe him.....I agree with Jon...we really must do something for him....reimbursement.....acknowledgement in next book.....perhaps a character directly/indirectly named after him.³³ Also, his use of ink from 1965 was absolutely the neatest touch.....probably worthy of mention in the next book if it also uses old ink.....the concept is strongly symbolic and wonderfully poetic. History is filled with such things.....The Apollo 11 Lunar Module carried a small piece of the Wright Brothers' first airplane to the surface of the moon.

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2000 4:34 PM

Dear Jon,

I've counted, and we have 66 books altogether ready for dust jacket, and I can bind 19 more in less than a week. This number, however, includes the 9 signed copies ... We therefore have precisely 76 available for our orders. (I already gave Margaret Taylor hers and she's gone to the post office right now to mail your check.) So I guess that means 75—plus the special two...

I think our paid orders from other customers should be top priority, don't you? They've paid and we've made promises to get the books to them next week. If the 30 your father is ordering are for gifts, then maybe some of those can wait if the gifts are for birthdays or Christmas or something. And I can reduce my order of 20 down to 10 or even 5 if necessary, until Fred gets more books bound.³⁴ He's got to buy some more heavy card-

³³ This was Montezuma Vly, who first appeared in *The Runaway Asteroid*.

³⁴ One of the problems we had during the first few years of our work was having enough copies of *Assault on Mars* on hand to sell to our readers. Even though we had hundreds of copies lying around, each copy had to be hand-bound before we could sell it, and binding a book was a very labor-intensive process. Normally we only had a few books on hand to sell at any given time, and it could take weeks before we got any more. There were times when we simply had to say that we were out of books, and that folks would have to wait a few weeks until we got more in. It took David Baumann and the folks who helped him three years to bind all the copies of *Assault on Mars* that were printed, and we were very glad when the last copy was bound!

board for the boards before he can get back to work, but he's got everything else he needs to keep going.

I've also contacted my father about the dust jackets. He had the artwork photographed to make an entirely new, top quality master copy without overlays. He will have 100 copies made tomorrow and will deliver them personally to my house on Friday. Then I'll have to cut each one individually and wrap it around a book.³⁵ But I'm sure I'll be able to get the shipping done by next week without any delay. We're on schedule, I think.

I hope you're doing well!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 2000 11:46 PM

Dear Jon,

Tomorrow I will spend the day putting together the last nineteen books and adding dust jackets to all of them. I bought some equipment similar to what Fred was using for the process, so am almost eager to get going. But I never imagined the high labor-intensive nature of this work. It will take a couple of days of full-time attention to get everything ready to mail, and what I'm doing doesn't even touch what Fred has done and will be doing! And I still have to do the two special copies...

> *When you need the addresses, let me know and I'll e-mail you*
> *the addresses of the people who paid up.*

I'm ready now. I can mail some tomorrow—maybe all, depending on how many there are. I've also already sold a few books and will supply the addresses of those people to you for our master file. These will be part of my twenty so won't diminish our limited

³⁵ The dustjackets for the first editions of the first four Starman books were all done by the Starman team. We took a picture of the artwork, laid a transparency on it of the lettering, and then went down to the local copy shop and had a bunch of copies (normally 100) made, at a cost of around \$1 apiece. After having them trimmed we placed them on the books ourselves. All of this was a bit tedious, however, and we were glad to have Friesens handle them for the fifth book. It was a great feeling to open up the boxes of *The Lost Race of Mars* and see that the dustjackets were already placed on the books!

supply of ready books.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2000 6:14 PM

Dear Jon,

I'd suggest using our AOM account [to pay for printing the first Starman book] so that you're not out too much at one time. Then if we need more money to print TRA, we'll see where we are.

Just now I finished binding all the books, and Fred sent me a package with nine more bound books, and my father came by this morning with the dust jackets. My nephew spent about five hours working with me and all books are now bound and clothed in dust jackets. I have a stack of 94 copies of AOM on my dining room table in completed form. It looks great!

Next task will be to mail them out. That'll take a little effort and I probably won't get to it until Monday, but they should all go out then. My father signed the nine copies, so those will go to Mike for his signature, then those will go on to you.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 01, 2000 8:20 PM

Dear Jon,

Four more books came from Fred today, bringing the total to 98. I'm even more sure that I had 94 yesterday, because I only have 2 dust jackets left now. I'm sure I've accounted for all the books, including the three I left with Margaret. It's just that there are two missing!

> *Maybe*

> *time-travelers from the future came and snitched two valuable AOM books so*
> *they could sell them for millions of solars in some future eon... ;-)*

Hmm. I'm wondering why some people have bought ten. I recall that a few people bought a dozen or more copies of *The Magic Talisman*³⁶ when it was first printed. Maybe they really believes in us and wants to make a killing in a few years. Maybe we WILL actually see a first edition of AOM on ebay.³⁷

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 02, 2000 11:35 PM

Dear Jon,

> *how am I going to get the dustjackets for the books?*

Sure, I'll ask my father³⁸ to send dust jackets to you in packets of 25 or 50 or whatever he can get. Just let me know when you want a set of dj's and I'll get the process started.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 03, 2000 2:01 AM

Dear Jon,

By the way, when Fred Woodworth starts sending you newly-bound copies of AOM, you will have to write the numbers on the title page, i.e. "This is Number ___ of 500 copies," etc. You should start numbering at 101. I've done 1-100.³⁹

³⁶ The last Rick Brant book.

³⁷ I've never seen used copies of the first Starman book for sale on eBay, but I have seen used copies for sale at www.addall.com/used and in antique stores!

³⁸ Until he moved, we had Bill Baumann make the dustjackets for the Starman books because his local copy shop charged less to make color photocopies than anyone else we knew.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 03, 2000 1:41 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

All books are now in the mail. I sent the large packages book rate and insured, including those sent to you two. You should have them in a week, according to the post office guy. Mike, you're getting 19 books—the ten you ordered plus the nine which need your signature. The signatures go on the very first page—you'll see when you open the books where Fred, my father, and I signed. Then send these nine on to Jon for his signature and distribution.

Jon, you're getting the five you ordered, plus the five ordered by others but not yet paid for, and five available for future orders. And remember I still have 17 here available for future orders.

So we're in good shape! Except for the large packages, all others went out priority mail, so our first customers ought to be receiving theirs by Wednesday or Thursday. Watch for postings on the Message Board by the weekend!⁴⁰

Now, onward!

David

³⁹ The first editions of the first five Starman books were numbered, and numbering the books was always a terrific pain. As you can see, each book (all 500 of them) had to be numbered by hand. That would not have been so bad had it not been for the fact that David got some books, I got some books, and Mike got some books, and we had to make sure that no two books received the same number. On top of this, each of us distributed a number of copies in person, and since numbers were given on a first-come first-serve basis, these people had already been allotted specific numbers. When it came time to distribute a new book I always had to go through the files and tell David who got what number, what numbers he needed to have to deliver to the people in his area, what other numbers he should use that had not yet been allotted, and so forth. I was actually glad when book six came out via print-on-demand and the books were no longer numbered: it made releasing a book so much easier.

⁴⁰ We were always looking forward to feedback from our readers!

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 07, 2000 3:49 PM

By the way, Jon. A few of the books had a superabundance of glue. This was before I learned to bind more effectively. This means that some glue flowed over the pages and will make them hard to open. That can be overcome if the reader carefully opens them with a letter opener.⁴¹

However, if anyone complains and wants a new book, that's fine. Just ask them to send the defective copy to me (I can fix it) and I will send them a new book with a check to cover their postage.

All four new orders were put into the mail today. Off now on a weekend trip.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2000 7:27 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I'm going to mail a book out tomorrow, but I'm not sure how to send it.*
- > *I know I go to the post office and they'll give me one of those priority*
- > *mail holders, but surely you do more than that! Do you wrap it in bubbles,*
- > *or put it in a bag, or anything? How do you protect it in that cardboard*
- > *holder?*⁴²

⁴¹ Oh, yes, that reminds me of another problem the first edition copies of *Assault on Mars* had: too much glue. Besides the occasional missing page, the glue used to bind the books sometimes spilled over onto the pages, sealing them shut. The best way to open them was to take a knife and cut the pages apart. Sometimes this was easy, and sometimes (when you had to cut apart 200 pages) it was tedious, and it did have a tendency to damage the pages. Once again, we were glad when *The Runaway Asteroid* came along and we were able to have a book printed and bound professionally: no more long binding sessions or glued pages!

⁴² I handled most of the shipping aspect of the series, as well as orders, finances, accounting, website management, customer service, and plotting. At first I wasn't sure how to package the books to send out, but over time I learned.

Whenever I get a package, I save any bubble wrap or styrofoam material. If I have bubble wrap or styrofoam, I put the book in that. If I use crumpled newspapers (and I've done both, when I've run out of the other stuff), I wrap the book in a white sheet so the newspaper ink won't run off, then pack it in newspaper. The priority mailers are free and the postage is \$3.20. There are stamps with that denomination, so it's easy. If I send several books (such as to your grandmother), I'll put the bunch of books into a plastic shopping bag before surrounding the product with newspaper.

- > *with your extras we do have a margin, but it's a really slim one. I imagine*
- > *you'll sell yours quickly. It'll be interesting putting up a notice that*
- > *says we've sold out; I bet -that- will draw some attention!*

At this point, I have only one book left, and I fully expect to sell that one tonight and get orders for more. So you can say that we have indeed SOLD OUT of the first 100.⁴³ We won't be able to ship more until I bind the twenty I've got (that'll take me a few days) and get new dust jackets for them and the 10 you're getting from Fred W. (that'll take probably until July 24). So we're about two weeks away from 30 additional books beyond the first hundred. I'll ask my father to make, say, 50 new dust jackets so we'll be ready for more orders. Or should I go ahead and get 100 more? There is a slight discount for 100 copies.

Which reminds me! Jon, when you get your package from Fred with 10 bound books in it, begin to number them at 121. The 20 he sent me I'll number 101-120.

Regarding prepaid orders.⁴⁴ I suggest that we tell those who are interested that we will accept prepaid orders with gratitude, but that there are some uncertainties. We will cash the check but will keep a record of their account. If, for some reason, we are unable to produce the books, they will get a full refund for any books they didn't get. And we can guarantee them a price of \$20 per book even if it turns out we have to charge more to others once the book is produced. How does that sound?

- > *right now we have \$350 in the bank; we need about \$2500 more to print #2*

That much? I thought it was about \$2200 for 200 hardback picture covers. I still haven't checked with Ameron or other publishers and I suspect they may be less.

⁴³ We sold our first 100 copies in about two weeks. This was very exciting to us as we never imagined that we would sell that many in so short a time.

⁴⁴ We did have some people who wanted to preorder three, four, and even five books in advance of what we had available!

- > *If we decided to do this, I would vote for only 'preselling' books that*
- > *we have detailed, completed summaries for: right now, that includes TRA, JTP*
- > *and DIE.*

Right. We haven't got a detailed summary of LRM⁴⁵ yet, but we're pretty close to it and I think we can guarantee that we will produce at least those five. I think we can accept prepaid orders as far as LRM.

And as a thanks for their confidence and support, we might also send a free copy of the History and Appendices to those who pay for all five, with no guarantee when that'll be ready. Others can pay \$10 or something for it when it's ready. What do you think?⁴⁶

- > *To me, all this support is truly amazing: it's a gift from God. ...We're*
- > *getting pretty*
- > *tremendous support from people who haven't even read our work yet!*

Yes, it is amazing! I hope it's a sign that the rest of the project will be equally blessed!

I should be finished with my sabbatical book tomorrow and then will get busy on the web site. After that, on to TRA!!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 14, 2000 1:34 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *It looks like (I can't say for sure until I receive payment) we've*
- > *already sold the 30 books that will come in two weeks, and then some; I*
- > *think by the time we get the 30 books and distribute those we will have a*
- > *pretty large backlog built up.*

⁴⁵ *The Lost Race of Mars*. I had forgotten that we didn't start calling it LROM until later.

⁴⁶ As you can see, we were thinking about how to distribute the Archives long before any volumes actually existed.

Outstanding! But I've noticed that nobody's placed anything on the message board yet. We have sold a lot, but nobody (except Ed Pippin) has given us a review on the story itself. I hope people like the story as well as the appearance of the books!

> *I got the books in the mail! They look beautiful; I'm really impressed with them.*

Glad you like them. I hope you've got yours by now, Mike!

The brilliance of the dust jacket compared with the dark authors' copies⁴⁷ is due to my dad. He photographed the original and made a master from the photo.

> *Fred did a marvelous job!*

That too!

> *I see what you mean about the dustjacket; the image is somewhat off-center (somebody didn't make the cover!), and the jacket is just a little tall for the book. It's nothing serious, though.*

Yes. That's because the dimensions I first gave my dad for the painting were those of the Dig Allen books—which are a little wider than most series books. When I made a master later, I cut off the last inch of the original and gave my dad a master from that. When that came out too dark and he made a new master, he used the old dimensions because I hadn't told him about the difference. He knows now, though. And we can cut the next 100 dj's an extra sixteenth of an inch to match the books better.

Next project: the new web site.

David

⁴⁷ The dustjackets for the author's copies of the books were always darker than the dustjackets on the normal books.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2000 8:44 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Tomorrow I leave on a trip with my brothers and father, and won't be back until Sunday evening. This is my and my brothers' Christmas present to our dad.

I finished binding the last of the 20 books and will get the five to our customers into the mail on Friday morning, including the homeschool person.

- > *That leaves six. Are they already spoken for? I need one more...*
- >
- > *Yes, they're spoken for and then some — but if you need one more go*
- > *ahead and take it. Some of the people on the list can wait; for instance, I*
- > *doubt Daniel will send his check until he gets back from Belize in August.*

Now I need two more. Marge Avery wants one for her other son. The first son, the real Uneven Stephen,⁴⁸ already has one. Shall I take two? I already told her probably not and that she'd have to order from you. If not, that's okay.

- > *I think it would be cheapest for us if you just kept them, and then*
- > *mailed them out as the checks come in. That would save some extra money to*
- > *put toward TRA.*

Good plan. I'll wait to hear from you then. Nobody gets one without your go ahead.

- > *I'm saving all postal receipts and keeping a careful account of*
- > *expenses, noting dates and whatnot...⁴⁹*

Been doing that.

- > *could you mail the dustjackets in some hard flat cardboard box instead of an*
- > *envelope?*

⁴⁸ A character in *Assault on Mars*

⁴⁹ Yes, I still have a box filled with an amazing number of postage receipts. No, I don't know what I'm going to do with them.

The dust jackets and your painting will go into a large, flat, hard package which I am specially constructing. Just to be on the safe side, I'll write DO NOT BEND on the package. And I'll insure it. It'll go out Friday first thing in the morning, priority mail.

- > *If we get a thousand orders, though, that would gross \$20,000;*
- > *with that much money we could afford to hire somebody.*

My thoughts exactly.

- > *You know, what might be best is to just use the*
- > *master your Dad just made for all the rest of the books; it would help*
- > *create some consistency. Unless there's a specific reason to, we probably*
- > *don't need to make a new master each time we want to print some dustjackets.*

Right. We only made a new master this time to correct the "half inch off center" problem of the first run.

- > *About the Videotape.....Jon, I am glad you and your family liked it⁵⁰*

I still haven't got to it, Mike, but I will! For being on sabbatical, I've sure been busy!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2000 10:10 PM

Dear Jon,

Just finished packaging the dust jackets and your signed painting. Everything looks absolutely fantastic! The dust jackets are beautifully proportioned! My father will keep the master at his house for whenever we need more dust jackets run. I'm sending you 105 dust jackets less eleven for those I've still got, for a total of 94.

...

⁵⁰ Mike Dodd sent us a cool video that, among other things, had some clips of Mike doing some land sailing in a parking lot! Part of this tape made it into the Starman documentary that we released several years later and showed at the 2002 Charlottesville Series Book Convention.

The dust jackets are being sent in a pretty firm cardboard package I have custom made and reinforced.⁵¹ Unless your post office guy is a real, certifiable sociopath, you ought to get these in good condition. I'm sending them priority mail insured.

The signed painting⁵² is coming rolled in a separate package, also sent priority mail insured. Both packages will go out first thing Friday morning, so look for them Monday or Tuesday.

Total cost for custom photographic masters is \$46.29. That breaks down to master for the dust jackets, \$12.83 and painting reproduction, \$29.93—plus tax. Total cost for photocopying 105 dust jackets is \$75.29. Therefore total reimbursement for my father is \$121.58. I think you've got the address. I'm sure it'll be fine to enclose the check when you send out his signed book.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2000 7:30 PM

*> Depending how quick we are at completing #2, we could have
> a problem finding the money to print #2. ... let's say that TRA is
> ready by the end of September to go to the printer (that sounds
> realistic to me!). We'll get perhaps 50 more books by then (I'm
> probably too optimistic). That will bring in around \$455, leaving
> us \$1,144.50 short. I think this is money we will have to come up
> with ourselves...*

Sounds good, but I don't know that you ought to take all the risk yourself.⁵³ I'm strapped right now, however, since I just bought a new (used) car to replace the one I wrecked. My discretionary, available money is less than minimal and will be for a few months.

⁵¹ Mailing dustjackets was always a terrific pain: it was very difficult to package them in such a way that they would arrive undamaged.

⁵² I really liked the cover art for the first Starman book and had asked David if he could make an enlargement for me and mail it to me so I could frame it. He did so, and it hangs on my wall.

⁵³ I was always worried about finances. Printing books is quite expensive, and I always wondered if we would have the funds to get another book printed or not. Eventually I relaxed and quit worrying about it, but it wasn't until after we released *Descent Into Europa*.

- > *So, that's how it stands. TRA will get printed, but I think about half the*
- > *money will have to come from project supporters instead of AOM.*

Good to have that in mind. I think we should make it a go and if somehow TRA loses money and you, or whoever invests, is out, then we ought to split the losses evenly.

- > *This fellow had a neat idea for a web page for our site:*
- >
- > *>An idea for the web page. I am curious on the cost of publishing. Not that*
- > *>I want to find out if you are gouging us :) but just for interest sake. How*
- > *>much did the run cost to print and how much will it cost for commercial*
- > *>printing? Thanks.*
- >
- > *This might actually be a good idea.*

I agree. I think openness about our finances is a good idea.⁵⁴ I'd suggest putting your figures on the web site in a section called THE FINANCIAL FIGURES or something like that and email the guy to tell him we've done it. Can't hurt and you never know, maybe someone will believe in the project enough to give us a donation.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2000 7:18 PM

Dear Jon and David,

We might be able to raise money to fund #2 by offering AOM to be serialized by a newspaper or even a sci-fi mag. We might ask the mag for only \$600 or the paper for \$300, but it would help.

Ironically, serializing the book might INCREASE our exposure and sales of the book. Any thoughts?⁵⁵

Mike

⁵⁴ Ever since this point we've been very open about our finances, and regularly printed how many copies we had sold, how much money we had grossed from each book, and what our current bank balance was. It's unusual but since this is mostly a non-profit project (in the sense that none of us are earning anything from it) we thought it would be a good idea.

⁵⁵ We liked this idea, but we were never able to follow up on it. I'd still like to do this.

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2000 4:02 AM

- > *We might be able to raise money to fund #2 by*
- > *offering AOM to be serialized by a newspaper or even a sci-fi mag. We might*
- > *ask the mag for only \$600 or the paper for \$300, but it would help.*
- > *Ironically, serializing the book might INCREASE our exposure and*
- > *sales of the book. Any thoughts?*

Sure. Could be done if some periodical would be willing. Selling the series to a professional magazine takes time and knowledge, though. I have the knowledge but can't take the time. Anybody else want to take the lead?

David

DATE: THU, 10 AUG 2000 13:55:50 -0700

- > *Should we offer discounts for large purchases?*

Sure. If you get a request, tell them that you'll confer with your partners and get back to them. Too many details on that possibility to cover all at once, such as how large a quantity, availability of books, etc.

David

DATE: THU, 10 AUG 2000 19:41:33 -0700

Dear Jon and Mike,

Ameron Press called me today, and verbal, unofficial estimate for printing the Starman books is \$9.50 to \$12 per book. They only do 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 pages, larger than the standard series book size. I think we can do better.

- > *I think there are some real possibilities here in*
- > *the used bookstore market; we just need to find a way*
- > *to break into it. Any ideas?*

Used book stores will probably not be interested since what we've got is not "used." Other bookstores might be interested on a commission basis, but probably only those that cater to series book fans. And we don't want to send a number of books out on commission to people we don't know or who are far away. No guarantees we'll ever see books or money!

I'd recommend contacting SynSine Press. That's one of the four places I've asked about publishing our books. They're the ones who bought several copies of *The Magic Talisman* outright, and where I got my copy from. They know series book people and series books, and series book fans know them.

Probably our best selling point is the reviews we have received.

Overall, though, I doubt you'll get much interest. If people can buy from a bookstore, they can buy from us. I think that, unless we get into real volume, maybe with a professional publisher like Golden Press, online selling will be best. That's why the homeschooling possibility sounds like our best bet.⁵⁶

You might look for other places that can recommend the product to their readers, or we might consider paid advertising in magazines.⁵⁷ Fred W. did that, however, and got zero response!

I'm not encouraging, I know, and I also don't know much about it. Do keep in mind that it took over six years to sell 500 copies of *The Magic Talisman*—which began with a ready audience, established fans, and was supported by a solid series with a known history that had sold millions of copies. I think that we're doing very, very well.

⁵⁶ Nothing came of the homeschooling possibility – in fact, it turned into a real mess. I've kept notes on the mess but I'm not going to publish them, and will just say that this was the last time we tried to reach that market. We really should go back and take another look at it, but we never have.

⁵⁷ About three years after this message was posted we did start trying paid advertising! Only time will tell if it was worth it.

Any word from Paul Greene yet?

David

DATE: SAT, 12 AUG 2000 17:56:43 -0700

I also had a "worst case scenario" idea for future full-length books. Suppose we don't get enough orders to finance a full printing of 200+ books at some point.⁵⁸ Then we could make a limited run of 50 on a photocopier. It costs about \$6 per book for photocopying. I could send collated pages to Fred for gluing and he could return them to me for hand binding into covers and wrapping in a dust jacket. Cost would be minimal and we'd have 50 hardback books just as good as AOM. These could be sold to a limited number of our best fans. ... That would leave 20 or 30 for sale to the general public. After the 50 are gone, then we can post the story on a web site as an e-book. That way, we get the full series in hardback and a large number of fans gets to read it. Again, this is only a worst-case scenario, if money fails us.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2000 4:20 PM

I'm glad to know that we're in comfortable position for printing TRA. Let's hope that our AOMs continue to sell, though, so we don't have to ask for advance orders. In the long run, that will cut into our ability to print JTP. But I think that God will bless what we're doing and we'll be fine.

David

⁵⁸ This was a big concern. At this point in time we had not yet released the second Starman book and knew that we didn't have enough money to print it. I'm very grateful that we never had to use David's worst-case plan!

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 2000 5:14 PM

By the way, I had one response from a potential printer for us. They won't work. In a very kind and helpful letter, they insist on editorial rights if their name is going to be on the book, and have a minimum print run of 1000. They make the distinction between publishers and printers. What we want is a printer. Ameron is a printer. Still haven't heard from the remaining two to whom I sent letters, and I haven't contacted the one or two firms you found last spring, Jon.

More later!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2000 2:43 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Update on the publisher/printers for TRA. We are down to three possibilities: Ameron House, Colossus (the firm SynSine referred me to), and Sheridan Books. All seem to be generally in the same ballpark of \$10 per book (VERY roughly). We'll get firm bids when we finally provide concrete information like exact number of pages, type of illustrations, etc. But we will definitely have someone to print for us when the time comes.

David

DATE: WED, 27 SEP 2000 18:13:02 -0700

Dear Jon and Mike,

Morris Publishing was one of my original contacts and I have already received their catalogue. It came yesterday. Haven't looked at it yet, though. I've been REALLY busy and when I have spare time I'd rather write than do busy work (in which I'm getting be-

hind). I really want to get TRA done. This Saturday is the meeting of the third reading group.

If they're the same Morris Publishing, however, I contacted them by mail, and then we corresponded by email a couple of times, and it looked as if they were not suitable—wanted a minimum run of 1000 copies and wanted editorial authority. But I may be thinking of another company. Anyway, I'll check out their package. If their web site says differently, then maybe I'm thinking of another company.

David

DATE: THU, 05 OCT 2000 16:27:31 -0700

Dear Jon,

I've looked through the Morris Publishing material, and they do not offer hardback binding. They also only offer two sizes of book, neither of which is the size of a series book.⁵⁹

The town of Morris on Mars [in *The Runaway Asteroid*] is named for them, however.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000 7:40 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I'm happy with Sheridan. Let's go ahead and get the paperwork started. And publishing 500 copies sounds good too. We can always get dust jackets done by photocopy if we need to, but getting 500 would be fairly expensive. They cost us about \$75 per 100 cop-

⁵⁹ As you can see, having the book printed in the standard series book size was absolutely critical to us. It wasn't until book six that we moved away from this, and even then it was due to financial reasons (namely, printing it via print-on-demand in a standard size saved us more than \$5000). It was very hard to let that standard size go.

ies at this point. Let's see what Sheridan offers and go with the best rate. Good work Jon!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000 8:06 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *[dust jackets] Remember, though, that Sheridan has access to better quality*
- > *paper than we can get at the local copy shop: they can make a lot sturdier,*
- > *nicer dustjackets. (Just something to think about).*

Good point. We should keep it in mind when we compare prices. Not to mention the convenience, too. It would be nice to have everything in one place at one time and only have to worry about shipping. Unless there's a BIG price difference, I'd say let's go with Sheridan for everything.⁶⁰

David

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2000 12:04 AM

Dear Jon,

- > *for the frontpapers/endpapers I specified them as being*
- > *color, but only one color (blue) on white paper.*

Oh absolutely. I personally don't care for multi-colored endpapers and we don't need to run up the costs more than we need to. I suggest that the blue they use should be midnight blue, which is what we used in AOM. Did I tell you that the ink Fred used for that was from 1965? He chose it especially to be reminiscent of the era.

⁶⁰ There was a big price difference, so we decided to make the dustjackets ourselves and save the money.

> *I was thinking: the Starman series is going to be quite
> an expensive set to collect: at \$20 each, for 23 books — that'd be \$460 for
> the set. Quite a lot! But I think they're *definitely* worth it.*⁶¹

Right—and people aren't going to be putting out that chunk all at once. It's really only about \$20 every six months or so. Unless our future customers start ordering all the back books too.⁶²

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2000 8:57 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *I will need to print out and provide the photo-ready manuscript, but I'm not
> sure how to do it.*

Don't worry about that. I can do it easily, either by sending it to you to send on to Sheridan or you can send me the package for me to complete and send to them.⁶³

> *What does photo-ready mean?*

Photo-ready means all they have to do is photocopy what we send—no typesetting, no illustrations to be added, no artwork to be created, no title pages to design. We just get bound copies of what we send.

> *the publisher suggested sending along a copy of any*

⁶¹ At the time I thought that \$20 for a single book was incredibly expensive: I was used to paying about \$5 or so for the other used series books I had been collecting. After paying for a few print runs, though, I began to see the light and realize that \$20 was actually pretty cheap in comparison with what it cost us to produce a book.

⁶² And they did! I was amazed at how many new customers bought the entire set at once.

⁶³ David produced the photo-ready manuscripts for books two and three – a very difficult task! After book three we switched from Sheridan to Friesens, and since Friesens required that manuscripts be submitted as a PDF file we bought Adobe PageMaker and I set up the PDF submission files for books four and five. After book five we switched to 1stBooks, which required all submissions be Word documents, and since David was familiar with Word he set up the documents and I just mailed them off.

> *previous printings so they could get a better idea of what we wanted. I thought it might be a good idea to send along a copy of AOM to explain exactly what texture we wanted for the cover, how the book was laid out, etc. and included a self-addressed stamped envelope so they could return the book. I'm somewhat nervous about getting the job right: I know they can do it, it's just a matter of their receiving proper instructions.*⁶⁴

Sounds good. I think we should do our best to make our instructions as complete as we can. When I let my father do the dj for the first 100 AOMs, I had forgotten that I needed to cut one inch off the painting to make it fit—that's why those first dust jackets didn't fit quite right. It was only because I had missed a teeny part of the otherwise very detailed instructions. Sending them a sample is a good idea. Having them return it is an even better one!

By the way, the dust jackets came today, Jon, and I'll distribute the two books to their buyers tomorrow.

> *If you're going to bind 15 books you'll need more dustjackets...*

I don't know for sure that I'll be binding any—I just made the offer to Fred to help out.⁶⁵ He sent me a huge package today of leftover pages for me to complete by adding what is missing, and send back to him for binding. It'll take me a few days. Probably on Saturday I'll ask the karate class to take a few minutes and do the complete collation of the 300 or so copies I've got. That should speed Fred's work immensely. But it SURE WILL BE GREAT TO HAVE THE REST OF THE BOOKS PROFESSIONALLY BOUND!

David

⁶⁴ I tended to doubt their ability to follow directions, and later experience bore this out: Sheridan had a great deal of trouble formatting the book the way we wanted, even after we provided very clear written directions. Friesens did it exactly right, but they were the only ones to do so: when we switched to 1stBooks we once again had tremendous formatting difficulties. We knew exactly what we wanted: getting companies to actually follow our directions tended to be difficult.

⁶⁵ David ended up doing the majority of the binding for the first edition of the first Starman book. He was pretty clever about it: he found a way to get a lot of students to help him, and with everyone working together it didn't take as long (although it was still a lot of work). I bound a few, but not many.

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 06, 2000 6:12 PM

- > What does concern me is the designs on the book (the little*
- > fancy latticework, the logo on the cover, etc): how am*
- > I going to lift that off the book?*

I don't think you need to do it. That can be the design for the first edition, hand-bound books. If you DO want, it however, Fred can probably send you a copy of the design printed on white paper. If you want it, let me know and I'll ask him for you, or you can write directly and ask him yourself. It would be nice!⁶⁶

David

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2000 10:33 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

- > Fred can probably send you a copy of the design printed on white paper...I*
- > mailed a letter to Fred today, asking if it would be possible to get*
- > the ink designs for the cover and spine of AOM (I explained what I wanted it*
- > for and so on). So we'll see how that goes!*

I made a copy yesterday of the curlicues Fred made for AOM, and was able to get it in black and white. I'll send it to you today. He may not be able to do it.

David

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2000 10:33 AM

- > solid black/solid white or shades of gray?*

⁶⁶ We did ask, and he did send it, and we used that latticework for the first editions of the first five Starman books.

Solid black/white. Ameron told me it is very difficult to print shades, and therefore more expensive. Or you just might contact Sheridan and ask what they can do for what cost. We do want to keep costs down. Best thing is to contact Tom⁶⁷ and have him send you the scene in black and white. We can still have Sheridan use midnight blue rather than black if we like.⁶⁸ I've forgotten why Fred used midnight blue instead of black. I personally prefer the black ink, which I used for the endpapers in our authors' edition of AOM.

Do you have any word from them yet on printing the dust jacket?

...

And without really good reason, I wouldn't raise the price of TRA beyond \$20, because although WE know we have a great product, the customers won't know it until they see it. We don't want to ask more for a new book than we did for AOM until we have a really solid base of support. We may find our customers evaporating. ("Gee, I liked AOM a lot, but now if they're asking more and more money for each book, I guess I won't get the next one.")

David

DATE: MON, 13 NOV 2000 13:22:06 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Having them print dustjackets could push the*
- > *price, once tax and other stuff is figured in, to*
- > *close to \$3000 (i.e. \$2500 for the books, \$150 tax,*
- > *\$350 for the djs). Obviously we'll need dustjackets,*
- > *but (unless you disagree) I'd rather print them as we*
- > *need them.*

⁶⁷ Tom Narwid, the fellow who took a photo of deep space with his own telescope and gave it to us to use as the endpapers for the Starman Series. This photo (modified by Kevin Anetsberger via a computer to drop it down to just two colors for printing purposes) became the endpapers for the first editions of the second, third, and fourth Starman book.

⁶⁸ That's what we did! I'm glad: I think that the dark blue endpapers look much better than black-and-white endpapers would have looked. I had forgotten that David wanted black ones.

That sounds fine. A little more work for us but a lot easier than what we've been doing with AOM.

The Sheridan package came today. I'll hang onto it, then, and have it ready for whenever we're ready to send it off.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2000 1:49 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *when do we want to open up the second book for preorders?*

I'd suggest that when Sheridan gives us a delivery date, we can advertise it and take preorders. Then we can say: TRA is finished, it's being printed by a professional company, the MS has been submitted, delivery is promised by so-and-so date, and shipping will commence on so-and-so date—reserve your copy now, send \$20, etc. But we need a definite shipping date.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2000 7:59 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> *David, we were thinking of enclosing a copy*
> *of AOM to send to Sheridan, for them to see how we wanted to print TRA (and*
> *then, of course, they'd send it back). Do you have an extra copy you could*
> *send? If not, I might need to send you one really quick.*

No, I don't have any copies at all except my own. If you send me one, it won't need a dust jacket.

- > *Next year it will cost us \$3.95 to mail out each copy of a Starman book*
- > *(as opposed to \$3.20 today). That's around a 20% increase in the price of*
- > *postage.⁶⁹ I know we can't raise our prices, so the net result is a*
- > *significant dent in our profits. We can't do anything about it, but it's*
- > *something we have to keep in mind.*

I guess JTP can be sold for \$21. However, we haven't asked for any advance orders yet, so we could ask \$21 for TRA if we wanted.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2000 8:54 PM

- > *I just printed out the endpapers, and man does it look nice. It*
- > *(somewhat unexpectedly) printed out in a deep midnight blue: it looks*
- > *gorgeous.⁷⁰ I'll pop it in the mail (along with a copy of AOM to send to the*
- > *printer) tomorrow morning, so you should get it by Tuesday.*

Excellent!

David

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2000 11:28 AM

- > *we might want to shrink the font half a point or so (say, to 10.5*
- > *instead of 11) instead of having 6 or 7 extra blank pages. Just a thought!*

⁶⁹ I was never very happy when postage was raised! Being the person in the series who kept track of the finances, I knew that it would hurt our profits, which in turn would hurt our ability to print another book.

⁷⁰ This is not the only time that a printing error changed what we ended up printing. When we were working with 1stBooks to print *Doomsday Horizon* (the sixth Starman book) I printed out a copy of the dust-jacket to show to a friend of mine. When my printer printed the image, it changed the gray title lettering to a dark red – and I really liked the change! I asked 1stBooks to change it on the jacket, and they did – and that's why the title lettering on the dustjacket of that book is in red.

Hey, good idea! It is at 11 points now, and 10.5 could work very well for a long book. I'll try it and see what happens.⁷¹

David

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2000 8:55 PM

I also reduced the font size from 11 to 10.5. The appearance of the pages is not changed appreciably, but it does reduce the overall number of pages from 240 to 225—a big savings!

Both packages arrived today Jon! The endpapers do look magnificent!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2000 11:53 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I tell you, I'm just about to ready to give real credence to Fred Woodworth's philosophy of complete distrust of modern technology. I've been working on printing up TRA for several hours and still can't get my computer or printer or both to work correctly! It is printing the page number in two places, and won't change the supertitle I'm putting on the right hand pages. It printed The Runaway Asteroid just fine on the left side, but I'm trying to print each chapter title as a header for the chapters, and no matter what I do, including shutting down the entire computer and starting it up again, it won't change from chapter to chapter. All I can do is print up about a hundred labels and scotch tape

⁷¹ We did it, we liked it, and we went with it: it saved us quite a few pages, and that in turn saved us dollars. Looking back, though, I wish we hadn't done that: the smaller font was harder to read and the artifacts that Sheridan introduced to the text when they printed it were just amplified by the smaller font.

them all by hand in the right places.⁷² I'll have to do that anyway to get the page numbers correct on the first page of each chapter. This is going to take hours more work, and then I'm going to have to photocopy the entire document before sending it off, so that I'll have something work with when I bind up the three author's copies.

All this is by way of saying that there's no way I can get this package into the mail even on Friday morning. Tomorrow, my alleged day off, I begin a two-day convention, then have stuff all day on Sunday. I'll finish it up on Monday and do my best to get the package off to Sheridan that afternoon.

Unless I have an apoplectic stroke first.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 01, 2000 4:22 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

1:15 a.m. and it's all printed. I guess the computer and printer just needed a little rest. I tried again and it printed up fine. Looks great! It still needs a little touch-up by hand to get some things done that the computer can't do—or least that I don't know how to get the computer to do. But that won't take too long. The frontispiece is in place and looks very nice.

I still won't be able to get it out in the mail tomorrow, since I still have to make a master photocopy for us and complete the Sheridan information, but now for sure there will be no problem getting it out on Monday. Sorry for the delay.

If you still have the scroll work, Jon, and can put it in the mail to me priority, that'll be the last thing. If you mailed it to me already, I'll scour the piles of papers on my working desk again.

⁷² That's what David did for the first editions of the second and third books in order to get things formatted correctly! I think I still have the original manuscripts he sent to Sheridan for those books sitting in my closet, and they are just amazing. It really took a lot of work to put those together.

Now the painting for the dust jacket is the only other uncompleted work, I think, and the lettering for it on a transparency, but there's no hurry on that. It's nearly finished, anyway. We're going to have a very fine-looking book.

David

DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 04, 2000 8:16 PM

Dear Jon,

I am all ready to mail the package to Sheridan. There are a few areas on the checklist that seem confusing, but as you said to ignore those, I will do so. There is one thing confusing, however, that needs clarification. In your handwritten note, you said to mail the package to the Fredericksburg, VA address. The cover letter from Cathy M-L, however, says to mail it to her at the Chelsea, MI address. If you can check this out and get back to me with an answer, I will send the package out. If it goes to the wrong place, especially this time of year, who knows how long the project will be delayed. And I definitely do NOT want to have to print out another master copy!

Other than that, we're ready! I will send you a photocopy of all the papers I send her so that if you need to be in contact with her over the telephone, you'll know just what I sent.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 05, 2000 2:11 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I spoke to Cathy this morning for some final coordination before sending the package off. She said that she chose the Fredericksburg office because it is closest to Jon in WV, thus minimizing shipping costs. She will coordinate the project from Michigan, using a Fredericksburg person as local project supervisor, whose name she supplied but which I didn't write down.

Cathy is very pleasant and easy to work with. You did a great job picking Sheridan, Jon! I am sure they will be a fine job with TRA!!

I sent Jon a copy of all documents, and sent the package to Sheridan this morning by priority mail. Cathy gave me a rough estimate of a mid-January shipping date, but will give an official date once they receive the package and see what they're dealing with. It does look though that we'll be able to start shipping to our customers before the end of January.

Next to do is finish the dust jacket painting (close to completion now) and get the transparency with the dj lettering prepared. I'll probably need Jon's help with that. Then I'll run 200 photocopies of the dj and ship 150 to Jon. I'll wait until after Christmas to do that, when the mails are not inundated.

I'll also make the three authors' copies of TRA and send them to you two before too long.

Blessings!

David

DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2000 7:34 PM

> *I haven't had any new orders [for AOM] for a while; I think things might be
> starting to level off. (Of course, I thought that before too and it didn't
> happen.) For now I think
> we're ok. [answering Mike's question about our financial picture] after
> deducting the \$1301.5 check for Sheridan (to cover half
> the printing costs), we've got around \$550 dollars. We still need around
> another \$1000, but we're moving in the right direction! I think if we can
> sell 70 TRAs we'll make what we need — and I think that we can sell 70 of
> them fairly easily. So the financial situation looks good.*

But won't the advance orders cut into the eventual profit we'll need to print JTP? Ideally, we want to be able to finance the printing of a book without having to depend on

advance orders.⁷³ So I've been wondering. Do either of you wonder whether printing up 500 copies of TRA is too many?⁷⁴ It costs us \$167 per extra hundred, so it's not too expensive, but on the other hand, if AOM sales are leveling off at around 200, should we maybe figure 300 for TRA, and save the extra \$334? I'm okay either way. It took about 7 years to sell the 500 Magic Talismans.⁷⁵

> *[on more AOM dj's] I imagine by the time we send the TRA dustjackets, I'll need them. Maybe in early January we should make up another batch: I'm thinking around 30 or 40. There's no need to make a huge number; the AOMs aren't selling as fast as that, and we could use the other money for TRA expenses...*

Okay. When I get on to the TRA dj's, I'll add 30 or so AOM dj's.

> *Actually, if I were you I'd keep it [the extra AOM dj]: no telling when Fred might send you another AOM book as he's done in the past, and if he did you'd now have a dustjacket and it'd be ready to sell or give to a customer.*

Good idea.

David

⁷³ I don't think this ever happened until after we printed the fifth Starman book.

⁷⁴ Boy, am I glad we ended up printing 500 copies of each of the first five Starman books! If we had only printed 250 copies of AOM we would have run out pretty quickly and been faced with a huge printing bill to reprint it – a bill we couldn't have afforded at the time. The same thing can be said about books two, three, and four: printing only 200 or 300 would have gotten us into trouble, since we would have run out of copies and then had no funds to reprint the book. Printing 500 copies of each book gave us enough time to build up our bank account that by the time book one needed to be reprinted we could afford to do so. Each step of the way we could have done something in our ignorance that would have been disastrous and ended the project, but God preserved us from ourselves.

⁷⁵ At the time only the first Starman book had been released, and we weren't sure of our finances or our audience. For all we knew we would never even be able to sell 200 copies of each book.

DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2000 10:19 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I agree that we should stick with 500 copies of TRA, even if it means my loaning some money into the process. The cost effectiveness of a 500 book printing is just too good to ignore.

Mike

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2000 1:05 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Good words, both, on keeping the number of TRAs at 500. We'll know better what our demand is when we get to JTP. Let's stay at 500, then!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2000 6:19 PM

> *Just got a call from Sheridan Books! They got our package, looked it
> over, and had a lot of questions to ask. They sound like they know what
> they're doing.*⁷⁶

Great!

> *Let me see if I can remember what they were:*⁷⁷
>

⁷⁶ Famous last words!

⁷⁷ Normally I wouldn't include such tiny details in the Archives, but I thought it might serve as an example of the sort of things we had to worry about to print a Starman book.

- > * *The endpapers are a little too small — they need to make them 10% larger.*
- > *They wanted to know if that was ok; I told them it was fine.*

Definitely.

- > * *The spine logo things are too large; they need to shrink them by 66% for their equipment. They're sending me a copy to see what I think — if we don't like the result we can change it.*

Okay, but I hope it's workable. Fred's design looks terrific!

- > * *On the quote, it simply says 'plain matching uncoated endpapers' — the price doesn't include the one-color endpapers we specified. They're sending me a quote for the price difference between endpapers and no endpapers.*

I wondered about that when I saw the paperwork. Let's pray the extra expense won't be too much.

- > * *David's trim size measurements conflicted each other: the sheet said 4 7/8 and the letter said 4 3/4. I didn't know which was which, so I told him to go with the larger measurement — I thought that was safer than shrinking it and risking cutting something off.*

They should go with the trim size of the sample copy of AOM. I measured twice and obviously missed 1/8 inch somewhere in there. Fred may actually have cut different sizes, since he did everything by hand. The difference is close enough not to worry.

- > * *He said that part of the manuscript had tape on it, and he wasn't sure how well that would scan. He said that when he sent out the blueline⁷⁸ for the book we could see how well it went, and either give him another sheet for those pages or just let it go.*

Okay. When I use tape, it photocopied clear, so I assumed their reproduction process would also not see the tape. What is taped are the frontispiece, the page numbers where the chapters begin, and a few other places. So having the taped material is important.

⁷⁸ Whenever a printer had taken the manuscript we sent them and scanned it, they produced a mockup of the book that they called a blueline. This blueline would be sent to us so we could see if they got everything right.

- > * *He asked about the cover logo — there's a logo on the sample book but*
- > *none on the book cover sheet. I told him to take it from the title page, and*
- > *we'd see how it looked on the blueline: if it didn't go over well we can*
- > *remove it.*

Right. I think my cover letter said to see how that worked if they did exactly as you suggested. I didn't have a photocopy in black and white of the logo. The book would look fine without one, better if they can pull it off and make it look nice.

- > * *He had some questions about the exact color and finish for the Roxite B*
- > *cloth I wanted. He said that the sample book we had was a paper cover, not*
- > *cloth, and he couldn't exactly match it. He's sending me some samples to*
- > *look over so we can make a decision on what exactly we want.*

In my opinion, it doesn't have to match at all.⁷⁹ If I remember correctly, the cloth color they mentioned was blue. I think blue would look terrific, especially with gold foil imprinting. ... I prefer blue—but if it turns out to be something different, that's fine.

- > * *He asked if we wanted the headbands and footbands we specified on the*
- > *quote. I asked him what they were, and he said (if I understood correctly)*
- > *that they are along the top and bottom of the book, and reinforce the book*
- > *and make it stronger. I'm not exactly sure what they are, but I told him*
- > *that since they're on the quote to just keep them.*

I don't know what they are either, but keeping them is fine. However, if the cost of printing endpapers is really high, maybe we can drop the headbands and footbands to save some money. Whatever you can negotiate is fine with me.

- > * *He mentioned the gold foil imprint; he said depending on what cover style*
- > *we choose, that gold might be hard to see on the red/tan cover. He said that*
- > *he could do black to match the sample if we wished.*

See my comments above on a blue cloth cover.

⁷⁹ At the time I thought that Fred had used a standard cover for the first edition of *Assault on Mars* and I wanted Sheridan to use the same cover for *The Runaway Asteroid*. I didn't know (and didn't find out for years) that to get the cover, Fred had taken a window screen and photocopied it multiple times with red ink to get that grid look. Sheridan, of course, didn't have that cover available and so we ended up using a sturdy blue material, just as David wanted.

> *I think it looks pretty good. They got everything safe and
> sound and have started work on it. I'm encouraged: I think they can get us a
> good book. I just wish I knew more about all this process, so I could
> intelligently discuss the options.... JTP should be a lot easier: by then
> we'll know
> exactly what we're doing! Then it'll only be a matter of sending them the
> package and being done with it. I'm glad they called, though, instead of
> just going ahead! They are very easy to work with, very helpful, and very
> polite. I think they're a good firm! Their customer service is excellent.*

Outstanding! I've got some eager people out here, waiting for TRA.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2000 10:57 AM

> *They called me back, and said that the matching front-and-back endpapers
> would cost \$294, or about 58 cents per book. I thought, 58 cents out of a
> \$20 book isn't too bad (it doesn't have a very big effect on our profit
> margin) so I told them to use the endpapers. However, none of this is in
> stone yet: if we want to take them out, we can do that just fine.*

It's a bit more than I had expected, but I say sure, let's get the endpapers. They make a BIG difference in appearance, and we do have Tom Narwid and Kevin's work to include, too. They're mentioned in the acknowledgements, also. So if we can save some money by eliminating the headbands and footbands or whatever they're called, let's consider that. How about asking Sheridan what benefit the bands provide. Maybe we won't need them very much. I'd sure prefer the endpapers to the bands.

> *It all depends on their equipment:
> my scanner, for instance, could pick up the tape easily — it would be quite
> noticeable. The reason is because computer scanners are so good: they can
> even make out the tape. I think they use computerized, digital equipment, so
> I wouldn't be surprised if the same thing happened there. We'll find out
> when we get the 'blueline' (the mockup they're sending): if we can see it
> there, then we'll have to find a way to give them something else.*

If necessary, I could provide new copies of those pages in which the taped material is pasted rather than taped.⁸⁰ That would slow us down, but let's see what the blueline looks like. It might even be something you could easily fix once you see the blueline.

- > *I may have to call them up tomorrow, then, and tell them to send*
- > *out some different samples — I didn't realize you preferred blue. I don't*
- > *really have a strong opinion, except that if changing the color will delay*
- > *the book or increase the price, I'd rather stick with what we have.*

Absolutely. I'm for haste rather than details on appearance.⁸¹

- > *I know*
- > *that we can change the finish of the Roxite from red to tan, and so we can*
- > *change the color a little, but changing it to blue means getting a whole new*
- > *material. Maybe it's not a big deal — I'll have to call them up and ask.*

Tan would be fine, and would also look good with gold imprinting. I even prefer tan to blue! You go ahead and decide, Jon, and I'll be happy with whatever comes out. Having different colors for the books is a good idea, too, but that can be decided when we get to JTP.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2000 7:34 PM

For the taped pages on the master copy in Sheridan's hands: how about suggesting that they just photocopy them and use the photocopies as their masters to scan from? The photocopier should eliminate the tape marks, and their scanner would then have no evidence of tape marks.

David

⁸⁰ In order to get the headers of the second Starman book right David taped them in place, and we were concerned that the tape would show up. As it turned out it didn't, which we were happy about!

⁸¹ I think this is the only time in our history when this was the case. In the future, we didn't have too many qualms about delaying production in order to get things exactly right – or, at least, as right as the company we were working with could make them.

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2000 5:44 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I asked them about the headbands/footbands today on the phone. They said*
- > *that it doesn't have a price difference at all: it's almost negligible for*
- > *an order of 500 books.*

Okay. Then the only way we could reduce the overall cost after adding the endpapers would be to reduce our order to 300 books. Unless you two want to revisit that idea, I'm comfortable with just adding the price of the endpapers onto our original cost. That'll bring the total up near \$3000, but advance orders ought to cover that amount, and the short stories, I hope, will fill our coffers again in preparation for JTP.

- > *I think the blueline is well into production. They've already*
- > *started work on it, as I said: picking out the cover material won't delay*
- > *anything because the cover material isn't an issue until after the blueline*
- > *is finished and okayed. They told me the book has gone into production,*
- > *which is good.*

No doubt they're competent enough not to run something that has garish tape marks on it. Surely they will do what they can to give us a good-looking product. But you still have the final approval of the blueline, so "full speed ahead."

- > *Roxite is a material: you can decide*
- > *what color and finish you want. He said he was placing a sample guide in the*
- > *mail today, and I should get it before the week's out; I can look and see*
- > *what's available and make a decision from that.*

Splendid.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2000 10:16 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I am for the endpapers, even at increased cost.⁸²

Mike

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2000 6:22 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *First, I thought I'd let you know that orders for TRA are really rolling*
> *in! We are tremendously blessed.*

Fantastic!

Regarding the numbering, it is rather amazing that people would really want the same numbers.⁸³ I have had two people already tell me that they want the same number they had before. That may not be possible, with the rate orders are screaming in, but it would be wise to keep a record of what book number people DO have—from AOM, if possible.⁸⁴ It could also be a good selling point. (Dear Joe Blow, you have the first three

⁸² David and I generally handled the printing details, and we traded responsibilities: sometimes he was the contact for the company and sometimes I was, and sometimes he did the formatting and sent off the manuscript and sometimes I did. Even so, we never moved ahead until all three of us were in agreement.

⁸³ We saw to it that the first five Starman books were numbered: we thought that would be cool and would add some value to the books. What we did not foresee is that numbering the books was quite complicated and that people would (a) want the lowest number they could get, and (b) want the same number they had before. This led to all sorts of headaches, and while we were able to rise to the challenge and deliver what our customers wanted I was glad when we quit numbering the books beginning with book six, *Doomsday Horizon*.

⁸⁴ It was not possible to do this from AOM, but I have kept track of virtually all the numbers assigned to the customers who bought first editions of books two, three, four, and five. There were times when I forgot to jot down the number before shipping the book, but the record is very close to being complete.

Starman stories, all number 82—DIE is coming out in a month, shall we reserve #82 for you again?)⁸⁵

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2000 9:53 PM

- > *Another thing I thought I'd point out: it turns out a lot of our fans*
- > *were quite eager to send in their money for TRA! From some of their*
- > *comments, it's clear that they had been waiting for this book and wondering*
- > *when it was going to come out:*

VERY encouraging!⁸⁶

- > *I think our customers are glad and excited to get TRA: looks like a*
- > *number of them have been looking forward to it. This is terrific! We have a*
- > *lot to be thankful for: God has certainly blessed us tremendously.*

Yes indeed. Could we ever have envisioned this two years, or even one year, ago?

Blessings!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2000 10:46 AM

- > *I only have 4 more AOM dustjackets left! I'll need some more*
- > *soon... Orders for AOM are still coming in: I got one earlier this week*
- > *(18th). They are still selling!*

⁸⁵ Did we do this? You bet!

⁸⁶ I was always nervous when it came time to release a new book, and I still am to this day. Will our customer base still be there? How many people will get the book? Will we hold our ground or will we lose customers? Are we going to get enough orders to print another book? Releasing a book was always the acid test of how many fans we really had.

Probably can't get more AOM dj's until the TRA dj's are ready. I could ask my father to bring 35 AOM dj's on Christmas, but mailing them would be difficult. As you will recall, Jon, I had to fabricate the package for the AOM dj's, as it was an engineering challenge to mail something that big and try to guarantee that the large, flat dj's wouldn't get damaged in the mails. It's better if I send the 150 TRA dj's and 35 AOM dj's all in one large, strong package.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2000 11:37 PM

- > *On your*
- > *instruction sheet, you specified a size of 7.5 x 4 7/8. I think they will*
- > *probably hit that exactly: they didn't raise any objections. I guess, as you*
- > *said, we'll simply have to hope for the best.*
- > *Now, Sheridan has said that they're sending me two sample copies of TRA*
- > *for me to look over before they send the whole rest of the shipment. I'll*
- > *probably get those too late to do any good concerning the dustjackets, but*
- > *at least by then we'll know what the actual size of the books are!*

Do we have a date for the delivery of the two sample copies yet? If we know that, we can delay printing the dj's. Once we know the exact dimensions, getting the dj's to you would just be a matter of a few days. I can even have the package ready to go so that all my father has to do is trim the dj's, plunk them into the package, and mail it off. The whole thing might be done in a day, or two at the most. Then 2-3 days to get to WV. Might be worth the wait just to make SURE that the dj's are the right size. What do you think?

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2000 2:00 AM

Dear Jon,

- > *Here are two scans that illustrate what I mean about the text.*

Okay, I understand now. I'm sure there's nothing we can do about it now except learn a lesson. The smudges can probably be removed without too much effort, but the fuzziness of the text is no doubt because I used ordinary paper on an inkjet printer. Rescanning probably wouldn't help—they need clearer masters. From here on we'll need a laser printer on some high quality paper to make our masters.⁸⁷

Interesting that this didn't happen with AOM. The masters for both books came off the same printer on the same kind of paper. Fred Woodworth will have something to say about that, I'm sure!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2000 10:58 AM

Today I'll photocopy our three copies of TRA and get them as far along the binding process as I can. I don't mind repeating that the dust jacket is fantastic!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 03, 2001 5:11 PM

This coming Sunday I'll take the original canvas and other necessary materials to my father so he can get started on producing the dj's. I think that he can go so far as to make the copies and trim one side before we hear of the actual size of the Sheridan book. Then all he'll have to do is trim one more side and we can send the package off to Jon. That should make for a very fast turnaround.

David

⁸⁷ That is what we did next time, and it didn't help. This is one of the big reasons why we switched from Sheridan to Friesens when it came time to print book four: the printing quality Sheridan was doing simply left something to be desired. When I received book four in the mail I was thrilled to see how crisp and clean the print was: Friesens had done an outstanding job.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 03, 2001 5:11 PM

- > *One thing to keep*
- > *in mind, though, is that so far we've grossed more than \$3000 from AOM*
- > *sales, and we haven't even reached the \$1000 mark in TRA yet.*

Wow! I didn't realize we'd sold that many AOMs! These figures ease my mind a bit, but I also suspect that a number of our initial readers won't order TRA. ... They might politely thank me and then never read the book, much less order its successor. It'll be interesting to see how many people own only AOM and not go on—i.e., to see how many repeat customers we have. And how many order TRA first and then request AOM!⁸⁸

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 06, 2001 7:30 PM

I suppose it's too late to reconsider whether we want to run only 300 copies, or even 200, of TRA? If possible, I'd suggest that we go with 300. If you two agree, how about calling Sheridan on Monday, Jon?

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 07, 2001 9:06 AM

Dear Jon and David,

About the number of TRAs printed.....it just seems really a shame to sacrifice hundreds of copies of TRA just to save \$200. If it comes down to it, I will loan this

⁸⁸ I don't think that anyone has ever ordered a later book and then turned around and ordered the previous books. Customers always started with the first book and worked their way into the series. That caused some consternation because the later books were better than the first one, but yet our customers would never get to the later, better books if they read book one and didn't like it. I've long wanted to do something about that in order to put our best foot forward, but short of rewriting the first book there isn't anything we can do about it.

money to the effort.....my gut feeling being that after the buying curve of our hardcore customers tapers off, it is possible for sales of the book to have a revival when we hit a "consumer awareness" breakthrough (newspaper, magazine article...etc.)⁸⁹

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 08, 2001 8:49 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Got back from my father's and we put together a GREAT master of the TRA dj. Shifted a few things around to place the high points of the painting in the best location for the dj. Now my father will have a photographic master professionally made. That'll take a couple of days. I will return on Wednesday, January 17, approve the master photograph, and take it to the photocopier. He'll make 200 copies overnight and we'll be ready to go as of the 18th. Also got 35 copies of the AOM dj today.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2001 1:31 PM

Jon, did Sheridan contact you about transfer of funds, and have they sent you the two advance copies yet? As of Tuesday, they were ready to do so and Cora was supposed to handle this on behalf of Marcel. If you haven't heard from them, I suspect that the shipment is just sitting there waiting for Marcel to return next Monday, and we've been delayed a week. Not good.⁹⁰

David

⁸⁹ We've had a lot of exposure now but still no major surge in sales as a result. We have never figured out why major, positive reviews in the media have not resulted in a measurable increase in sales.

⁹⁰ We always took delays in production very seriously, especially when we already had customers who had preordered the book, paid for it, and were waiting for it to arrive!

DATE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2001 12:05 AM

*> I called them yesterday and talked with [Sheridan], and they said the total we
> owed was \$1,846.46 and that they were waiting on us to wire them the money
> so they could send us the books. I asked them about the two advance copies,
> and there was surprise: what advance copies? We were supposed to get advance
> copies?*

This, of course, was confirmed in our contract and assured by Marcel from the beginning. When I spoke to Cora on Tuesday, she said she would take care of it—including the two advance copies! Was it Cora you spoke to? This is worthy of a complaint—maybe we should go to Cathy. I'll call tomorrow morning if you wish. Let me know. I don't want to just wait until Monday.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2001 3:48 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

*> When I got home at 3 this afternoon the two samples hadn't arrived yet,
> so I called up Sheridan. They said they had placed them in the mail
> yesterday, so I should get them soon. They also gave me the final price: the
> \$1846.46 was just an estimate. The actual, final prices is \$1932.79.*

For my own files and any future correspondence with Sheridan, here is my understanding of our situation. Please correct me where I am wrong: Original quote was \$2515 plus \$88 shipping 500 copies to Jon, or \$2603. Our endpapers added \$256 to the price, if I remember correctly, for a total of \$2859.00. I don't recall the amount of sales tax, but don't understand why we have to pay it since we're ordering across state lines. Even if we do, if it's 6% that's an additional \$166.26 for a total of \$3025.26. They're now charging us a total of \$3234.29, which I assume includes sales tax. That's an error of \$209.03. This additional cost might be due to four extra pages and shipping 50 books to me rather than the full 500 to Jon. Still, I don't see how this would amount to that much extra cost. I'd like to see an itemized bill and would dispute anything I disagree with, especially with the delay they've caused and the customers who are asking about delivery of their order.

On top of that, Marcel left the office in the middle of production without telling us. When I called last Tuesday, January 23, to find out what was going on, I left a message and someone named Cora returned the call. She obviously knew very little about the project and added that Marcel was not due back in the office until Monday, January 29. She did, however, say that the project was completed—i.e., the books were printed. No one, however, told us when that happened, and the two advance copies were not sent. We don't know how long the books had been sitting at Sheridan when the contact could have been made to Jon and delivery expedited.

Additionally, I sent Sheridan the package on December 5, and they received it in Fredericksburg on Friday, December 8. The promised 22 working days to complete the project (Marcel on the telephone to me in mid-December) has extended now almost two extra weeks, even allowing for a Christmas/New Year's break. When I spoke to Marcel the first time, I asked her for a timeline, mentally added a week to her estimate, and then said, "So we can expect shipment about mid-January?" and she said Yes. That's when we decided to advertise for pre-orders, and just to be safe estimated delivery by the end of January.

The two advance copies were reported mailed on Thursday, January 25, two days after Cora promised me she would mail them right away. Two days after that, the 27th, they still haven't arrived.

> *Needless to say, I am very unhappy about this.*

I think it warrants a telephone call to Cathy, who is supposed to be overseeing the project. Unless either of you objects, I'd like to call her on Monday morning. Maybe I'll start with Marcel and see if I can get some satisfactory answers to these questions. Maybe I can negotiate a reduction in price because of Sheridan's delay.

And we still haven't seen the quality of the books.

What do you think? May I call?⁹¹

David

⁹¹ As you can see, things were starting to fall apart with Sheridan. This was the beginning of the end of our relationship with them: we printed one more book with them, but that was it. It's a pity, and it just goes to show how critically important customer service can be.

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2001 11:59 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Jon, I don't need the redo on the Sheridan letter you attached yesterday, so you can ignore my email asking that you make it smaller. I didn't need it for my talk with Marcel.

I talked to Marcel just now, and here's the deal. She was out of the office since January 10 and apparently Cora took over. Marcel was back in the office for the first time today and had all the facts at her fingertips. ... I didn't push on this problem because Cora wasn't on the line and I didn't want to complain about somebody who's not there to answer back. I think it would have been better if Marcel or Cora or someone had told us that from January 10 we have a new person on the project, but that's really a small point.

The two advance copies were sent out last Thursday by UPS to Jon. Payment of our account can be made by overnight certified check or wire transfer and the books will be shipped immediately upon receipt. So whenever Jon wishes, you can make that payment.

Here is how the charges break down:

\$2757.00 for 500 books with endpapers (first quote without ep's was \$2515)

\$2.00 to type the cover (probably the gold imprint)

\$84.10 for fifty extra copies (more on this in a moment)

\$43.32 postage for the proofs sent to Jon

\$162.00 for bulk shipment of books, 50 to me balance to Jon

\$185.87 VA sales tax at 4.5%

Total \$3234.29. Balance we owe after our deposit: \$1932.79.

The 50 extra copies are prepared per small print #11 on back of contract, in which it states that customer shall consider an overrun or underrun of 10% to be considered full shipment. To guarantee that we get our full order they automatically add 50 copies to all orders, and then charge the customer extra for them. Naturally I questioned this and told her we ordered more than we needed to begin with to cover this problem, and Marcel said that we could call Cathy, the sales rep, and tell her that we don't want this in the future. But right now it means that we are getting about 550 books instead of 500 for the

extra \$84.10. Maybe when we become famous this will turn out to be a good thing, but I'm not happy about it now.⁹²

Also, the postage for the proofs seems stunningly high to me, but I forgot to ask Marcel about it. To my way of thinking, this cost ought to be included in the estimate, and I don't think it was mentioned anywhere else.

In the first estimate, shipping is an approximation since they can't give a final quote until they actually weigh the books after they're printed and come up with a true cost. Well, I guess that's reasonable enough, but one would think that at this point they could estimate pretty close. In our case, they underestimated by almost 50%. The original estimate was \$88.00 and the actual is \$162.00.

Unless the UPS charge for the two advance copies is included in the \$162, apparently they're not charging us for that.

So it appears that we are the victims of "hidden charges"—fine print on the extra 50 books, exorbitant shipping charges on the blueline, and extra on the shipping of the books. Along with the \$2 for the typing of the cover, this is a total unexpected extra cost of \$203.42.⁹³

I'll call Cathy and see if we can get a reduction in some of these extras. I'll email you later and tell you what happens.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2001 8:26 PM

⁹² I wasn't happy either, especially since we had printed in the book that this book was book X of 500 copies. What on earth were we going to do now that we had 550 copies? I couldn't sell book 546 of 500 to somebody: people would wonder what on earth we were doing. We asked for 500 copies and were sold 550 – and the bad thing is that this happened *again*. When book three came out we specifically asked for 500 copies and were sold (and charged for) 550. I still don't know what we're going to do with those extra copies.

⁹³ Had we ever had a company print a book before? No. Were we happy with our first experience? No. Did our future experiences in getting a book printed go to show that we just had a bad experience the first time? Nope.

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *That does remind me of something, though! If Sheridan really did print*
- > *550 copies, well, the index on the front page says _____ of 500 copies.*
- > *What on earth are we going to do with the extra 50 copies? If a customer*
- > *gets ahold of one, he's going to have a fit... You know, these*
- > *extra copies might be sheer deadweight! It might be impossible for us to*
- > *sell them even if we had customers for them.*

If we get to the point where we are selling 501+, we can have a rubber stamp made that says, "Copies 501-550 are from an overprint run, but are genuine first editions." Or something like that.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2001 8:26 PM

- > *I know you already know this, David, but I just wanted to tell you that*
- > *the two sample copies have arrived. I've tried to take pictures of them;*
- > *they didn't turn out very well but I'm attaching them anyway so you can at*
- > *least get a general idea of what the book looks like.*

Very nice! I am impressed.

- > *When you take*
- > *out the wire transfer, we have \$118.27 in the bank. It will cost around*
- > *\$350-\$400 to mail the books, so we're around \$150 short. For the time being,*
- > *I'll just pay for it myself and chalk it up as money I'm owed, to be repaid*
- > *on that glorious day when we have enough to cover our bills... :-)*

I'm doing the same with the Inter*Stellars. I can handle a hundred dollars or so and am confident that orders will continue to come in and will cover our costs before too long.

This is how we did AOM, remember? We didn't get paid back for several months in that case.⁹⁴

- > *Our next challenge will be*
- > *finding \$1300 to finance JTP! Any suggestions?*

Well, let's see how the Inter*Stellars do⁹⁵ and how orders for AOM and TRA continue to come in. We won't need the money for about 5 or 6 months. Let's track how we're doing and plan for the money later.

It occurred to me that we ought to be better organized whenever we make official contact with people. Mike offered to contact Marcel for us, but we hadn't mentioned him to Sheridan before, so they wouldn't have known him. This was only because Jon made the initial contact and I sent the materials. But if we make it clear from the beginning in any future contacts we have that any of the three of us can speak for the team, it might be easier in the future when we need to talk to someone.

Finally, I've got a good start on cutting the TRA dj's. There will be slight variations in size, since the cutting is being done manually, but I think they will be okay. Just keep in mind, Jon, when you get them that the cutting is being done by hand with razors and a paper cutter, not a fancy machine that can slice 200 sheets of paper with precision to the 64th of an inch at a single cut.

Blessings!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2001 9:54 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I just spoke to Marcel in Fredericksburg, to verify that Sheridan had received the wired money and to determine when shipping was to take place. She said that they shipped the

⁹⁴ Yes, there were times when we were hundreds of dollars in the red and had to make up for it from our own pockets. We did eventually get repaid for what we had spent, but of course it was never with interest or anything like that.

⁹⁵ They did reasonably well, although I would not call them a great success: the five issues we released brought in roughly \$1000, which certainly helped.

same day the money was received—so the books are in transit! We had a pleasant conversation. Our contract with Sheridan has been fulfilled now and we need have no more contact with them unless we decide to use them again.⁹⁶

The dj's, etc., did go out priority insured mail yesterday, Jon, so you ought to receive both shippings at about the same time—by the end of this week.

Great news about the Netherlands order, Jon! I'll respond to everyone's other emails later, when I have more time. I ought to be able to get the I*S done within a week, maybe by this weekend.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2001 8:34 PM

I was feeling pretty down about our experience with Sheridan.....I am thinking we don't need to go with them next time.⁹⁷

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 02, 2001 4:43 PM

The great writing in Stand By For Mars! begins on page 168 and continues to the end of the book. I had this scene in the back of my mind when I wrote of our invasion team crossing the desert in AOM. Tom Corbett had to cross a desert in which the temperatures reached 150 degrees; ours is more authentic, of course, in which they cross the desert when it is below freezing. But the theme is similar.

⁹⁶ Well, almost. We still had one more bill coming, although we didn't know about this at the time. In a few weeks I received a bill from Sheridan for 7 cents, and it came complete with a warning that if this bill wasn't paid we would be subject to lawyer's fees, being sued, and all the rest. We were *not* happy campers – so much so, in fact, that I'm not putting most of the letters covering all that into this Archive.

⁹⁷ We didn't want to use them again, but we did because they were so much cheaper (even with the hidden costs) than everyone else. It wasn't until Neil Lindholm found Friesens for us that we found a company even cheaper than Sheridan.

...

- > what would you think about offering (as a product to buy)
- > dustjackets from all the books we produce? It wouldn't cost us anything to
- > offer them for sale, and if we sold them for \$4 each (\$1 to cover cost of
- > DJ, 70 cents for for S/H, \$1 for the tube, plus \$1.30 profit) we could make
- > a tidy profit. If someone wanted one, I could go out and get the tube then,
- > so it wouldn't require a capital investment. I don't know who would want to
- > buy just a flat dustjacket, but it would be kind of cool to offer them.

Well, we can give it a try.⁹⁸ I know that Benjamin Bennett wrecked his AOM dj and asked me for another one. Luckily I had an uncut one left from our first print run so I just gave it to him.

...

- > I received the book yesterday, will sign it and send to Paul
- > today.....It looks great, however I did see the "artifacts"and we do
- > NOT want to go this way again. Perhaps for JTP, we can ask prospective
- > printers if we can call a previous customer and ask what THEY thought of the
- > printers skill and methods.

There's another one of Mike's outstanding ideas!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 06, 2001 5:30 PM

Dear Jon,

Have you received the package of Three Investigators I returned to you?

⁹⁸ We did offer them for sale for a little while, but since there wasn't much interest we discontinued the offer.

I got my package from Sheridan today. It arrived just before 9 a.m., before I headed out the door. They look good. Even the print isn't too bad, although not up to Fred's quality.

However, the box only contained 44 books instead of 50. Did you count how many they sent you? Since they ran an extra 50 and charged us \$87 for them, I want to make sure that we get at least the 500 we ordered. Let me know. I don't mind getting only 44 as long as you got at least 456.

I've numbered the 18 I'm distributing to our customers here, according to the list you gave me. How should I number the remaining 26? I suspect that some of them, at least, will sell pretty fast. People may give me the money to pass on to you and I'd like to be able to deliver the books immediately upon payment.

On to glory,

David

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 08, 2001 8:14 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I've given some thought to your AOM solution, Jon, and I'm willing to go for it, but I think we need also to keep mulling it over before committing to it. Would there really be fans for the paperback version? It really means a new marketing ploy—targeting a group of people who may not have a background in series book collecting. Our audience right now is mostly the old fans who are used to hardbacks with dj's, and the format has been a great selling point. I don't think we want to be in the position of having 200 paperbacks we can't sell, or trying to get into a new market. That would be time-consuming.

Also, I had another idea. I ran across a person in Placentia who has a printshop. She has the capability of cutting book-size stacks of paper, so that I could have the unbound pages of AOM trimmed to size. That would make it much easier for Fred to do the binding. I might be able to collate 50 more books, have them trimmed to size, and then send the result to Fred. Shipping would cost less and the binding would be much easier for him. It's a thought. I haven't even stopped by the shop yet and I don't know what it would cost us, but it's worth looking into, don't you think?

If it gets to the point where we just need 50 books real fast, maybe I could take a few days off and just have the trimming done, and maybe even do the binding, and then send a crateload of AOMs to you. It would be a massive undertaking, but we don't want to lose people for lack of supply. The reviews we're getting are extremely outstanding and we may get a bunch of new orders.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 09, 2001 10:03 PM

About the rising cost of ISBN numbers⁹⁹....I have a theory about that too.....I imagine it might be a way to "cut out" the threat that desktop publishing might pose to the industry. Just a thought. There are certainly similar type barriers set up in other industries (ex. supermarket "shelving fees")

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2001 6:24 PM

Dear Jon and David,

About the "too tall" dustjackets.....in the past I have seen books that had DJs that looked a little "short" ...now I know why. Perhaps we could solve the current problem by cutting the DJs to a shorter size with a straightedge and razor.....I can do that kind of thing easy as I often have to cut material for the "invention" side of my life.

In the future we might want to consider slightly short DJs....what do you guys think?....would it be feasible?

Mike

⁹⁹ At one point we wanted to get ISBN numbers for the first couple books so that we could sell them via bookstores and so forth. We looked into it and found that they had to be purchased in lots of 10 at a cost of \$200 per lot. We couldn't believe the cost and quickly dropped the whole idea.

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2001 1:11 PM

Regarding ISBNs, crushed dustjackets, lack of supply of books, etc.—we have to keep in mind that we are three guys doing this in our spare time. Our customers need to be reminded of that. We're not a company with a staff or an easy way to provide large amounts of our product. We are working hard, putting together a good product that looks pretty professional, and keeping our costs down. We're investing some of our own money when we need to do it in anticipation of getting paid back someday, and we're investing A LOT of time. Our customers need to be patient with delays and with flaws.

Some of the dust jackets are a little oversize because each one is cut by hand—the first cut by a metal straightedge and a razor knife, the second cut on an old-fashioned paper cutter. Because it is old-fashioned, it sometimes bows the paper up when it is cut. Once I saw that happening, I tried hard to prevent it by the way I held the paper and in most cases came pretty close to the correct measure. A bowed page will be slightly oversize, so a number of the dj's will be oversize. It is easy to fix. Each person with an oversize dj can carefully cut the extra 1/16 of an inch off with a hand scissors. It seemed to me that it was better to have a dj that was slightly oversize that can be cut down than to have one which is 1/16 inch too small, because then it can never be made to fit. I have one or two laser dj's that are too small by that amount, and in my opinion they don't look nice. A mylar cover makes up the difference.

How many people are complaining about the oversize dj and asking for a new one? I would not think that there are very many. And how crumpled are these dj's? Have they actually been ruined? If it is just the top edge, that's the part that needs to be cut off anyway.

I'd suggest that these customers be advised to try to cut off the extra part, but if the dj is severely damaged (which I doubt), then we can replace it. By and large, however, I don't think any of our customers has much reason for complaint about anything. We're doing a good job with a lot of attention to details, and people need to expect some flaws when much of the work is being done by hand.

Now in the matter of missing or duplicated pages in AOM, or pages that come out (I have already had to fix one book whose pages were coming out), of course we'll fix or replace those.

I'm thinking that we ought to send out an email to all of our customers to explain a bit more about the hand-binding process, etc., and that flaws will occur at times—briefly

tell them what I wrote above. We could use the same email to advertise the I*S. How many orders for the I*S have we got, Jon? We don't want to make 100 copies and then have 10 orders. I thought that when we're all agreed on the text I could make a few copies at the church and send them out to our first customers—that could be done in a couple of days. Then if we get lots more orders, I can have them professionally copied and collated and send them out later.

Your thoughts?

...

> *I got a bill from Sheridan Books today: they claim that we owe them 7 cents, and that if we don't pay promptly they will begin charging interest, and that we will be liable for lawyer's fees.*

...

Maybe I should send a letter to Cathy expressing our unhappiness. Be sure to save that letter, Jon. It'll be a classic. In fact, I'd like to have a copy.¹⁰⁰

> *ISBN numbers.*

I think that if we get big enough to require ISBN numbers, we'll be too big. This is, after all, supposed to be a hobby and a service to our readers.¹⁰¹

David

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2001 10:38 AM

I think that we ought to put out a massive email to our customers in a week or so. It should include the message I suggested yesterday, reminding people that we are not a

¹⁰⁰ I sent him one. I think I may still have that letter somewhere.

¹⁰¹ When we got to Friesens, ISBNs were supplied automatically. 1stBooks does the same thing.

professional book-selling firm and that handwork will involve a few flaws that they need to live with, and should definitely include a plug for the I*S.¹⁰²

More later!

David

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2001 3:45 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I now have about 40 copies of AOM cut and collated and ready for binding. The cost for the initial cut was \$10.75. To explain, in case it's not clear, the unbound pages are standard 8 1/2 x 11 inches, with two pages on each side. Thus, at one end you may have page 17 and 18 on the back; on the other end, maybe page 183 and 184. To collate, you stack them up from the title page through page 96. These are then cut precisely down the middle, making stacks which are 5 1/2 x 8 1/2. One stack will have the title page through page 96; the other stack will have 97 through 199. These two stacks are then laid on top of one another to make the entire book. This is the cut I just had done. Then I use bookbinder's glue (which is special because it has a flexibility agent put in so that it will bend and not crack) to glue the pages together and wrap bookbinder's cheesecloth over the join to keep it together. This is applied with a brush. Then this is put into a book press. I don't have a book press, so I just put it under a stack of heavy books to keep it from warping as it dries. After drying, I take the result back to the cutters who must then cut the pages to the precise size they must be in the finished product. This means trimming the top, bottom, and unbound side—three more cuts. It then looks like a paperback without a cover. This item is then bound into the hard cover, which has been assembled using a different process. Result is one AOM without dj.

Total cost for the cutting, then, is \$43 or about a dollar per book. Worth it, I suppose, if we get a supply of AOMs. I still have to do the binding of the pages, locate a source for the heavy cardboard used for the boards and have them cut, and then bind the pages into the boards. It's a bunch of work and will cost more money. The cardboard and the cuts

¹⁰² Just as a side-note, our customers should remember that this is still the case! We may have gotten more experienced at the process and are perhaps a bit better at managing it, but this is still very much the case.

of the card board will also cost something. So we're on the way, but it'll be a while yet and will cost us. The cutter wants ONE DOLLAR per cut—but she stacks 'em up and cuts several at once. Maybe I'll look around and see about getting a better price.¹⁰³

David

DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2001 12:08 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I spoke to Marcel at Sheridan Books this morning. ... We had a pleasant conversation.

...

I wonder if we ought to consider staying with Sheridan for future printings. (1) The actual product of TRA was quite good, and we know how to improve the quality of the appearance now. (2) We have a track record with them and know how to negotiate the minefield of hidden costs, etc. (3) another firm will be an unknown—new people, perhaps other hidden costs, unknown quality of product. (4) Since we have a number of complaints with Sheridan, we can use these as negotiating points on a future price. What do you think?¹⁰⁴

David

DATE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2001 9:14 PM

- > >I wonder if we ought to consider staying with Sheridan for future
- > printings...
- >
- > I would like to check out what other
- > people offer, though: I still think that Sheridan's turnaround time of 6 to
- > 8 weeks is totally unacceptable.... At the very least, I'd like to see what

¹⁰³ Not having very much money in the bank, we were always very stingy about where it went!

¹⁰⁴ That all sounded very reasonable, and so in the end we stayed with them – for one more book.

> *our other options are: if we do end up going with Sheridan again we can use
> this knowledge to bargain with them. It never hurts to do your research.*

Oh, I agree completely. I wasn't very clear when I sent the original message, but I assumed that we'd still look at our options. I wasn't saying, "let's go with Sheridan"; what I meant was, "let's not rule them out."

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 02, 2001 10:45 PM

Dear Jon,

Hmmm. Now that we will have some AOMs soon, we have to solve the dj problem. You received 35 AOM dj's from me recently. Suppose I just send you enough new AOMs to fill out what you've got left. Fred said he sent you four copies a few days ago, so you ought to receive them soon if you haven't already. Let me know how many dj's you have left after those four arrive, and I'll send you that many AOMs. Then I'll retain the remaining AOMs here and get new dj's for them from my father, and I can distribute those to our customers from here. Sound okay?

Leslie Owens and I are binding the AOMs on Saturday and Sunday afternoon. We have enough boards to finish 24 of them. At roughly ten minutes apiece, it is about 4-5 hours work, which we ought to be able to complete by Sunday evening. Fred will send me additional boards before too long, I'm sure. Then we can do the remaining 23.

I bought spray paint this afternoon so I can color the top part of the pages. No doubt you noticed that the AOMs have the top part of the pages colored, like the old time series books. TRA doesn't have that. The color I bought is called "Terra Cotta"—a little darker than what Fred used. He told me that the first color he chose was called "sandstone"—a color he chose to be reminiscent of Mars. What a detail guy! He ran out of that and had to buy more paint, but he couldn't find that color again, so the second lot is colored "mauve." I've put that tidbit in the second I*S.¹⁰⁵

David

¹⁰⁵ I hope the diehard completist collectors out there are taking notes of all these different formats! ;)

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 05, 2001 2:12 AM

Dear Jon,

> I hope that there aren't too many more problem [AOM] books!

I've checked all of them and they are okay. What happens is that when you glue the endpapers to the boards, the seal has to be complete and smooth. Complete, because this is what keeps the pages in the boards, and smooth for aesthetic reasons. If the glue is too thick, it squeezes out the sides, and if it is too thin, it runs out the sides. Either way, it runs down the pages and causes them to stick together. If it is a minor problem (as it usually is), you can just open the pages with a letter opener and no damage is done. If it is a larger problem, then some of the pages can get torn when they are separated. This happened to two of the books, although the tear was quite small. These are the two I exchanged so the public gets problem-free books and I retain those with small tears.

To get it just right, the glue has to be the right consistency and applied in just the proper amount. It is applied with a roller, then pressed with the hands, then pressed tight with another roller. In either process of pressing, extra glue (thick or thin) will ooze out of the sides. It can happen when you're not looking. Doing it right takes practice, and even then it can still happen.

You will note that the pages cut locally are slightly smaller than those Fred cut, by about 1/16 of an inch. No one should notice or care.

I have packaged all 24 books up and addressed the package. It'll go to you tomorrow morning. Unless it's WAY too expensive, I'll send it priority so you should have it by the end of the week.

> Perhaps in the future you should keep a supply of AOM DJs on hand.

I'm asking my father to make 35 more. That'll give me about a dozen extra dj's beyond the 23 we still have to bind.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 06, 2001 10:50 AM

- > One thing I would seriously suggest is hiring somebody to bind the rest*
- > of the AOMs. I know it would be expensive, but we are critically short of*
- > time and time (unlike money) cannot be replaced. As long as the cost of*
- > binding an AOM is less than \$15, we can make a profit and get back the money*
- > we invested into binding it.*

Right, the binding of AOMs is preventing me from getting to JTP, but it's actually not too bad. Fred seems to put four copies together in the midst of other projects. I just sit down on two afternoons and do two dozen. Doing this one more time will produce another 36 AOMs, and that should hold us for a while. Fortunately I've got Leslie who now knows how to do it and is willing to help. Companionship makes the drudgery go faster. So don't worry too much about that. Hiring someone to do it would mean taking the time to train and supervise them, and risk having them make mistakes. It wouldn't save too much time and would risk our limited supply of AOMs. It just may be better to train one more volunteer, buy some more rollers, and have three people sit down on an afternoon and bind. Then it would go quickly.

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2001 5:07 PM

Today I went back to Minuteman and had them cut the dust jackets. Wow, what a difference! Hand labor of at least an hour with unpredictable accuracy reduced to one minute with hairline accuracy—cost, \$2.15, and we have 55 new dj's for AOM. I also got a referral from them to a paper store where I can probably get heavy cardboard for the boards.

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2001 11:58 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

- > About this page cutting and book binding.....would it help if I offered to do*

> *some or all of the binding for AOM?*

Thanks, Mike, enormously, but I think it might be pretty difficult and impractical. First, it would be mightily expensive to ship everything. Also, although the process of binding is not too difficult it does take some practice and there are many steps involved. It would be really hard to describe by email. At this point, I've got the process down rather effectively and have trained a helper, so it's not too much of a burden right now. Also, we're almost caught up.

Where we really need help, I think, is with sales. I know that Jon is working far too many hours now,¹⁰⁶ so he might be able to give you some leads he's got going and maybe you could put some time into pursuing those. That's not something I've got time or patience for. Or maybe working a way to get copies of the poster.¹⁰⁷

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2001 10:14 AM

- > *Right now I'm working on two strategies. The first is auctions: ...*
- > *The other strategy is to get listed everywhere. Right now I'm working on*
- > *contacting three broad categories of websites: homeschooling websites,*
- > *children's literature websites, and science fiction websites.*

Sounds good—broad exposure with the right amount of response. We won't be overwhelmed with orders but enough new ones that we can meet them, and to the right groups of people who will enjoy and benefit from the books the most. Good strategies.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ During the first few years the Starman series took up an awful lot of my time. Since I handled pretty much all of the production side (orders/mailling/finances/website/accounting/customers) I was kept very busy, to the point where I just did not want to go on and wanted to turn over everything to someone else. When we released book five I had had it, and at that point we started looking into other companies that would not only print our books but sell them as well. That is one of the major reasons why we printed book six via 1stBooks: they would not only print the book, but would sell it as well, and all I would have to do is collect royalty checks – and that I could handle. We did talk about discontinuing the first five Starman books, but a yearlong break between releasing book five and six helped to re-energize all of us, and so we didn't do that.

¹⁰⁷ Oh, the poster! Boy, was that ever a lot of trouble. Rather than discuss it here, I'll discuss it in its own section at a later date. Getting a copy of the poster printed was quite an experience.

¹⁰⁸ Did these strategies bring in any orders? Not really.

- > *There's lots of other work involved in sales: following up with*
- > *customers (i.e. "I got your payment"), writing replies to customer inquiries*
- > *("How much is the book?"), balancing the accounts and keeping records up to*
- > *date, and so forth. It's worthwhile, though: this sort of thing is where we*
- > *get the money we need to print the next book!*

Maybe, since Mike is willing to put in some time, he could take over the Sales Response Department. Jon could do the advertising and mail out the books, and

Mike could receive the orders. E.g.

JON please buy our book and respond to doddzep@aol.com

CUSTOMER to Mike "I have question."

MIKE answers the question

CUSTOMER sends money to Mike or Jon, whatever you prefer

JON finds out that check has arrived, whether sent to him or Mike, and mails out book.

If checks to go Mike, he sends a package of checks to Jon once in a while

MIKE keeps record of who orders only AOM so that follow up on TRA, etc. can be made

Details to be worked out by you guys, but you get the idea. What do you think?¹⁰⁹

David

DATE: THU, 31 MAY 2001 12:10:53 -0700

On the title page of our books, so far we have had the heading DAVID FOSTER NUMBER THREE. Now that the series is developing, what do you think of redoing that so it reads VOLUME THREE IN THE STARMAN SAGA? If you like it, I'll redo the heading on the 2nd editions of AOM and TRA. Even Rick Brant changed from A RICK BRANT ELECTRONIC ADVENTURE to A RICK BRANT SCIENCE-ADVENTURE STORY.

David

¹⁰⁹ We talked about this but it never happened, and I just kept on doing what I had always done.

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 01, 2001 11:02 AM

Shall I contact Marcel at Sheridan and get the papers sent to me for getting JTP published, or do you want to make the contact Jon? It's about time to get started, since we hope to be able to mail the package in about 3 weeks.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 01, 2001 2:32 PM

> *From what I understand, having JTP be around 220-230 pages isn't that
> much more expensive, and it makes the book easier to read than if it had a
> 10.5 font. I'd recommend just going with 11 points and leaving it at that.*

I like that idea too.

> > *Shall I contact Marcel at Sheridan and get the papers sent to me for
> getting JTP published, or do you want to make the contact Jon?
>
> Yes! I think so. It is indeed about that time: that's great thinking.*

So shall I call, or will you, Jon?

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 01, 2001 9:12 PM

I'll call Marcel at Sheridan on Monday and start the paperwork.

> *what would you think about only ordering 300 copies of this book?*

Certainly not more than 300. Probably 300 will be fine.¹¹⁰

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 05, 2001 10:01 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Got ahold of Cathy first try this morning. She will fax me the contract today or tomorrow. I told her about 220 pages, 300 copies, everything else same as before. She estimates a 5-6 week turnaround. I gave her an approximate date of the week of June 18 as a delivery date from us, and then she'll try to speed it through the printing process.

Halftones are no problem and no extra cost. So go ahead and shade away, Mike.¹¹¹

I did remember, Mike, that my father is moving away from our color photocopier guy, so if we are to get a good price on the dj's (\$140 for 200), I'll need the copy of the dj painting very, very soon. I'll have to get the lettering put on it and then get the master to my father on June 17. Otherwise we're either talking more expense for getting our dj's (about \$400), or a wait while for my father to come back to visit friends in his old homesite. He's moving June 22. Of course, I'll also need the internal illustrations in a couple of weeks now, too, so I can get the master printed up and sent off to Sheridan. I hope you can squeeze it all in. Maybe if you quit your job.

Need the text of your dedication, too, Mike. Here is the first draft of the dedication page. Let me know what you think.

David

¹¹⁰ I am *so glad* we printed 500 instead of 300...

¹¹¹ Mike Dodd did the internal illustrations for *Journey to the Tenth Planet*, which is the book we wanted to print at this point. We weren't sure what format they needed for internal illustrations, and so David asked and we found out.

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 07, 2001 7:03 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *For now we should probably just go with Sheridan. Once I get out of college and*
- > *don't have insane schedules like I have now that give me more work than any*
- > *3 people could get done, maybe I'll have more time to shop around!*

Two days later and still no faxed estimate, as promised by Cathy.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 09, 2001 8:24 PM

I got the estimate from Sheridan by fax. For 300 books they want \$2995. We know it'll cost a bit more than that with add-on costs and dust jackets. Say \$3500 total. That comes down to \$11.66 per book. \$187 per extra hundred. I still feel comfortable with printing 300 copies of JTP. Let's see how many sales we get at the book fair on October 13. If we run out, we run out and print 400 or 500 of DIE. What do you think? Some of the classic series books had small runs for various reasons; that's why they cost an arm and a leg to find today.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2001 7:37 PM

Dear Cathy:

Thank you for sending me the estimate for the publication of our second book. I received it by fax last Friday, June 8.

Our first book, *The Runaway Asteroid*, was quoted last October 17 at \$2,515 for 500 books. At \$167 per extra 100, this comes to \$2,181 for 300. We added pictorial endpapers at \$256, bringing the total for 300 books to \$2437.

For our second book, Journey to the Tenth Planet, the quote for 300 books with pictorial endpapers is \$2955—more than \$500 higher. This is an increase of 21.25% in just under nine months. (The increase in adding an extra 100 books went from \$167 to \$187, which is just about 12%.)

This strikes us as so large an increase that we'd like to ask you to check the figures and see if the quotation is accurate—and if it is, whether there is some way in which that figure can be reduced.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

David Baumann

DATE: SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2001 8:04 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

By now you ought to have received a copy of the email I sent to Cathy about our price increase. Note also that I made sure to include Mike's name in our partnership.

Question for us is, if this estimate is accurate and fixed, do we want to look elsewhere? I think we should. We may find out we can't do better, and that at least would tell us that we have to go with Sheridan. If we can do better, we have a bargaining chip with Sheridan. I'll check my files on publishers; I think I've still got the information on the firms I checked last fall.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2001 11:36 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> > *Question for us is, if this estimate is accurate and fixed, do we want to*

- > *look elsewhere? I think we should...*
- >
- > *I think we should too: that is an enormous price increase and really*
- > *hurts our profit margin. As you said, that might be the best we can do, but*
- > *it sure wouldn't hurt to look around some!*

I've checked out my file from our previous investigations and will call 2 or 3 other firms this morning just to find out what I can. Will report later.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2001 4:48 PM

Publishers: I had four additional publishers in my files besides Sheridan. I eliminated Ameron without calling them, the people who do the reprints for Jim Towey, for two reasons—cost last fall was \$9-12 per book, which is about where we are with Sheridan now, and they only do one size—bigger than we want. ... Morris Publishing only does softcover or comb-bound. Pentland Press does not do "print-on-demand" jobs and has a minimum print run of 1000 copies anyway. That leaves only Colossus press, which is the people who do SynSine Press's stuff. I am to fax them our specifications tomorrow and then get a quote.

If we are stuck with the price that Sheridan gave us as our best option, then we'll probably have no other choice but to ask \$25 for our books, postage paid. We absorbed the increase in postage that took effect after we took orders for TRA but before we mailed them out. I'm sure most of our customers will understand a price increase under the circumstances.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2001 10:09 PM

- > *It is going to be interesting paying the bill for JTP though!*

It does seem that we are always on the edge with paying for things, but so far we've always managed. Maybe that's part of living by faith in this project.

- > *I'll be interested in seeing the price they quote you — as well*
- > *as knowing how the other places I sent you line up.*

Got your email about other publishers and tried to access all the web sites. Several don't exist anymore, but three looked really good. I will try to call all of them and see what's up. And one had a form by which I could request an estimate by email, so I've done that already—minimum order of 500 books, though. I'll keep a file as well of what everyone says, in case we need to refer to it in the future.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2001 4:19 PM

I've been working the list of publishers you sent me, Jon. No estimates in yet, but I have spoken to several people who were helpful. Their questions helped me understand a little better what is involved in the process. Several others didn't call back, so I assume that they are not interested in a small run of 300 books. I'll try them once again before I give up on them. I did call every single firm on the list. I do expect 3 or 4 estimates, though, and that'll give us a good field to know whether Sheridan is out of line or not. No word back from Cathy to my email yet.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2001 8:36 PM

- > *We have simply got to get our costs down, and the only way to do that is*
- > *to increase our volume. If we could print and sell 500 or 700 copies of*
- > *these books apiece, we would be ok.*

AND SELL is the key item. We've still got a closetful of TRAs, and lots of AOM customers who didn't go on to #2.

- > *However, we will never be able to do*
- > *that as long as we only get 12 or 20 copies of AOM at a time: they sell*
- > *almost as quickly as we can get them in.*

Well, that's a good sign. And that'll often lead to purchases of TRA, I hope.

- > *Given our rising costs, this is starting to become a serious matter: our*
- > *slow production of AOMs could prove very, very expensive.... We have simply*
- > *got to have more AOMs. We have to find a way to quickly get the rest of the*
- > *AOMs bound: I know it will cost money but it will cost a whole lot more if we*
- > *don't.*

Maybe I can just get a band of volunteers to help me collate and bind the whole rest of the batch of AOMs. It would cost something, but would not be anywhere near as expensive as printing up a second edition commercially. There would be the cost of professional cutting and trimming as well as the cost of the heavy cardboard for the boards. Maybe I could put together a production line of interested people whom I could train, and we could spend an entire Saturday together putting 200 copies together. Then the Starman Team could treat them all to dinner as a thank-you, and a free copy of the third book or something. What do you think?

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2001 6:55 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

So far I've had two quotes returned to me. Both are higher than Sheridan. It looks as if, even with the 21% increase, Sheridan is going to be our best bet. Except for the higher price, that's probably good news because we now have experience with them and know the people. I've maintained a cordial relationship with Marcel and she'll work for us. So the only regrettable news we've got now is that we're going to have to pay more for the printing of JTP.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2001 8:02 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > > *So far I've had two quotes returned to me. Both are higher than Sheridan. It*
- > > *looks as if, even with the 21% increase, Sheridan is going to be our best bet...*
- >
- > *Well, it's too bad that we weren't able to find anyone cheaper, but it*
- > *is good to know that Sheridan is our best bet.*

There are still a few quotes to come in so something better may turn up, but so far the two quotes for only 300 books are: (1) \$3332, with \$231 for each additional hundred, and \$180 shipping; and (2) \$3501 for 300 and \$4692 for 500, shipping not mentioned. I figure that unless we get a real good deal in the next day or so from another firm, I'll call Cathy at Sheridan on Monday and make the commitment. Okay?

- > > *How are we doing on dust jackets for AOM?*
- > > *Do we need more of those?*
- >
- > *I don't have a single one. When you sent me the last batch of AOMs a*
- > *while back, you sent me just enough AOM DJs to last through the batch of*
- > *books you sent.*

I just looked through my stuff and saw that I have a stack here. Obviously I retained enough to put the dj's on the AOM's I'm still binding. So I will send you books in dj. I have enough to do 20 books with one going to Baron Mrkva. So you'll get 19. After that, I start from scratch.

- > *The people who bought TRA represent our real customers: I think*
- > *folks who buy that far are with us for the long haul. At least, we'll see!*

Sounds logical to me.

Re: having a book-binding party and doing 200 or so AOMs all at once. I think I can make that happen. I'll make it a goal for the summer to get the rest of the AOMs bound, one way or another.

David

DATE: WED, 20 JUN 2001 21:09:23 -0700

Dear Jon,

Well, I've printed up a master copy. I had to use my inkjet printer at home, but I used high quality laser paper and I think it looks fine—much clearer than before. When I loaded the file onto the church computer (which has a laser printer), it reformatted the entire document, messing up fonts, type size, pagination, etc. I didn't want to redo the whole format so I took a chance and ran it off at home. Only a few printing problems, nothing serious, easily resolved. Tomorrow I'll run off our three authors' copies from the master, then send the package off to Marcel. She'll have it early next week—so, if their schedule is reliable, we ought to have delivery by late July or early August. And if I have the time, I'll bind our three copies and get them in the mail tomorrow too. If not, then early next week.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2001 8:07 PM

I have copied the pages of JTP for the authors' copies and will do as much of the binding tonight as I can. I've got the covers and dust jackets ready, but will not be able to get the pages cut professionally until tomorrow morning, since it is too late now—unless I can find a place that is open all night. Maybe I'll check the place doing our poster. They are open 24 hours a day. But my hope is to get the authors' copies done and in the mail tomorrow, Friday.

The printed master came out much better than the one last time, even if it was done on my inkjet printer. The paper quality is very high. At any rate, it is the best we can do at this time, and no matter what, it will be higher quality than TRA.¹¹²

> *I should have given this to you earlier but I kept forgetting. The*
> *material code you will want to give to Sheridan for JTP is this:*

¹¹² It was – marginally. We weren't really happy until we turned to Friesens, which produced a far better book!

Got it. Thanks.

- > *I didn't send them the endpapers: when I mailed*
- > *the check this morning I totally forgot. Do they need it again?*

Yes. I tried to print what you gave me, and the color came out very poorly and only part of the picture printed. I can't use it. Just address everything to Marcel. I'll call her tomorrow also and give her a heads-up on everything before I get the package out to her.

- > *Also, what about the lettering for the cover? That will be in gold foil (which*
- > *will stand out nicely against the black!), and will need to be sent to them.*

I've got the master for that.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2001 3:53 AM

Dear Jon,

I've had better days, but plenty of worse ones too. I will get the authors' copies out tomorrow. My 24-hour shop does have a commercial paper cutter. Unfortunately, the operator was not too experienced, and SLICED ONE OF OUR COPIES UPSIDE DOWN, ruining the entire book. The manager was apologetic and said to bring the masters over and they would remake the book.

So I did, but he had gone home and the same person who chopped the book was in charge and didn't know how to run the photocopier. It was a huge machine the size of a barn with an immense number of controls. So I took the master back home and RE-RAN THE ENTIRE BOOK and had to bind it all over again. About three hours of work. Then I went back to the shop a third time and got it cut properly.

It is now nearly 1 a.m. and I haven't had time to prepare the package for Marcel (that won't take too long) or write a blurb (if I get enough sleep I'll probably be able to get that done too before leaving at 10 a.m. for the two-day trip).

But your author's copy will be in the mail tomorrow.

It was mine that was chopped, by the way. Yours and Mike's are fine. And now mine is too.

Whew!

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2001 9:29 PM

Dear Jon,

> *I just wanted to tell you that my author's copy of the third Starman
> book arrived! It really looks great, David: I am impressed! The book is a
> lot sturdier and cleaner than the first handbound Starman book: the quality
> is excellent.*

Well, by now I've had enough practice to be able to put together some nice-looking books by hand. ...

I'm glad you like the appearance of the book!

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2001 10:02 PM

Dear Jon,

For your information, here are the final figures of estimates I received after inquiring of 13 different publishers. Figures are for total estimate cost of 500 copies plus shipping. You can see that Sheridan is still out in front. It is good to know that, even if we are unhappy about their rise in prices.

One no longer in business.

Four did not respond to inquiry.

Three were not suitable (only do softbacks or minimum print run of 1000 copies)

Kolossos \$4814

McNaughton & Gunn \$3974—but can't do endpapers.

Thomson-Shore \$3621

Gorham Printing \$4692

Sheridan Books \$3329 plus shipping; total about \$3509

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2001 4:51 PM

Dear Jon,

I can't provide any better logos than what they've got, so I'll just have to tell them to proceed without the logos.¹¹³ I didn't send them anything better last time, as far as I can remember, so I'm not sure what they used. I remember being really surprised that they put the logo on the front in gold, since I didn't know where they'd gotten a master.

Maybe in the future we can prepare a good simple logo that can be used for imprinting, but not this time. Well, maybe if I have time today I'll try to make a good, simple, black and white logo to send Marcel tomorrow. I'll try.

Are there any customers in California for whom you do not have an email address, or whom you haven't sent any information on pre-ordering? Most of the people I've contacted say they've already got your information and have ordered, but I want to make sure no one gets missed.

David

¹¹³ This is a reference to the Starlight Enterprise logo that is on the spine of every Starman book, and that was on the cover and spine of the first five Starman books. As you can see, we had a little trouble getting this on the third Starman book.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2001 8:16 PM

Dear Jon,

I'll spend a little time tonight drawing a black and white master for the die copy. If you can scan the logo and reduce it to simple black and white, let me know, as that'll save me the trouble of doing it by hand with pen and ink. Sheridan can use it for both the gold imprint and the logo on the title page. It's expected that some details will be lost—that's okay. In something like this, that's better.

Good to know that Neil [Lindholm] confirms Sheridan's low price.¹¹⁴ I guess they're not so bad after all. I'm glad we've stuck with them. You found the place in the beginning—good work.

And you're right—I checked my AOM cover and the original die master was what Fred did for us, and it is not very clear for use as a master. We can do better, now that we know what it is for.

Tonight I hope to finish I*S except for the short story, and that I can take care of rather quickly, but probably not for a few days. In a few minutes I'll write and let you know what illustrations I'll be needing from Kevin. This'll be the first Starman tale I'll be solely responsible for, plotting and writing. I hope I don't blow it! You'll get to read it right off the bat.¹¹⁵

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2001 9:23 PM

Dear Jon,

Your master for the die copy is fine. I just finished doing an ink black and white, but yours is better, so send yours in. Interestingly, I did a negative of what you did. I did the star and ship in black on a white background with black stars.

¹¹⁴ It took Neil a while to find Friesens; at first, the companies he located in Canada were actually more expensive than Sheridan.

¹¹⁵ This was “The City of Dust.”

I did send them what they needed for the spine. I made the lines much more simple and clear from what Fred did, with wording for the titles too, so that shouldn't be a problem for them. They'll just need the logo for the die.

You should ask them to keep this die on file since we'll be using it again.¹¹⁶ Some of the estimates I got from other firms charged \$60-100 to make a die, and Sheridan may be including that cost in the figure they gave. If we can save that cost in the future, maybe we can reduce our overall cost.

> *I haven't received the*
> *shipments of AOM yet, but I am hoping to receive them soon — I've got a*
> *stack of orders for AOM to fill. I'm really hoping that package comes this*
> *week!*

Should come any time. I sent it two weeks ago Friday, I believe, and it's supposed to be 7-10 days.

I can't download the Acrobat file. It takes about 1 hour and 40 minutes with my glacial machine, and after 2% of the download, my system disconnected—as it does fairly regularly. Blast!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2001 8:03 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

It's nice to have someone like Neil Lindholm putting some effort into our behalf. I think the Sheridan version of our books is fine, and nobody complains about the quality of the books as they are.

Going for a commercial publisher has been suggested more than once, but as we've already discussed, finding one is a big job in itself. I know how to do it, and it is time-

¹¹⁶ I did, and then I asked them to send it to me once they were done with it. They never did send it.

consuming. I'd be willing to make an attempt with Golden Books, if you two agree that it's worth a try.

Success in finding a commercial publisher would make a number of things easier—book design, sales and distribution, etc., but also opens us up to editing and other loss of control. Good editing may still work to our benefit, but you never know. The Epsteins and Hal Goodwin really liked their editor and Grosset & Dunlap, but everything else about the process they didn't like.

We'd lose our artists, for example, too.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2001 10:40 PM

*> [Neil Lindholm] Have you checked with Broadman & Holman, the company reprinting the
> Chip Hilton books? They are a religious publisher so they would not shy away
> from the religious overtones in your books and since they are having some
> success with the CH series, maybe they would be interested in the Starman
> series?*

Sounds like a great idea.¹¹⁷

If you two like, I will check with Broadman and Holman and Golden Press¹¹⁸ and see what it would take to send them a book package—that is a proposal to them for their consideration for publication. Doesn't hurt to ask what they want in a book package, and if they don't ask too much it won't be too much work to prepare the package. And even then, all they can say is No.

David

¹¹⁷ We did get in touch with them, and they were not at all interested in us.

¹¹⁸ We checked with them as well, and they weren't interested either.

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 01, 2001 7:03 PM

- > I'm thinking that we wouldn't*
- > actually make any of the books until we had firm orders for them...*

Okay. This is for AOM, right? Sometime this summer I'll get a group together again and collate, etc. the pages we need. Then I can easily make some of the picture-covers. When I'm ready, you can see who wants one and I can make them as the orders come in.

- > > If you two like, I will check with Broadman and Holman and Golden Press*
- >*
- > Let's do it!! I really like that idea: it wouldn't hurt to ask. Let's*
- > give it a try and see what happens.*

Do you, by any chance, have an address for Broadman and Holman? I think I've got Golden Press' somewhere. If you've got that one handy, though, that would save me some time searching for it.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 02, 2001 10:27 PM

Dear David and Jon,

I really like the idea of going to Golden (and the others, but especially Golden) with the idea of their being given a shot at publishing the series...even despite their initial non-cooperation with us. There is something poetic about the possibility.

Mike

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 03, 2001 10:11 AM

- > I really like the idea of going to Golden (and the others, but*
- > especially Golden) with the idea of their being given a shot at publishing*

> *the series...even despite their initial non-cooperation with us. There is
> something poetic about the possibility.*

Okay, I've got both addresses now and will get a request off to them about what they require in a book proposal.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 09, 2001 5:59 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

All the I*S#2s went into the mail this morning! I also went by the Copy Club, of author's book slicing infamy, and had the 400 dust jackets cut to size. Only one small problem, which I'll get to in a moment. I also had a few oversize photocopies of the dj made for the picture cover versions: 20 of AOM, and 5 each of TRA and JTP.

The problem is that I had assumed that when someone makes 200 copies of something, they put the original onto the copier, press the button and 200 exact copies come out which are identical to each other. Apparently, for some reason, this was not the case with these copies. Some were slightly off center. Therefore, when the cutting guy put the stack of 200 JTP dj's under the cutter, he sliced them to precisely 7.5 inches. Regrettably, some of them were about 1/8 inch off center. This means that even though we have 200 JTP dj's which are precisely 7.5 inches high, in some cases there is about 1/16 of an inch, maybe a little more, of white line across the top.¹¹⁹ Nothing we can do about it now unless we want to recopy these for a couple hundred bucks. Even though they're not perfect, they are usable. Once we noted the difficulty, the 100 copies of the AOM and TRA dj's came out fine. <sigh> part of the territory when you're doing hand work.

I will retain 50 copies of the JTP dj for the shipment coming my way from Sheridan, a couple each of AOM and TRA, and send you the rest very soon, Jon.

David

¹¹⁹ This is where the infamous white line on the white line JTP dustjackets came from! Not too many of these were made, but if you have a first edition copy of *Journey to the Tenth Planet* and was wondering about that white line, this is where it came from.

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2001 7:36 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > A sixteenth of an inch isn't a whole lot to*
- > complain about! We'll see what happens.*

Some of them are a little more than that. I think I can guess what happened. The copy shop where my father had the copying done does good quality work, but it is a little hole-in-the-wall kind of place. It takes them a few hours to make 200 color photocopies. I'll bet they put our master on the machine, then had to stop the run when another customer came in needing a color copy. Then they put our master back on and continued the run, probably putting the master in a slightly different place from where it had been before. With several interruptions like that, you're going to get several different runs that add up to 200, but the placement of the copy on each run will be slightly different from the others. And there you have it.

I'll retain the AOM djs, then, Jon, and put them on the books as I bind them.

- > My sister e-mailed me this morning, and sent me the two word documents*
- > attached. I have no idea why Sheridan sent these documents to me, since you*
- > are the contact person for this project.*

Julie is overseeing the production of JTP. She is pretty competent, and had already contacted me on the missing items, and I resolved them—except for the signed statement you received and faxed.

The die copy and the missing text are probably for the gold foil imprints. Julie said that what they had was not good quality, so I redid the spine text with a clearer copy, and you sent them a good b/w master to make a new die for the logo. That was done a while back.

- > It's encouraging that the scheduled completion date is August 10! Given a*
- > week for shipping after that, plus various other slippage factors, means*
- > that we just might be able to mail these out by the end of August after all.*

Sounds good.

- > If they can send out the proofs by the 12th (which is Thursday), then I*

> *should get them sometime in the near future — either on Saturday or Monday,*
> *probably. It will be neat to get them.*

If that is the blueline, I think we asked Julie to send it to me, knowing you'd be in Indiana. I HOPE she doesn't send it to Hurricane! Sounds as if [your sister] April is very on the ball for us, though.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2001 7:40 PM

Dear Jon,

I will call Julie tomorrow morning just to make sure we're on track with all these items. I don't like it that the specifications indicate that they will bill us \$1.87 for overruns. I specifically asked them NOT to include any overruns, so that we won't get another surprise bill of \$100 or so for 48 books we don't want.¹²⁰

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2001 9:59 AM

Dear Julie,

Good morning! I left you a message a moment ago on extension 250. There was another name on the greeting, so I am following up to make sure you are getting this message.

First, could you please send the blueline to Jon Cooper ...

Second, Jon received a couple of faxes from Marcel (who apparently is away for the rest of July, so we can't follow up with her) with a new estimate on the project (which Jon has signed and faxed back) and a list of missing items. These were the die copy and

¹²⁰ As it turned out, this is precisely what happened.

additional text copy. I think you and I have taken care of this, as well as the new master copy for the gold foil for the text on the spine. If there is anything else missing in the package, I'm sure you'll let me know right away; you've been really good at keeping in contact with me.

Third, and most importantly, the new estimate included a figure of \$1.87 per book for overruns. Please remember that we do not want any overruns. I wrote this in our original arrangements. Our order is for 500 books, but we expect that there will be some wastage and that shipment will really be a few copies fewer than that. We prefer that to paying for an extra 40-some books, which we understand is standard in the industry. In our first order with Sheridan we didn't know that and were surprised by receiving 548 in our shipment, and an extra charge for the overrun. When I inquired about this, Cathy referred me to the fine print, and told me that if we wrote down in our next order that we did not want the overrun, then that extra charge would be removed and we would probably have to settle for a few copies under the 500. This is what we want.

Thanks very much.

Sincerely yours,

David Baumann

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2001 10:04 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

This [price quote] looks pretty good. I'd like Neil [Lindholm] to get a sample or two of the books this firm [Friesens] makes, and let him know that we very much appreciate his work on this and that we are interested in this firm.¹²¹

We ought to tell him that we are currently attached to Sheridan and so far I am pleased with what they are doing on JTP, but we'll see how the product looks when it finally arrives. I just confirmed our position with Sheridan on not wanting the overrun print, which apparently they forgot, and that'll be a good sign of how well they will work with us.

¹²¹ Neil Lindholm discovers Friesens! What a blessing that turned out to be.

Sheridan also way underestimates the shipping charges. Neil's estimate looks accurate, so that's a good sign. I really prefer honest, up-front dealing. No surprises.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 12, 2001 1:56 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

- > *Perhaps we should each sequentially number the next ten or twenty*
- > *e-mails sent as a test.*

Good idea. Here's my #1.¹²²

- > *[David] Last night I interested a couple of our college students*
- > *in setting up a crew of about 6 to help me with the AOM*
- > *binding...*

The word has already gone out, but there hasn't been much time for a response yet. Today, however, I will purchase 2-3 more sets of rollers so we'll be ready for a real production line. And I will promise them some of our surplus TRAs, then, as well as an AOM.

- > *the blueline has arrived!! ...I can say that the printing quality looks superb!*
- > *There isn't the same problem we had in TRA in this manuscript: it all came out*
- > *fine.*

Excellent! Then we have that problem solved.

¹²² At this point the internet started losing our e-mails: I would e-mail David and the e-mail would never arrive, or he would e-mail me and I would never get the message. We wanted a way to see how many e-mails were getting lost, so for a while we numbered our e-mails. Soon after we started doing this the problem went away, much to our relief!

I spoke to Julie this morning, who said that she had all that she needed to complete our project, except the new spine lettering which I only sent her two days ago. It looks as if this book is going to look very nice!

Cathy is apparently the person I have to talk to about the overrun printing, but I did get the word from Julie that they went ahead to do the overrun printing in spite of my work order asking them not to do so.¹²³ Charge, according to a message from Cathy on my machine yesterday, is about \$93, but we haven't talked on the phone in real time about this yet. She asked me to call her, and I've already left a message on her machine and will try again later today.

I did make up a worksheet of all costs for TRA, both estimated and actual, and am compiling one for JTP as well, so I will be ready when I talk to Cathy in an effort to find a real figure for our costs. Extremely rough estimate, just going by our history with TRA, is that our final bill to close the deal with Sheridan will be about \$2200—that includes the sales tax, actual shipping costs, and the overrun. This, of course, does not count our cost for the dust jackets and the postage our customers. Not counting postage, our cost for 500 JTPs (200 in dj), plus whatever overrun they send us (it was 48 last time), will be just over \$4000.¹²⁴

Anyway, I'll talk to Cathy eventually, but the Starman team is getting some good experience on learning the real costs of printing and how to negotiate with other firms. The Canadian firm is definitely something to look at now. I am somewhat upset that Cathy would tell Julie to do the overrun printing even when I specifically wrote NOT to do so, and would authorize that without checking with us first. However, as I say, I will talk to Cathy about it.

> *Two more people have paid for their copy of the I*S....Someone else has ordered
> and paid for one copy of the I*S:*

¹²³ Which, as you can imagine, really thrilled us. There's nothing like doing something like this to upset your customers.

¹²⁴ This shows that, by pricing our books at \$20-25, we just about break even. Our total out-of-pocket cost for TRA was about \$4000, and we sold about 225 copies of the books in the earliest months. Our profit margin, therefore, is very roughly \$500-1000. It is this record, maintained with DIE, that made it possible for us to print LROM with a high quality dust jacket at a cost to us of more than \$6000. Sales of this book still has not covered its costs, but with the sales of Inter*Sellers and Starman Chronicles and other odd income, and moving to 1stBooks as a print-on-demand company, we are, at last, mostly in the black and not worrying about expenses.

All three went out in today's mail. I printed 40 four days ago and we're already down to eight. I also fixed the master for both I*S's so that future printings should be error-free—unless there's something else no one has caught yet! I noted 3 errors in #2, but they're fixed now.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 12, 2001 3:11 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I spoke to Cathy a moment ago and got things cleared up on a number of matters. It didn't change the financials much but at least I understand them better. This will also help us when we talk to the Canadian firm.

Marcel, by the way, is out on medical leave. ... She'll be back in two weeks. ... In the meantime, Julie is spearheading the project and seems very competent.

Here are the questions I asked and the answers I got:

Sheridan has two policies on overruns, which is probably standard in the industry. Normal is the surcharge to guarantee that you will get the number you order. I.e., to guarantee that we get 500 books, they plan to print 550 or something. The overrun charge is \$93.50 at the present time, and we get whatever number of books turns out correctly, which will usually be well over 500. Second policy, which is NOT industry standard and which people have to request,¹²⁵ is taking a gamble. For this there is no charge, but we take a chance that we get only 450 books. If they send us 525 books, then they bill us for the extra 25 books over and above the estimate. We also might get only 450 books for the original estimate. For any future book deals with Sheridan, we are now automatically in that second category unless we change it back to the first way.

I asked about the die cut and the endpapers. They are now on file with Sheridan for future books. They store them free for three years, then offer to mail them to us for \$25 or keep them at \$50 a year. I assume this is if we have no projects with them during that

¹²⁵ And we did request it for this book, and they did ignore us, and then we did leave Sheridan for Friesens...

three-year period. If we get them mailed to us, they are available for our use with another firm, e.g. the Canadian firm.

Sales tax is because we are required to pay sales tax when we sell to our customers. Since we don't, we pay it through Sheridan when we buy the books. This, apparently, is a government law, and Sheridan has to have things in order if they are audited. If they can't show that we paid them taxes, the government comes after us and asks for the sales tax we should have been charging our customers. If we can get a tax exemption certificate (I don't know how to do this and didn't ask),¹²⁶ then they will not only waive the sales tax but reimburse us for any sales tax we paid on previous projects. It might be worth looking into what it takes to get a tax exemption certificate. We pay about \$200 in taxes per project.

Postage for proofs was \$43.32 last time.¹²⁷ Cathy said that they send them by a quick method and use their commercial discount and pass it on to customers. I don't know if the proofs came to you, Jon, by the US mail, UPS, FedEx, or personal courier by helicopter. I assume that the proofs is the same as the blueline. If they come by US Mail, we ought to inquire further about this cost.

I asked about sending a disk rather than camera-ready copy, and Cathy referred me to their web site at <http://www.sheridanbooks.com>, which has a lot of information on that. There are many options. Sending them a disk will make production easier, faster, and cheaper. However, we have to have the program to do it. At some point, Jon might be able to put this together. It will probably save us money in the long run. Maybe even the short run.

I think that's it.

So for JTP, right now we have anticipated costs of:

book production at \$3329
overrun charge \$93.50
shipping of proofs (\$43.43 last time)
sales tax 4.5% (\$185.87 last time, probably > \$200 this time)

¹²⁶ I found out, and it is really expensive, so we didn't get one and just paid sales tax through Sheridan (and later, through Friesens). So, those of you who have been wondering why we don't charge sales tax, rest at ease: it is being paid.

¹²⁷ I have no idea how they mailed it, but I found out that I could easily overnight the proofs back to Sheridan for half this cost.

shipping \$162 last time, probably similar this time
die cut, etc. \$20 (who knows?)

ESTIMATED TOTAL COST \$ 3850

We've paid \$1664; balance due in 3-4 weeks, roughly \$2186.

On top of that, we have to be able to pay postage when we start mailing these things about at \$3.50 a pop. For 100 books, that's \$350. By mid-August, then, our target for the bank account is about \$2550. Then we're happy and our customers are ecstatic.

I've overestimated a bit on postage, since at least some of these books can be distributed without postage.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 14, 2001 9:35 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

I have the guidelines from B&H for book proposals, and they specifically ask that juvenile fiction not be submitted. Their children's category is only for children up to ten years old. My first contact was with a fellow who provided the guidelines, and when I asked him about this restriction and mentioned the Chip Hilton reprints they are doing, he said to send our proposal to the children's section anyway.

It's a bunch of work to put a proposal together. I can do it and we may want to do it eventually for other publishers, but I'm inclined to put this on a middle burner for right now.

...¹²⁸

What do you think?

David

¹²⁸ Are you seeing all of the details it takes to print a book? No. A lot of it is either boring or confidential in some way, and that material I have not put into the Archives. I'm trying to give enough details, however, to show what is involved and how frustrating it can be.

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 14, 2001 9:25 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I sent Neil Lindholm's Inter*Stellar off this morning. He ought to have it by the end of next week.

Now to answer his questions:

> > *Can*

> > *you give me a list of all the questions you want [Friesens] to answer? Some of the*

> > *problems that arose in the past hopefully could be clarified. Also, do your*

> > *current publishers make the covers or are you doing that separate?*

Of course, we do our own covers, but it would be nice to have an itemized quote so we can figure out if it would be economical to have the publisher do it. It just might! We're paying over \$1 for each cover right now, and will probably have to pay significantly more than that now that my father has moved.

Questions:

Can we dispense with the industry standard 10% overrun?

What is the cost for 300 and 500 dust jackets?

Can we send them our own die for the logo and dispense with the cost of making one?

What is minimum print run? Cost for 300 books? Cost for each additional hundred books?

What other charges are there beyond producing the books, e.g. shipping for sending proofs, shipping of the books to us, etc.

Can we get a discount for contracting for several books at once? If so, what happens if we cannot fulfill the contract (i.e., we can't afford to print further books)?

Can they use camera-ready copy?

If we send the book on a disk, what program do they require?

What is the difference in cost between camera-ready and disk?

How long does it take to produce the books? I.e., what is the time span between receiving the material and shipping the books?

What are their payment policies?

I think those are our questions. At least those are the ones we've had with Sheridan and the other firms we asked.

It will take three separate sessions to produce the rest of the AOMs, and I have scheduled the first for July 28, and have promised the workers a pizzafest for the collating. The next session will be to bind the pages and the workers will get an AOM. The last and most demanding session will be for inserting the pages into the cases, and the workers will get a TRA. In between I have to do the professional cuts. This time also I will have to locate a source for the cover stock and get that precision cut. We're going to incur some costs here, but I will cover that cost until we are flush enough with profits to get paid back. The cutting will cost a bunch of money, and the cover stock may cost a few dollars too. We're probably talking \$100-200 altogether, but that's just a rough estimate. That's about a dollar a book. Oh, plus the pizza for eight people!

Before too long I'll send my rough notes on DIE as I have worked them into the summary. Then I can begin writing Starman #4.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 21, 2001 8:38 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I also got a chance to look at the dustjackets. I see*
- > *what you mean about the white line: I didn't realize that it was on every*
- > *single dustjacket!*

Wow, I didn't either. If it is, then the guy cut them wrong. If they are ALL miscut, then it is his mistake.¹²⁹ If SOME were miscut and others weren't then it would show that some were offset and others weren't. I thought that some were okay.

- > *I'm sure that*
- > *people will notice, and I really wish it wasn't there, but I guess we just*
- > *have to make the best of it.*

¹²⁹ They weren't all done wrong – that was my mistake. Some of them were fine.

That's right. Nothing we can do at this point. I sure won't go back to that place. I still haven't heard anything about the poster, and the guy there still has the CD.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2001 8:42 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *Here are our questions answered! What do you think?*

Looks very good. I'd like to get some actual US dollar estimates. I think Neil sent them to us before, but I'd like to see everything all together. If it all looks good, I'd say let's give them a try with DIE. You two agree?¹³⁰

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2001 4:59 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *David: it seems to me that it's somewhat dangerous*
> *to have all of our Starman books in one place. ...What would you think, David, about*
> *having Sheridan mail you 200 copies of*
> *JTP instead of 50 — or possibly mailing you 100 and Mike 100, or something*
> *like that? Also, what would you think about not sending me all 200+ AOMs,*
> *but maybe only sending me 50 or 100 and then keeping the rest until I need*
> *them?*

Sounds great! We can have Sheridan send me 200 and I'll send you only half of the AOMs as we bind them. We'll have to arrange the numbering since you have 150 dj's

¹³⁰ We agreed, and so for book four we went with Friesens. They did such a good job that when book five came out we went with them again, and they did an even better job with book five. Of all the books we printed, book five was the least amount of trouble and the best done.

for JTP, but that sounds good. If you want to send me some TRAs at some point, that would be okay too. And if Mike wants a supply, we can divert some to him also. Let us know, Mike.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2001 4:59 PM

- > *This just came in from Neil. I've already replied to him, but I thought I'd*
- > *send it on to you so you could know what was going on. More soon!...*
- > *He said that they usually deal in Canadian funds but can quote in*
- > *US but to be honest, It probably would be better to do it in Canadian, as*
- > *the exchange would be done without a middleman and a better rate would*
- > *probably occur.*

We want the quote in US so we can compare directly with our costs with Sheridan, but we can pay any way they want.

- > *As well, he wondered if you want a UPC code on the cover and*
- > *a ISBN number. I noticed that there was not one on the previous books. He*
- > *said that with an ISBN number (which doesn't cost anything), libraries will*
- > *take the books and it would make it easier to sell them to a distributor.*

An idea to consider.

- > *if the book is done up here, by law it has to say "Printed in Canada"*
- > *somewhere on the book, usually on the bottom of the copyright page.*
- > *Hopefully that will not be a problem.*

Not a problem.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2001 9:05 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Neil's research on our behavior looks very interesting.....and I am of course all for looking into it.

Also the more I think about it, the more I like the paperback idea. (Not forgetting the hardback, of course!)

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 9:33 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Five people, nearly two hours, and two pizzas later, ALL REMAINING PAGES OF AOM HAVE BEEN COLLATED!! What a great feeling that is!

This coming week, I will take 3 1/2 large boxes to a local shop for cutting in half. On Saturday, August 18, 6-8 people will gather at my house to glue them together into untrimmed paperback format. Then back to the shop to have those trimmed to proper size. Then there will be one more binding party to put them into cases. By around Labor Day we ought to be rife with AOMs.¹³¹ That's also about the time I can get the picture covers done.¹³²

David

¹³¹ Getting a reliable supply of AOMs was the most difficult and frustrating part of our sales. People wouldn't buy TRA—copies of which we had coming out our ears—if they couldn't get AOM. With the hand production required for each AOM, we were almost always behind in our orders. Sometimes people had to wait several weeks, and not everyone was patient enough to do so. With the “assembly line” method David devised we finally had plenty of AOMs. Just when that happened the terrorist attacks took place and our sales dropped into the cellar for several months. We even despaired of having enough money to continue the project. Thanks to two generous gifts early in 2002 we were able to continue.

¹³² Getting the picture covers done was another story in itself; rather than tell about it here I'll discuss it in its own section.

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 9:33 PM

- > I was looking at this quote again this morning, and I am just amazed.*
- > [Friesens] wants a thousand dollars LESS than Sheridan! That would help us out*
- > enormously: we wouldn't have to worry about paying our bills anymore.*
- > Sometime in the near future I am expecting to get the samples from this firm*
- > in the mail, and once I get those I can examine them and see if their*
- > quality really is up to par.*

If the quality is good, then I'd say let's GO for it. We could charge the same amount for the books and start, finally, to get a comfortable cushion in the bank. By taking orders in the fall for DIE and finally having a good supply of AOMs and having a long time before we start racking up costs on LROM, we ought to be in pretty good shape by the time we get to printing LROM. The proceeds from the store won't hurt either!

By the way, I assume the Canadian quote does NOT include a dust jacket, right? We still have to do our own covers by photocopying, etc.?

More later!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 11:30 PM

I really like what I hear about this Canadian printing company....I am just like David in that I say "go for it" if the quality is good.....and we owe a big thanks to Neil for being our "MAN in the North".

Mike

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2001 11:01 PM

- > I do have one piece of advice: make sure that the copy shop doesn't cut the book*

> *upside down this time and ruin it!! I seem to remember having LOTS of
> trouble with copy shops before...*

I'm going back to the print shop I used at first. They charged more but did a fantastic job. The one that gave us problems was a new place that offered half-price for a month or two, so I tried them. Now I'm going back to the first one.

...

> *It turns out that for
> them to do the dustjackets, it would cost around \$2.25 per jacket. This is
> significantly higher than what it costs us, although they would be printing
> it on much better material and the resulting jacket would be "glossy" (like
> modern DJs are, as opposed to the paper we are using). I would vote for
> going with the DJs we are currently using: it's a lot cheaper and at this
> point, inexpensive is good.*

Right.¹³³

Tomorrow I plan to get a good start on DIE.

Blessings!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 01, 2001 9:50 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *Here is the response from the book store owner! ...What do you think?*
> *[Mike] About the Comic book store owner who wants to stock some
> Starman books....I say we go for it....at least we can claim that some store*

¹³³ At first we were going to produce the dustjackets for book five ourselves, but later we changed our minds. I'm glad we did: the dustjackets Friesens produced were simply outstanding – and best of all, we didn't have to put them on the books ourselves!

> somewhere has stocked the product.....a barrier that once broken might help
> us get into more stores.

I like Mike's comments. Let's try it. I'm glad his order is small. Remember that the "review copies" we've sent out in the past just disappeared.¹³⁴ If he sells them and does well, he'll order more. Let's tell him that the price needs to be \$16.50 for the first two and \$20 for the third so that all prices are the same, and see what he says. If he agrees, then let him know that we'll get three sets of the three to him as soon as we can.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 01, 2001 11:16 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *One thing has struck me as being curious about this whole deal. ...*

Is there a way you can check the telephone book or something to find out that this guy actually has a store and isn't a private party trying to buy three sets of our books at an enormous discount? My feeling is that he is legitimate, but there are a lot of sneaky people out there ready to capitalize on some folks' good and trusting hearts.¹³⁵

David

DATE: MONDAY, AUGUST 06, 2001 9:50 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I contacted Marcel at Sheridan Books today and changed our shipping instructions so that 200 copies of JTP will now go to me and the balance to Jon. That will raise our

¹³⁴ One thing we had a great deal of trouble with is people coming to us asking for "review copies" and then disappearing, with no word or thanks or review. To me it looks a lot like a scam to get free books – books that we spent a great deal of time and effort to produce and for which we are not getting paid for.

¹³⁵ We checked this out and it turned out to be legitimate, and that proved to be a good contact. Sometimes, though, the books just went to a black hole...

shipping costs somewhat, of course. Shipping date is now August 17—she didn't know why the date was pushed back a week.¹³⁶

I don't know if Jon is supposed to get two advance copies for approval or not. Somewhere in there we are supposed to pay the balance of what we owe before they ship. Jon, I suggest you get in contact with Marcel over this so that our shipment is not delayed further.

I also told her about the two defective books.¹³⁷ She said that sometimes that happens, but it should not affect the entire order. I know that every business that does mass production of an item will have a few defective copies that will make it through the quality control doors. I checked my copies, pulling hard on a handful of pages and there was no problem. Jon, I suggest that you take a random sampling of those you have and do the same test. If the problem is defective glue, it will affect most of the books, but I don't think it's that. It is probably just a coincidence that it happened to two books at once.

...

It looks as if we will probably be moving to the Canadian publishers anyway, so we won't have to worry about these problems with DIE, etc. No doubt the Canadian publisher will raise other problems.

I don't think that the defective books reflect badly on us—our readers know that we did not bind these. If we replace them quickly, our customer service record will go up.

More later,

David

¹³⁶ I will resist the urge to comment on this...

¹³⁷ A few copies of *The Runaway Asteroid* were beginning to disintegrate: the pages were falling out. This caused me to panic, thinking that our entire print run was about to fall apart. As it turned out only a few copies had this problem, and we sent new copies to the customers who encountered this. I can say, though, that this did not happen with the books that Friesens printed.

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 10, 2001 1:43 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I got my sample copy of JTP from Sheridan this morning, sent by next day UPS air mail. It's not bad, but has some slightly disappointing features. The gold foil logo on the front is much inferior to the one on TRA; the page number "4" appears on the frontispiece where it ought not to be (obviously my fault, since I missed that when I sent in the master copy, though I don't see how); and the color of the book is not black, it is a very deep, midnight blue—which is also nice.¹³⁸

But overall, it is as good as TRA. Jon, I don't know whether your copy was sent to Fort Wayne or Hurricane, but since we want to get the books shipped, if you can get the transfer done asap, we'll be able to satisfy our customers soon.

Did you receive my email about Marcel's information? If not, here it is again. You can reach her at Marcel, That's all the contact information I have.

I'm now off for the weekend—back Sunday evening.

Best wishes!

David

DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, 2001 9:31 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *These books basically*
- > *disintegrated: all the pages came out and we are left with a bunch of loose*

¹³⁸ I was really unhappy to hear this. At this point we had decided to color code each of our books. *The Lost Race of Mars*, a book about Mars, was to be red (both book and jacket). *Descent Into Europa*, a book about an adventure underwater, was to be blue. *Journey to the Tenth Planet* was to be black: the jacket was black and we wanted a black book to match. When Sheridan messed up and printed a blue book instead we were not happy: it ruined our color themes.

> *pages and some boards. It's not a pretty sight. It is as if the books were*
> *never glued to begin with. The endpapers are still securely in place, but*
> *that's it.*

Sounds like a fluke. Did April make a random check of the books in your closet?

> > *I got my sample copy of JTP from Sheridan...*
> > *The gold foil logo on the front is much inferior...*
> > *and the color of the book is not black...*
>
> *That's pretty aggravating. I can't believe about the logo or the color of*
> *the book: I specified black — solid black, without a hint of any other*
> *color. We ought to get a discount for that: there is simply no reason why it*
> *shouldn't be black. It really looks like switching publishers is the best*
> *idea: Sheridan is just not giving us what we are asking for.*

I agree. I will call tomorrow and see what I can negotiate. I checked the book in the sunlight and it is definitely blue, not black. It is only a little darker than TRA—so close that no one would think there was a functional difference.

I took JTP with me this weekend and flipped through it, and unfortunately found an egregious mistake! In the scene where the Starman are exercising, after they have left Titan, Zip tells the others that he regrets not asking about Robert Nolan's condition. However, when we were editing the book, we added a scene in which he does just that—but I forgot to revise the exercise scene!¹³⁹ So we have a scene in which Zip asks Richard Starlight about Nolan and is referred to his father, who gives him a lengthy explanation—then a chapter later Zip says he's sorry he didn't ask. I'm sure we'll get more than a few comments on that.¹⁴⁰ I'll rewrite it for the second edition.

As far as a wire transfer to Sheridan, well, we'll get to it when we can. I want to negotiate on the color anyway and I'll let you know what happens.

David

¹³⁹ This is how these things happen. We tried to correct as many of them as possible, but somehow something always slips through. When we find these things we correct the text so that the next edition will be accurate, but that doesn't fix the problem in the previous edition! Oh well.

¹⁴⁰ We didn't – not one. I was surprised. In fact, we only received two pieces of feedback about the third Starman book – one from someone who liked it, and one from someone who didn't.

DATE: MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2001 5:16 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > That is pretty sad: I know we wanted black, we specified black, we gave the*
- > code for black, and the contract we SIGNED was for black. I think we should*
- > point out that the contract we signed specified black books, and that since*
- > this shipment isn't black, we don't have to accept it.*

I looked through all of our documents this morning, and Sheridan does have a loophole. The contract that I actually signed has all the details of the project written on it. In the information on the binding it reads "Arrestox/Roxite B 51545 Royal Vellum cloth." Now I suspect that this means the very dark blue cover we got. However, in the cover letter I sent with the book package, dated TWO WEEKS AFTER THE CONTRACT, it specifically says "the material we want for the cloth cover is Holliston, Roxite B, code 51575. This should be a jet black cloth. Each of our proposed books will be a different color." This is also the letter that specified that we did NOT want the 10% overrun. It has been the case that whenever we change the agreement in financial favor of Sheridan (e.g. new die cut, new shipping instructions), they immediately comply; when we change it in our favor, our request gets dropped through the cracks (e.g. the 10% overrun).

I have called Sheridan twice today and spoken to Cora once and left a message for Marcel the second time. If Marcel gets the message I left with Cora, she knows what it's about and that I want to negotiate a reduction in our cost. However, I have not spoken to her personally, and their office is closed for the day.

- > It turns out I can't do it today anyway, even if I did*
- > live in West Virginia: Sheridan doesn't have a quote ready for us yet...*
- > Didn't this happen last time?*

I think they had the quote ready, but the shipment was delayed by 2-3 weeks for unspecified reasons. The delay this time is only one week, but still for unspecified reasons. Marcel speculated last week that it may have been due to equipment breakdown while she was out of the office.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2001 12:09 AM

Dear Jon and David,

I am all for a bit of hardball with any company that looks as incompetent as Sheridan does. I certainly hope that the contract does not have any fine print that gives them "wiggle room" (such as "what is the definition of BLACK?") Every time a consumer does not point out when a product or service is significantly in error is just more contribution to a sad trend in our country.....mediocrity.

I ordered and received two T-shirts...one has the European city with the Xenobot fighter on the back and the other is ROS of course. I really like both of them...and the quality of transfer is much better than I expected. I really like the way the Xenobot fighter came out and would eventually like to see an updated version of it. (I think a nice border around the pic with some other stuff superimposed into the scene might be nice....I have found a flaw in the drawing and I would like to correct it.)

... Perhaps the cover of JTP will make it onto a shirt....I will try to bring the painting with me when we meet in a couple of months, then I can give it to Jon personally.

Mike

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2001 12:19 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> *I am all for a bit of hardball with any*
> *company that looks as incompetent as Sheridan does.*

I finally got ahold of Marcel this morning. She accepts complete liability on the color snafu and said she has asked her supervisor to make an offer for financial compensation. I should hear from her sometime today. If the offer is too little, I will, of course, counteroffer. So that is a relief—no arguing or threatening; now we're just talking an amount.

She also said that the gold foil logo [on the cover of JTP] was the best they could do with the material they had. I said that the logo on TRA was significantly better and she

said she'd look into the difference, but there is still nothing we can do about it at this point.

So Jon, do we have all the information we need now to move to the Canadian publisher? I still hope to have DIE completed by the end of September. That means we'll need the artwork from Kevin [Anetsberger] by the middle of that month and we'll need to be ready to take pre-orders. If my timing is right, we'll have only a short time to raise enough funds for a down payment. Although we could delay that until we raise the funds. Nothing wrong with that—I just want to have the authors' copies ready for my trip in October. Wow! That's only two months away!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2001 4:36 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Marcel called and said that her supervisor said that when we get the bill, Jon should take \$180 off. I said, "Is that your best offer?" and went on to tell her that the color of the book is part of its message, that the next were to be bright blue and red, and that we had already promised our customers a black book. She said she'd go back to the supervisor. Then she called me right back and asked how much we wanted. I told her \$500. If I ask for too much, they'll balk and we start arguing; if I ask for too little, they get off easy and we don't get a fair discount. So I picked \$500 after their offer of \$180. I'll get a call back later today or (more likely) tomorrow morning.

Sounds as if the Canadian firm is our best bet if we can get the files translated. Asking Neil and Kevin about that is a good idea. Odd that they would want a Mac file since almost everybody I know uses a PC. I may be able to get it translated locally if other sources pan out, but let's keep that as a back-pocket option since I don't know much about what we're talking about, and the experts I know are all PC guys, so we'd probably have to pay to have it converted if I do it at this end.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2001 3:31 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Marcel called me today to tell me that Sheridan has accepted our request for a \$500 discount for binding the book in the wrong color. She will call me later today or tomorrow morning with a final amount for JTP.

I have completed the revision of the first draft of the second chapter and am well on the way to finishing the third chapter.

So we're moving along speedily!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2001 8:49 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Marcel told me that the final bill comes to \$1,521.34, after our \$500 discount. Knowing that Jon would be traveling until next week and then back in school and not available to get to the bank, I went ahead and got a cashier's check from my savings account and sent it off today. Sheridan should have it by Monday at the latest and should send the books out right away, if they're on the ball; we ought to have them by the end of next week.

Jon, could you send me a check for \$1621.61 at your convenience? That's the final tab on JTP plus \$100.27 which is on my account for Starman costs. That'll bring me up even on our account. I'll be spending more soon on costs for binding the rest of the AOMs, but that's for later.

Almost done with DIE#3. I'll be getting that off to you later this evening.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 2001 12:09 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Today is our gluing party. Six or eight people will come together to glue all the pages of the remaining AOMs together. I'll let you know how it goes. Then later this week I take the four boxes worth to get them trimmed to the right book size. Then I can do the picture covers for our fans and get going on binding the rest of the AOMs for general sales.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 2001 7:17 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

A little more than three hours of work, and all the remaining AOMs have now been glued—four big boxes full of them. Eight people helped, one of whom is our model for Zip Foster. Got a set of photos of him, too! In the next few days I'll take the boxes back to the local shop and get the pages trimmed. After that I can bind the picture covers for our customers and we can progress with the binding of the rest of the AOMs into the boards. What a big help they are! If I had done it myself it would have taken 24-30 hours just to do what we did today.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2001 11:13 AM

> *This just in from Neil! It looks like it's ok to use Adobe after all.*

Terrific. However, whoever puts the text into Adobe¹⁴¹ will have to have some detailed instructions from me on how to set it up. I only do it in a word document, which means it is rather complicated to set it up with pagination and the headers. I have to make many changes each time I print up our master copy. For example, on the even-

¹⁴¹ Which turned out to be me!

numbered pages, the header is always the title of the book, and on the odd-numbered pages it is the title of the chapter. However, there should be neither pages numbers nor headers on the introductory pages, and the page numbers are put in smaller type size at the bottom of the page on the pages that begin chapters; etc. I have to do all this by hand when I print. In a program in which the entire text is put on a disk, there must be some way to do this that I don't understand, and whoever sets the book up on Adobe will need to do that. I hope that's clear.¹⁴²

David

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2001 2:08 AM

> it looks like Sheridan sent the overrun to me, although I have no idea why

Probably because you were already getting the lot of them before we said to send me 200.

*> Today I also got a note from Sheridan, saying that the total bill was three
> thousand and something, and that we had paid half of it up-front and needed
> to send a check for fifteen hundred and something to cover the rest.*

That's a lot more than the 7 cents letter we got last time. Their bookkeeping department probably doesn't coordinate with Marcel's department very well. I'd suggest ignoring it or calling Marcel about it.

Do you want to give me the names and addresses of the people who want picture covers of the books, Jon? I can probably get at least some of them mailed out on Wednesday. Today I bought material to make a book press. It is an important piece of equipment in the bookbinding process, since it keeps the books flat while the glue dries to keep them from warping. I've seen several of them and they are all antiques, none of them for sale. Fred W. has no idea where to get one—he got his serendipitously. So I just bought the material to make one—cost \$10. I've been just stacking heavy books on the newly-glued books.

David

¹⁴² This is a great summary of how we format the books!

DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2001 8:17 PM

> *I've been getting*

> *a number of orders for AOM recently — all new customers.*

Terrific! That probably means future sales of TRA and JTP too! I think with our current bank situation and a new publisher in sight, we may have passed the place of financial worry and shoestring operations.¹⁴³

I'll do the JTP pc's first and then a bunch of AOMs. Leslie Owens gave me the word today that we are getting 400 boards cut to size—enough to bind all the remaining AOMs—for \$120. Delivery is scheduled for Friday, September 14. After that, I can get the college students together again for some serious book binding and crank out AOMs by the dozen.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2001 8:21 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I have set up a book-binding party for next Sunday. If all goes well, I should have a huge pile of AOMs at the end of the day. Of course, the binders themselves get the first 8 as a thank-you for the gluing they did a few weeks ago, but we should still have a large number of AOMs. They will go first to Jon for the book fair October 13. I'm sure we won't be able to bind all 196, but I hope to get half of them done. We will have four teams of binders. Each can do about 20-25 at a sitting. We'll need at least one more session, but that can wait until November or so.

David

¹⁴³ This was a bit premature: we had serious trouble when it came time to print the fourth Starman book, and printing the fifth Starman book wasn't very easy either.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2001 9:25 AM

I went out yesterday to make the dust jackets for TRA and got 30 of them made and beautifully cut, got home, and realized I had made 30 dj's of JTP!!! Blast! Of course, I can use those dj's too, but now I have to go out and make TRA dj's! So if you can make that check out for \$240, that would be helpful! Sorry! If it's too late, I'll get caught up on expenses later.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2001 11:22 AM

> * *the die from Sheridan — we never received it.*

I suggest that we have the Canadian firm make a new one. Sheridan didn't save the one from TRA and had to make a new one for JTP, which was poor quality. Compare the die cuts in TRA and JTP. The one for JTP is little more than a blob.

Yes, I understand that Kevin will have to format the text of DIE with the illustrations,¹⁴⁴ but to make that happen, I will still need to make the authors' copies. It is therefore not less work for me, but I don't mind doing it.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 02, 2002 9:38 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> #1 AOM: 289 \$5,258.16

¹⁴⁴ At first (as you can see in this and in following e-mails) we were going to ask Kevin to format the fourth Starman book for Friesens, but then I got a copy of PageMaker and we decided to learn how to do it ourselves. I'm kind of glad: it gave me the chance to learn a new piece of software and a valuable skill as well.

- > #2 TRA: 210 \$3,562.25
- > #3 JTP: 160 \$3,091.78
- > *And there you have it! It's not really too bad.*

It is very good that we have covered our costs and have a chunk in the bank, but it is a little disturbing to see that we are losing customers with every book we distribute!¹⁴⁵ Have we sold any recently?

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 2002 11:34 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I have no time at all, but I wanted to say that Kevin's offer is very, very*
- > *generous and I think we should accept it if the publisher doesn't already*
- > *handle ISBN numbers — but I really think that our publisher does and offers*
- > *them for free. Check up on it and let me know the score.*

I checked. The Canadian printer [Friesens] does offer them for free, but charges \$35 to put a bar code on the book—and of course that's \$35 Canadian. Now we are doing our own dust jackets so all we need is a master of the bar code. However, the bar code would indicate that the publisher is Friesens, not the Starman Team. I don't know if that's a problem or not, but our contact for Friesens suggested that we might want to get our own ISBNs to ensure that the publisher is shown as the Starman Team. Maybe we really ought to find out just what ISBNs do.

David

¹⁴⁵ This is a characteristic of all series, from Tom Swift to Rick Brant to Harry Potter. The first book always sells more than the second book, which always sells more than the third book, and so forth.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2002 8:53 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I just now finished printing the master copy of DIE—it took six hours altogether! There must be a better way to do this, but it would involve special software. I'm told that pagemaker software can cost up to \$1000, but it will do easily what I have to do by hand by using Word. As you will see when you get your authors' copies, there are some glitches. I can't figure out why I can use a font one day for pagination but can't use it the next day. Fortunately Kevin DOES have the pagemaker software, so I hope he can make it work easily.

I have been in contact with Earl, our rep from Friesens. He says that the requirements for submitting the package are a lot more flexible than their paperwork says. We CAN use a PC format rather than just MAC, etc. I haven't nailed down the details since we've only passed each other, but I will call him tonight and get the details. It would be best eventually, when we get to that point, to put him and Kevin into direct contact so Kevin can put the disk together without me as a go-between.

Tonight I plan to run off the authors' and artist's copies, then tomorrow will bind them. The master of the draft dj is ready to be copied too. If all goes according to plan, I should have all books completely finished by tomorrow night and can mail them out on Friday morning.

The procedure from this point on is very familiar to me so I don't expect any problems.

More later,

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2002 6:41 PM

Dear Jon,

The authors' copies will be finished tonight. Right now the glued pages are in the book press. After a while I take them to be trimmed then put them into the boards. It's easy

from here on and, God willing, they will be in the mail tomorrow morning. There are a couple of surprises in these authors' copies that I am SURE you will like!

- > *I have an idea, David: what would you think about*
- > *investing in a good copy of some pagemaker software after we get in the*
- > *funds from DIE? I know that it can cost a thousand dollars for Quark*
- > *Express, but the full version of Adobe Acrobat (which is quite good and is*
- > *what Kevin will use to send our manuscript to Friesens) is only \$300.*

Absolutely fine with me! If YOU can run the program and want to be the person who prepares the MS for the publisher, that'll be excellent!

...

- > *Glitches are fine; after all, these are just the author's copies. We can*
- > *live with them!*

They're small. Teeny.

Earl of Friesens says that delivery turnaround time at this time of year is about 4 weeks, so that's makes a March date more possible. It's 4-6 weeks during their busy time. What's uncertain is how long it'll take Kevin to prepare and mail the disk and then we have to negotiate endpapers, foil stamp, etc. Anyway, I'm hurrying. It seems as if I pastor the church on the side.

Blessings!

David

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2002 8:11 PM

MEMO TO: All those involved in the production of Descent Into Europa
Earl Schmidt, Kevin Anetsberger, Jon Cooper, Mike Dodd

FROM: David Baumann

SUBJECT Status report on the production of the book

Dear friends,

This is my understanding of what still has to be done to get the book into print and who will be doing what to make it happen. Please correct me where I am wrong.

PERSONNEL:

Starman Team's contact for the printing of Descent Into Europa is Mr. Earl Schmidt, Friesens Representative in Victoria, BC.

David Baumann: Writer, Book Design, Team Contact with Friesens

Jonathan Cooper: Plotter, Marketing, Accountant

Mike Dodd: Science Advisor

Kevin Anetsberger: Artist and Production

Person at Friesens main office who will coordinate production and shipping: Ryan

Friesens will accept any disk with the manuscript, so long as it is formatted for ready printing. They are set up for Mac, but can take any program. A hard copy should be sent with the disk so they can tell what we want the book to look like. I assume that this can be loose pages—it does not have to be bound into a book format.

STILL TO BE DONE:

Kevin will prepare disk and hard copy and send them directly to Ryan at above address. Kevin will add one more illustration if it is possible.

Earl will send me samples of paper and blue cloth for the cover, from which I will make selections. Book should be a sea blue color, or close to it. Earl (on behalf of Friesens) and I (for the Starman Team) will continue to coordinate with any other matters that come up during production.

Jon will send check for entire amount in original quotation to Ryan when disk is submitted. Any difference due to overage in books, endpapers, gold foil stamp, etc. will be

billed later. Bill should be sent to Jon. Quotation is in Canadian dollars. I will find conversion amount at my bank and inform Jon, who can then send the check.

Jon will send master copy of endpapers and design for gold foil stamp and lettering on book directly to Ryan, with copy to Earl for his information.

I will send Kevin the text of the book in a word document.

I will send Kevin a detailed list of instructions about how the book should be formatted, with a copy to Earl, Jon, and Mike. Jon, Mike, and Kevin already have hand-bound copies of the book, which will assist Kevin in formatting the text onto a disk for Friesens.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2002 8:15 PM

Dear Jon,

In the message I just sent, please note that I have you down for sending Ryan the material for the endpapers and the gold fold stamp. I figure you can print and send better quality stuff than I can. I had trouble printing the endpapers (probably just because my ink was running out) and the image for the stamp came out the size of a dinner plate. I'd feel better if we have as few "middle men" in the process here as possible, as it would be faster if you send the material directly to Ryan. I hope you don't mind. I'm doing my best to crank out the project as fast as we can.

David

DATE: THU, 24 JAN 2002 19:09:46 -0800

I have finished binding the authors' and artist's copies of DIE. They are packaged up and I will drop them into the slot at the post office this evening. Look for them at your doorstep early next week. You will notice that the pages have a strong bias in them that was not apparent until they were cut. This means that the two halves of the book bend in different directions when the book is opened. I don't know if pressing them will fix it

over time. Not a big problem for these copies and of course the finished product will not have that problem.

Also the place where I get the guillotine cuts will give us an excellent break on printing the dust jackets—better than I've seen anywhere else since my father moved.

Kevin, I have been in contact with Earl, our contact with Friesens, the company we're using now for printing the books. Apparently they are more flexible in what we send them than their paperwork would indicate. I'll make a call to him tonight to clarify a few last minute items, then get to you with what we settle on. Then I guess I can send you the entire text in a word document and you can format it as they want. You'll probably eventually want to contact Earl directly. The office you'll need to send the material, however, is somewhere else—Toronto or someplace. That's where the printing will be done. The artist's copy of DIE that you'll receive will show you how we want the finished product to look, but I imagine that when you set it up with whatever program you need to use, there will be some changes in pagination, etc. That's okay. When we get closer to putting the disk together, we can be in contact over the details at that time.

Needless to say, we want to get this book out as soon as we can. We'd hoped to have it out in November, but my computer problem squashed that.¹⁴⁶ Anything you can do to press this through quickly will be deeply appreciated by the Starman team. The work on the dust jacket can take second place to the disk if you have to make a choice, since I won't need the dust jackets for several weeks. Thanks for everything! Without your help, it would have been a very different book.

Now—on to LROM!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2002 8:48 AM

Dear Kevin, Earl, Jon, and Mike,

¹⁴⁶ David had a major computer meltdown that delayed the production of the fourth Starman book. I think that I covered this in Volume 2 of the Starman Archives.

Good news! Since we've learned that Friesens is more flexible than we had thought at first regarding the format for submitting our manuscript for *Descent Into Europa*, Jon has decided to purchase right now the necessary software for preparing the disk rather than wait until later. Since we have more options than we thought, we can afford a less expensive software package than what the original proposal from Friesens required.

Therefore, Kevin, Jon will be happy to take on the task of preparing the disk for *Descent Into Europa* and submit it to Ryan at the Friesens plant, and you're off the hook. If you'd like to prepare the last two illustrations for inclusion they'd be very welcome. Just send them to Jon directly. And I know that Mike would be really delighted if you have in your files a good close-up of the mantaship that could be placed somewhere in the book. Do you have anything like that in your files, something along the lines of the sketches or descriptions he sent you? Jon wants to get the disk prepared in the next 2 or 3 days, so just send whatever you have in your files—we're not looking for new artwork here. I know that takes time to do.

Thanks everybody! We're coming close to the end.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2002 12:10 PM

Dear Jon,

Just called you and you were out. Earl Schmidt called me just now and said he'd read the email about your getting the software. I hope it's not too late, but he says that you should get either PAGEMAKER or QUARK—PC or Mac doesn't matter. He said pagemaker is the cheaper way to go and suggested that.

He also strongly suggested that you call the fellow at the Friesens plant who is their tech support, formatter, and general troubleshooter to see what would be the best way to go for software and formatting etc. so that you can get them what they want as cheaply as possible. His name is Brad. You can reach him at the Friesens number in Manitoba.

He added that we could have colored endpapers if we wanted for no additional cost, but we can worry about that later. Friesens is also sending me an estimate in American dollars so we don't have to worry about the conversion.

Kevin also just emailed me to say that he is working on an illustration of the mantaship for Mike but doesn't expect to have it done by today.

Dashing off to work now. Have to run. I hope you get this in time.

David

DATE: MON, 28 JAN 2002 20:01:35 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

*> I got the text! It looks exactly like what's on the
> dustjacket flap. That is the first thing that occurred
> to me too but I thought I'd ask you and see what you
> had in mind.*

Actually, it's a little bit different from what is on the flap, but that's of course where I got the idea.

*> I got my author's copy
> and I was very impressed with it!! WOW! I thought it
> was just outstanding. I haven't looked through it
> completely yet but I will as soon as I can. This is
> clearly the best-looking book yet! The full-color
> cover (with that nifty picture of Europa!) and the
> color endpapers really set the book off. This is a
> treasure!*

I thought you'd like it!

...

Have you received the correct version and printed the dustjackets or does that remain to be done?

Kevin said he will send a corrected version of the dj soon. When he saw what it looked like he said he can improve the contrast and make it look even better. (He's also adding two illustrations—a black and white version of the dj and the scene of Zip piloting the UB. Right now all the illustrations are in the second half of the book, so these two will be in the first half.) When he sends me a CD with a version of the dj that needs no more correction, then I will have a top quality print made of it, add the endflap texts, and then take the result to our local shop and have 300 printed up and trimmed to fit the books. I'll wait until I have the books in hand so that I can get the dj trimmed to the perfect size. They charge \$1.50 for each 11x17 color photocopy—which is still better than any other shop around me—and promised a discount for a bulk assignment like 300. We were getting charged anywhere between 75c and \$1.05 each before my father moved, so this time it'll be a bit more but still a good deal.

...

> > *In the message I just sent, please note that I have*
> > *you down for sending Ryan the material for the*
> > *endpapers and the gold fold stamp. I figure you can*
> > *print and send better quality stuff than I can...*
>
> *Sure, I'd be glad to do it (and send a copy to Earl*
> *as well — I noticed you had that in there too) but*
> *are you sure they need a printed copy? The manuscript*
> *itself is to be an electronic document; I just assumed*
> *that the endpapers and gold foil stamp should be too.*
> *Could you check up on this before I send it? I want to*
> *make sure they really would rather have a paper copy*
> *before I print and send it.*

It would be best to send both—electronic and hard copy. This is how they want the book submitted. They'll work from the electronic file but want the hard copy to make sure they get it right. If you're in doubt, check with Earl directly. They'll need to know which end is up, too.

David

DATE: TUE, 29 JAN 2002 00:11:31 EST

Dear David and Jon,

Today was the first day I felt OK and I went in to work,when I got home, the advance copy of DIE was waiting for me! It truly is beautiful. The jacket is extremely nice (and I understand that an even better copy will make the production run). I love the colored end paper and the cover art UNDER the jacket (board outsides?). This is probably the nicest looking one yet.

Mike

DATE: TUE, 29 JAN 2002 15:55:30 -0800

Dear Jon,

Sounds as if things are moving along rather quickly now. Sorry that you're the one who's putting in all the time at this point.¹⁴⁷ This is where it may be to my advantage to be so minimally literate with computers!

- > *Brad did say that there were two options: we could*
- > *send it on a CD OR we could upload it to their FTP*
- > *site. David, could you get ahold of Earl and see how I*
- > *would upload something to their FTP site?*

Best and quickest thing would be for you to contact Earl directly, by email or telephone. He's also quick at responding, and I'm going to be really busy for the next couple of days. My time won't free up until Thursday afternoon.

David

¹⁴⁷ It took a good many hours to take the Microsoft Word document David sent me with the full text of *Descent Into Europa* and turn it into a properly-formatted PDF document! This was complicated by the fact that I was using a computer program completely new to me and had a very limited amount of time in which to learn it.

DATE: WED, 30 JAN 2002 17:16:06 -0800

Dear Jon,

Here is the current quote from Friesens, which includes some information on formatting. It is indeed about \$1000 better than Sheridan. If you have any questions, please check with either Brad or Earl. I notice it says something about no illustrations—better be clear on what that means.¹⁴⁸

Notice that they will do dust jackets for a fair price. We're paying about half that for color photocopies which must then be trimmed and hand-wrapped. No doubt their quality would be better and certainly easier than what we've got. We may want to consider going this way for LROM.¹⁴⁹

David

DATE: WED, 30 JAN 2002 18:12:38 -0800

Dear Jon,

I just did the math and the 500 books will cost us \$2615 in US dollars. This doesn't include making the gold foil stamp (a one-time cost, obviously) or any overage in book production, but that's only \$1.32 per book. I don't know if there's any other costs in there, like extras for the endpapers, etc. but either way you look at it it's a much better deal. If Friesens delivers on time and if the books are good quality,¹⁵⁰ I think we've found ourselves a partner!

Did we agree to send me 200, Mike 100, and you the balance?

David

¹⁴⁸ It just meant no color or grayscale illustrations – the halftone line drawings we had planned to use as illustrations were fine.

¹⁴⁹ We did, and Friesens did a beautiful job with them!

¹⁵⁰ Both of which happened!

DATE: THU, 31 JAN 2002 16:05:25 -0800

Dear Jon,

Man! Computers solve many problems while creating others. Doesn't sound a whole lot easier than what I had to do to print the book just in Word. Still, at least now we have the program for the future.

Don't worry too much about page font size or font type, Jon. I know you've already changed the page numbers from [font size] 12 to 11, but in the future that's just a detail that's not important. Also font types. Sounds as if we'll have a good product, and I'll look forward to seeing it later tonight.

I got the package from Earl today with samples of cloth, etc. but I haven't opened it yet.

Soon we'll be in business.

David

DATE: THU, 31 JAN 2002 17:42:42 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

> > *I got the package from Earl today with samples of*
> > *cloth, etc. but I haven't opened it yet.*
>
> *Great! I'm sure you'll pick us out a great one.*

I've opened it. He sent me a bunch of cloth samples for the cover of the book. Paper samples are a day behind—I'll check those out tomorrow. I'm glad to report that there is a blue cloth that just about matches the color of Aquapolis perfectly! Royal blue. It looks so good that it is sad now that Sheridan did not get JTP right. Their error saved us \$500, though. LROM will be a nice red, and then it'll be clear to our readers that the books are in a color scheme.

I'm really looking forward to DIE. It's going to be a great book!

David

DATE: THU, 31 JAN 2002 18:10:57 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

I went through the document, Jon. Overall it looks very nice. I do see a few things which, if they can be fixed easily, ought to be, but if they wreak havoc, can be left. Sorry to point them out; I'm sure you'll grimace, to use a series book word.¹⁵¹

EASY TO FIX:

On the table of contents, the page numbers with two digits should be moved a little to the right so the right margin is straight.

The capital letters at the beginning of each chapter look a little small. Are they the same font size as the rest?

Page 233, the last page, is blank. You can stop at 232.

OF MORE MOMENT:

All the headers on both even and odd pages are slightly off-center—just slightly.

THE BIG ONE—PROBABLY NOT FIXABLE—SORRY:

Some paragraphs are indented at 0.15 inches, but many are indented at half an inch. This makes a major inconsistency in the appearance of the text. All should be at 0.15 inches. I'm afraid that fixing it will mess up just about every single page so it is probably not worth the effort to fix it. I can guess how it happened. My Word program defaults tabs at 0.5 inches. This is quite jarring to the eye so I alter it to 0.15 inches, which is the tab distance in every series book except *The Magic Talisman*, which was prepared on a computer. For some reason, whenever I type, sometimes I have to indent each paragraph and sometimes it indents automatically. Very irritating! Probably when you got the Word text, those sections that indented automatically (or maybe those for which I had to use the tab—one or the other) defaulted in pagemaker to half an inch. From what you've said about pagemaker, I doubt this can be fixed without your having to redo the entire document and I don't think it's worth the effort. In Word, of course, one can just change the default, press Go, and the thing is done throughout the entire document. This can be easily fixed in LROM.

¹⁵¹ This is an example of the sort of things we had to correct in the document before we sent it off to Friesens. As you can see, sometimes setting up the document was a pain – but we got it done in the end.

And you're quite right about this new format. I no longer have to do all the formatting for our books, since you'll be doing it with pagemaker. Then I can take the PDF and print up a master quite easily for the authors' copies. Starman is becoming higher tech.

David

DATE: FRI, 01 FEB 2002 01:45:31 -0800

Dear Jon,

Good news and bad news—mostly good.

I think that if you correct the paragraph indentations, in most cases it won't affect the pagination.¹⁵² Even where it does, at worst it will just move the print up a line on the page and we can live with that.

Also, the header on ZIP FOSTER RIDES THE GRAY PLANET reads GREY PLANET. "Grey" is English spelling; the title of the book uses "gray." Should be easy to fix.

David

DATE: FRI, 01 FEB 2002 08:33:21 -0800

Dear Jon,

I just scanned it and it looks fine! Very attractive. All the revisions you made work well!!

¹⁵² This was a big deal to me due to the chapter headings. I had already set up the entire document by this time and had gone through the book, one page at a time, and inserted the right chapter headings. If reducing the size of the tabs reduced the length of a chapter by a page, a blank page would appear. If I removed that blank page, all the rest of the pages would be off: there would be two odd pages in a row (since I had removed the now-blank even page between them), and I would have to go through dozens of pages and redo the page number positions and the header values. This actually did happen, but instead of redoing all the pages I had David write a couple more paragraphs for that chapter in order to make it flow over to that extra page: that was easy for him to do and saved me a *lot* of work. (The paragraphs are quoted a little further along in this volume.)

Page 165. I suggest breaking the sentences for the illustration so that the second line ends at "tubes" and the third line begins with "they."

Page 224. Could you put the title LROM of Mars in a slightly larger font?

Page 227. How about putting WARNING and the other words the suit shows Zip in that electronic font¹⁵³ you used in the two other places where Zip is using a computer? If it doesn't work, it's fine as it is.

Just in case, I'll write another paragraph for page 175-176. I really don't think that the flowing script works for Nolan's vision.¹⁵⁴ Then you can use either the paragraph or Mike's sketch, whatever you think—maybe both, if the sketch comes in time. I'll get it done right away and off to you shortly.

David

DATE: FRI, 01 FEB 2002 08:08:14 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

Wow, Jon! It sure was a pleasure to wake up this morning, open up all those emails, and find that you've corrected just about everything with a <grin>!

- > *One question: when I send the manuscript up to Canada, how*
- > *should I communicate what sample to use? Does it have*
- > *a number or something?*

It's royal blue. In their pamphlet called "rainbow color samples," it is identified as "royal BB." Earl also sent me a package of paper samples for the pages but it will probably not arrive until today. He said there is a thicker paper that we can have at no

¹⁵³ A rather obscure font known as LcdD – and I did as he suggested. You can see this section on page 229 of *Descent Into Europa*.

¹⁵⁴ At first I used a fancy cursive font for the scene in which Nolan had his vision. David was right, though: it didn't work, so I took it out.

extra charge if we wish. Personally I rather prefer the thicker-paged series books and will look at that carefully. What do you two think?¹⁵⁵

If you're getting the package off to Friesens today, Jon, then I will send the swatch of royal blue cover stock and paper sample directly to Ryan. Otherwise I should send them to you to enclose in the package. If it takes Mike a day or two to get a sketch of Nolan on the cliff (nice idea!),¹⁵⁶ then I will send the samples to you, Jon. Let me know either way so I can get the envelope in the mail this afternoon in time to go out with today's mail. Maybe it would be best if I send swatches to BOTH addresses.

- > *The only*
- > *chapter it messed up was THE VEILED RAIDERS but I*
- > *think I can think of something to take up the space*
- > *and fill that blank page.*

If Mike can't get a sketch in, I can write an extra paragraph somewhere. That can be done quickly. I'll need to know what's on pages 175 and 177. I'd prefer that to a different and larger font for Nolan's out-of-body experience. Send me the corrected version of DIE on PDF and I can see what we're talking about.

- > *So I send everything to Ryan, not Earl?*

Right. Ryan is the project manager at Friesens. I gather than Earl is like Kathy [from Sheridan] and Ryan is like Marcel. When we get going, Ryan will be the person we talk to. HOWEVER, just to make sure, I'll contact Earl—but I remember that he said that it would be faster if we send the stuff directly to Ryan. If he gets it, all he'll do is turn around and send it to Ryan himself.

- > *I tried to fix this myself [changing the straight shot to a parabolic*
- > *shot] but it just didn't look*
- > *right. Mike, if you can send me a fixed version I'll*
- > *update what's in the book; otherwise I'll just go with*
- > *it as it is. Sound ok?*

Ok!

¹⁵⁵ We liked the idea of using the thicker paper, so that is what we used!

¹⁵⁶ He did, and he delivered it to me, and I placed it in the book! You can find it on page 174 of the first edition of *Descent Into Europa*.

Wow! Soon we'll have the package off and then we're just waiting. Then we'll be ready to take prepaid orders!

Have a great day,

David

DATE: FRI, 01 FEB 2002 08:55:58 -0800

Dear Jon,

Here is a new section you can insert into DIE to make page 175 stretch over to page 176. If you get a sketch from Mike in time, you can discard this is you need to, or use both. Whatever you need.

Robert fled from the room. Outside, he composed himself and headed for the shuttleport. He was breathing hard. NME looked like a strange place to him now. Nolan tried to look normal as he walked down the hallway, but he couldn't keep his eyes from flashing as he took in sights that were once so familiar but now seemed stained and ugly. Everyone he passed was an enemy, a traitor, put in place by the most reprehensible traitor of all.

Denn! He had trusted Denn for years. His lips tightened. Denn had saved his life, but only to use him to gain control over the plant. For that he had needed Nolan alive, but now Denn was completely in charge of NME and didn't need Nolan anymore.

Nolan quickened his pace. If Denn returned to consciousness before he could get off the wheel, Nolan knew he wouldn't get off it at all-at least, not alive.

Walking easily he reached the shuttleport in less than five minutes. The left side of his face throbbed where Denn had struck him.¹⁵⁷

David

¹⁵⁷ I've always wondered what people thought of this scene, and what they would think if they knew the story behind this passage!

DATE: FRI, 01 FEB 2002 19:23:37 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

> * *I had some trouble inserting Kevin's fantastic
> drawing of the Underbird. I finally had a brain-wave
> and put it in the beginning of the book on the chapter
> that dealt with the descent into Lake Vostok. There,
> the drawing was not inaccurate at all. Had I placed it
> at the end of the book, not only would it have already
> been overcrowded with other illustrations but it also
> didn't fit because they never cruised at the bottom of
> the floor.*

Brilliant idea, Jon. It works fine! Nice to have the illustration in the first part of the book, too.

> *Adding it, however, was a bit tough because the
> text ran out of space.*

Your solution is good too.¹⁵⁸ Note, however, that on page 69 there are two blank lines where none should be. There should be no space between the paragraph that begins "Forty-five minutes" and the preceding paragraph. If you fix that, will it mess you up?

> > *Page 224. Could you put the title LROM in a
> > slightly larger font?*
>
> *It's been done! Let me know if I've made it too
> large or if it's ok.*

It looks okay, but I notice that it made an extra space between the lines. Not too important, I guess. A tradeoff.

> *I obviously didn't get it off today! It will take
> some time... we still have some revising to do before
> the manuscript is where we want it.*

¹⁵⁸ No, I don't remember what my solution was...

Good, because the paper samples didn't arrive today either. Maybe tomorrow.

> *As it turned out, DIE was not a short book — in terms of pages, it's already 234! That's what gave me the idea. With thicker paper and the two I*S stories in the back, the book could look quite respectable — almost like a superadventure in itself. Most of our fans would love having the other two I*S stories, and even though the cost for the extra pages is rather small to us we could still charge an extra \$5 for the book (say, \$25 total instead of \$20 — remember, we charged \$23.50 for JTP) and explain that this book has some cool extras: the LROM chapter, all kinds of illustrations, and the two short stories. The extra \$5 multiplied by the 100 or 150 orders could bring us more than \$500 extra and that would be quite nice.*

Sounds good! To head off any objections from those who've paid for the Inter*Stellars, we could give #3 to them for \$5 if they bought one previous issue and \$3.50 if they bought both previous issues. What do you think? The font size for the short stories should be 10, too, I think—the same size as the LROM teaser, to set it apart from the actual text of DIE.

Very nice idea!

David

DATE: FRI, 01 FEB 2002 20:50:31 -0800

Dear Jon,

"The City of Dust" is attached. Two slight comments on putting the short stories in: Be sure to italicize Olympia on page 235 and in the header; and it is perfectly fine to begin each chapter without a new page. Short stories are different from novels and the chapters don't need a new page. That'll save a few pages.

You've been working really hard, so I'm glad you're enjoying it! It's fun for me too when it gets right down to the wire and I'm putting in the hours. It's also a great feeling when it's over!

I plan to write the third short story next week when I'm in the mountains,¹⁵⁹ as well as get the first chapter or two or even three for LROM done. The short story is for I*S #3, of course, not DIE.

David

DATE: FRI, 01 FEB 2002 20:54:59 -0800

Dear Jon,

I just sent City of Dust and then looked at it. There are places for illustrations, but I don't have them except in hard copy. You can either scan them from your own I*S#2 or eliminate them. Also there is a glossary at the end that is not needed for DIE. You'll also need to eliminate the line after the title that tells how many words are in the story and the date when I wrote it—that was just for personal information. All this is obvious.

It is perfectly fine in a short story not to have a separate title page. You can just write the title and then start chapter 1 a few lines down. However you want to format it, however, is fine with me!

David

DATE: SAT, 02 FEB 2002 19:27:25 -0800

Dear Jon,

This is going to be a fine book! I hope our readers agree! The new illustrations in COD¹⁶⁰ are VERY nice! I didn't notice if you put them in the list of credits for Kevin in

¹⁵⁹ This was the story we called "SETI."

the beginning or not. I did notice that you indicated on page 2 that the short stories are included in DIE as well as the Inter*Stellars. Good. I was going to suggest that.

Three points:

- 1) be sure to italicize "Olympia" on the title page, p. 235. It's italicized everywhere else.
- 2) FOTO¹⁶¹ does not begin with 2 or 3 words all in caps, COD does. I'd suggest that we reserve that technique for the novels and remove the all-capital words from the beginning of COD
- 3) The title page for COD is on page 256, which is an EVEN page. It should be an ODD page I don't know how you want to fix that, but the easiest way the better. I know that it is hard to add a single extra blank page. Another way might be to eliminate the separate title page and start the story on page 256, and use page 235 as a title page for both stories somehow. Whatever you want.

Finally, I sent you a large envelope today which contained:

- 1) paper samples from Earl. One at 60# and one (thicker) at 55#. I suggest the thicker one. Earl says it'll be only slightly more expensive but didn't give a quote.
- 2) a sample of the cover stock in royal blue. If you agree on the thicker paper, send that sample and the cover stock sample to Ryan with the rest of the package.
- 3) a photocopy of the picture of the 1904 "land-yacht"
- 4) two pages of best-quality color photocopies of photographs of the iron foundry on Belle Isle that can be posted on the web site to accompany the excerpt from Lost Race of Mars.

Have a great Lord's Day!

David

DATE: MON, 04 FEB 2002 08:06:41 -0800

Dear Jon,

I've scanned the entire document quickly. It looks fine. Only a few miniscule details.

¹⁶⁰ *City of Dust*

¹⁶¹ *Flight of the Olympia*

Page 7, Contents: change page number for City of Dust from 256 to 257.

Page 8, listing of Kevin's artwork: change "page" to "pages" just before you list all the numbers.

Page 10, question: in the web site URL, should "com" end with a virgule? i.e. "/"

Page 174, illustration of Robert Nolan on the cliff: can you remove the vertical line between the illustration and the text? If not, that's okay, but I think it would look better without the line.

Everything else is GO!

David

DATE: MON, 04 FEB 2002 16:32:00 -0800

Dear Jon,

Only one or two teeniest things on one page this time—the contents page, page 7.

"Olympia" needs to be italicized.

I also suggest that the required bit from the John Blaine trust be put after the chapter listing of DIE but before the short stories. A small point and if it's a bunch of work, don't sweat it.

Finally, if you have room, what you think of adding a line that says:

Excerpt from The Lost Race of Mars . . . 228

with LROM italicized? If there's room and if you like it, great. If not, don't sweat that either.

> > *Page 10, question: in the web site URL, should*

> > *"com" end with a virgule? i.e. "/"*

>
> *I always preferred it with one, but I've changed*
> *it — it doesn't matter to me.*

I thought it might make a difference. I remember someone correcting me once by saying that a virgule changes the URL. If it doesn't make any difference, either way is fine with me.

The illustrations really look good! I think we're ready to roll as soon as you get the envelope from me with the paper samples in it. At last!

David

DATE: SAT, 09 FEB 2002 16:27:06 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

Just got back and had 140 or so emails waiting, about 90 of them spam. Still have a lot to go through and a very full day tomorrow. I'm disappointed that the envelope still hasn't arrived, Jon. I sent it last Saturday, a week ago, by first class mail and got it to the P.O. before the last ingathering of mail for the day. Also disappointed that the grayscale images had to be edited and ESPECIALLY that Colin in the Tunnel won't make it in. That was a magnificent illustration.¹⁶²

The quote from Friesens was sent to me. It came out at \$6.16 per book or \$3020 for 500. I don't see where it mentioned the die, however, and I didn't see the discounts. I'll look more carefully and see what it says.

Good news is that I have three full chapters of LROM completed and a complete first draft of SETI done. I hope you'll like them. I'll transfer them from my laptop later and send them to you. SETI needs a little additional work from some reference material I have here, so I'll have to send that later.

More later,

David

¹⁶² This illustration eventually appeared on the cover of the third Inter*Stellar, March 2002.

DATE: MON, 11 FEB 2002 18:59:55 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Oh my! Something just occurred to me. I know we have*
- > *an ISBN number for DIE, but where are they going to*
- > *put it? I sure didn't put it in the text. We might*
- > *want to check up on this! I'm not sure what the*
- > *procedure is...*

I don't know either. I think it has to go on the dust jacket too—in which case I'll need a scan of it to put on the master. Also, it is written somewhere in the introductory pages. Earl will know. Actually, I don't think we ever made a commitment to Earl or to Kevin about what we were going to do about an ISBN. Maybe we don't have one at this point.

- > *I'm sure they [the illustrations] will be fine!*

Well, I can guarantee that they'll match the text.¹⁶³

- > *Hey, Mike, you can draw people, right? Your*
- > *picture of Robert Nolan and Zip's*
- > *little sister was great! Maybe, David, you and Mike*
- > *could split up the drawings. I sure wouldn't mind*
- > *seeing more of Mike's artwork!*

Fantastic idea, Jon. Even if Mike sends me pencil drawings, I could ink them easily.

- > *I was thinking of opening up the book for preorder*
- > *in a few days. If we get the quote, pay it up-front,*
- > *and have the check off later this week, then let's*
- > *open it up right after that. If it turns out that*
- > *we're waiting a few weeks to pay for the books, then*
- > *let's open it up right after we find that out. Either*
- > *way, we'll open the book for preorder up sometime late*
- > *this week. It will be fun!*

¹⁶³ When necessary, David could alter the text to match the illustrations!

Sounds great!

> *We do have to write some advertising blurbs!*

Ah yes. Shall I do that?

David

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2002 11:18 PM

> *I'm writing because I just got off the phone from
> Friesens. They said that the grand total for the
> project is: \$3,308.19*

Sounds good. I imagine there will be some extra shipping, as you say, and probably a bill for any overruns. What is going on with the ISBN? Earl told me that Friesens provides them free but charges \$35 to print them on the dj. If they can just supply one and give us a single scan, I can do the rest with the dj. If Friesens provides the ISBN, however, they are listed as publisher rather than the Starman Team. That doesn't bother me, but then I don't know what an ISBN is supposed to do anyway.

> *What would you say about opening up the book for
> preorder tomorrow, after the check is sent?*

AMEN!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2002 11:49 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Hmmmm. Maybe we're still suffering from the 9/11 fallout. I don't understand why that event would have caused such a dramatic change in our fortunes, but that seems to be

the line of demarcation. Maybe things will get better, but I think it likely that many other factors are involved in our sales, or lack thereof.¹⁶⁴

I suggest Plan A and Plan B for your consideration:¹⁶⁵

Plan A.

Send out another message to all previous customers, which I will be glad to draft. It's title can be WILL THE STARMAN SERIES SURVIVE? or STARMAN SERIES SURVIVAL IN DOUBT. A headline like that will, I hope, get the serious attention of any procrastinating fans who intend to buy DIE. We also continue to advertise and broaden our prospects, such as the web site Mary [Doman] suggested. I would also suggest that we ask her to be our "Marketing" person. She knows the series very well and has had some terrific insights into it, not to mention being completely supportive. On the side we also have Dorothy¹⁶⁶ who will, at the very LEAST, have some comments to make about our books; there is also a chance that she can move us in the right direction for finding an agent, reviewers, etc.

Plan B.

When it comes time to offer LROM, if DIE has died,¹⁶⁷ we don't go to Friesens. We take PREPAID orders for LROM up to a maximum of, say, 50 copies, including our personal distribution copies (i.e. our own copies, Fred, Paul Greene, artist, Reading Group, family, etc.). These can be run off at a local Kinko's or someplace, and my intrepid crew of college students will bind them by hand. After those are distributed, we put the entire text of the book up on our web site for those who want to read the book but didn't purchase one of the bound copies.

¹⁶⁴ When the fourth Starman book was opened for preorder it received very little attention; weeks went by with very few orders – not nearly enough to pay the bill that Friesens was about to send us. That, coupled with very weak sales over the past few months, led us to wonder if the Starman series actually had a future and could afford to pay to print more books. We were pretty concerned: if something wasn't done the Starman series was going to end.

¹⁶⁵ Fortunately, Plan A did the trick and so we did not have to do plan B. We were very glad: things were looking pretty grim. This is the closest we have ever come to thinking about dropping the series: after this, things got easier and began to look up for us.

¹⁶⁶ Sam and Beryl Epsteins' agent. Jim Towey had put us in touch with her and she told him she'd be glad to receive our books and consider serving as our agent or at least representative to Macintosh and Otis—the book agents that Sam Epstein and Hal Goodwin used. We sent her a complete set but never even received an acknowledgement from her.

¹⁶⁷ A pun—even in dire straits, we retained a sense of humor.

We then put out one last book, which summarizes all the rest of the series in one volume, and do the same with it as we did with LROM. This book will be offered only to purchasers of LROM. At that point the series ends.

We are putting out a good product and we are having a lot of fun doing it, but we don't want to go too much in the hole with our own money and we CERTAINLY can't risk spending \$3500 of our own money to produce 500 copies of a book that will sell to 50 customers.

In all of these matters, whatever we agree on, we tell our constituency up front. They will decide by their labors and their orders what course we take.

Your thoughts? If you like it, I'll draft another announcement to be sent to our previous customers.

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 04, 2002 9:37 AM

> What should we tell [Kevin]?

Let him use his own judgment. I don't want to lose much of the artwork. Does the ISBN have to be so big? If it goes inside one of the [dustjacket] flaps, that'll wipe out some of the text but that's not a problem. Usually the ISBN goes on the outside of the back of the book. If possible, I'd prefer that it be placed on the back on the outside as small as we can get by with.

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 04, 2002 7:57 PM

Dear Mike, Mark [Johnson], and Jon,

I like all Mark's ideas. We may want to discuss pricing a bit, but I think we've already decided to go this route since we're now offering books at about half price or something

like that. (Sorry I'm not up on the details with the recent swamp of work I've had.) We could consider making dj's optional. They cost us about \$1.50 each. If we didn't have to include them on some of the books, it would save us time, money, and effort. Getting a marketing person would be a definite plus; we've been asking for someone to do this for some time but no one has responded yet.¹⁶⁸ Maybe the right person will come along, but we know that we definitely need someone to do this. Finally, we might well consider a good discount for supporters who buy in bulk. We've done something like this, but maybe we can do more.

Thanks, Mark, for your support!

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 04, 2002 8:13 PM

Dear Jon, Mike, and Mark [Johnson],

I like your thorough response to Mark, Jon. Makes sense and you raised all the right issues I didn't have time to think about, or write about if I had. Hopefully things will ease up tomorrow.

The only point I would make, which is also probably obvious, is this—you actually said it, Jon, in another way: we are basically required by our printer to print 500 books as a minimum print run. We sell roughly 200 at roughly \$20 a book. That covers our costs and a bit more—which makes it possible for us to add extras like the short stories at the end of DIE, or pay up front for the next book and get a discount for it. That means that we have about 300 copies of each volume (except AOM which is down to about 150 copies left) stacked up in our rooms, offices, dens, or wherever we put them.¹⁶⁹ This bulk is our actual profit. We can use these books for review copies, discount offerings, whatever. If we get new customers and sell these, the profits will ease up our financial woes when they come up. We can't really expect our current customers to buy another book that they don't need or want. It comes down to new customers, and that means ad-

¹⁶⁸ The three of us have long known that we're not very good at marketing and advertising, and have always hoped that we would run into someone who could handle that part of the series. It's never happened, but we've kept hoping!

¹⁶⁹ Even though our sales are now about 300 copies per book, we still have a *lot* of Starman books stacked in our closet! You ought to see what my closet looks like...

vertising/marketing. And since none of us on the team is really good at that—Jon is probably the best—we need someone to do that for us. Simple as that, I think.¹⁷⁰

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 04, 2002 8:16 PM

Some good suggestions. We have enough good suggestions now that it can be job just to sort through them. There are bound to be some workable ideas out there. What he is saying is that we have to decide whether we are willing to sacrifice the format of a hardback with dj for the sake of sales. I really like the hardbacks with dj's, but acknowledge that they will appeal mostly to collectors—and we've probably got pretty close to exhausting that market.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, putting them out in paperback etc. means a second edition and that means more money and that means finding a new audience. We're back to getting a marketing person onboard.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 05, 2002 1:38 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *This morning to my surprise the proof for DIE arrived from Friesens! It was beautiful.*

Excellent news!

Even more good news: at our church's literature discussion group last night we finished nine months of study on Tolkien and selected a year's worth of new books. Among them, by popular demand, is the Starman series! That means that there will be a number of complete sets to be purchased soon.

¹⁷⁰ I agree! It's as simple as that. All we need is that bright enterprising person who can advertise and market the series, using talents that person has which we do not...

¹⁷¹ I think that we've done a fairly good job of reaching the series book market: what with all the advertising and other things we've done, there can't be that many series book people out there who haven't heard of the Starman series.

That raises a question: how much are we asking now for complete sets of four books? Are we saying \$11 each for the first 3 and \$25 for the fourth? What if there is no postage involved? Bottom line: how much should I charge people today if they want to buy the first four books in person?

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2002 7:09 PM

Dear Jon,

*> I just realized something: if Friesens ships out the books by the end of
> next week, we don't have very long to get the DIE dustjackets made!*

I'd planned on waiting to see the books before making the djs, just to make sure they were the right size. I seem to remember that we had a problem once with that—some were too large by a sixteenth to an eighth of an inch. If you can contact Ralph or somebody at Friesens and get a PRECISE measurement of the height of a book, I'll get the djs made to that precise size and mail off a bunch to you as soon as I can—early next week.

How many do you think we should make? 200 or 300? I don't know what the rate would be at that point, or if there would be a better rate for 300.

*> Important note: don't forget to put the ISBN number on the back dustjacket
> flap! It looked horrible on the back of the book (did you see the image
> Kevin sent?). I know that crowds the text but we'll have to live with it,
> I'm afraid. This is just going to be important to remember when we make the
> DJS!*

No, I didn't get the image Kevin sent, but I remember now that we'd decided to put it inside the flap. That's not a problem. I will need a good print of the image, though.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2002 7:19 PM

Dear Jon, Mike, and Kevin,

I just picked up the master print of Kevin's work for the dust jacket for DIE and MAN does it look fantastic! I got a very high quality print for just under \$13. On top of that I got a quote of \$1.18 each for color photocopying 300 dust jackets at the same place. That means the whole job would cost us well under \$400 for all the dust jackets cut to size. I doubt the other place I've been going to can match that price, but either way it's a good price. Not as good as the 75 cents each we used to get, but even that place went up to \$1.05 last time we had a run of djs. Tomorrow I'll drop the master print off again with the text added and if all goes well I can pick up the djs on Friday or Saturday and get them in the mail.

Stats: we're sending 100 DIEs to Mike, 200 to me, and the balance to Jon. How about if I send 20 djs to Mike, 180 to Jon, and keep 100, since Jon and I do most of the distribution. If you're happy with that arrangement, let me know—if you prefer another, let me know that too.

Also, when we start circulating the books for signatures, Jon, remember to send them without djs. Send 'em first to Kevin, Kevin to Mike, and Mike to me. I'll put the djs on them and send them to those who get signed copies. There will be seven of these books: the four of us, Fred Woodworth, Paul Greene, and Chris Goodwin.¹⁷²

Finally, Jon and Mike, we will need to coordinate closely, of course, on how we number the 500 books. Jon will have to take the lead on this. We can figure that out later.

¹⁷² We have made it a practice that the authors, artist, Fred, and Paul Greene always get a copy of each Starman book signed by all the principle parties. These are the only copies that have a full set of signatures. It is always a little difficult to do this since it involves sending a box of books around the country several times before the books are distributed. In the case of *Descent Into Europa*, we sent one to Chris Goodwin as well since DIE is a tribute to Hal Goodwin. Fred receives a signed copy as a perpetual thanks from the Starman Team since the Starman series could never have existed if Fred had not taken over a month of full time work to print AOM and bind so many copies. He refused to take any remuneration, although he did accept payment for his out-of-pocket costs when we pressed him on it. Paul Greene receives his copy as an honor and tribute to his father, the late Joseph Greene, author of the Dig Allen series.

We're getting close!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2002 2:03 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Tonight I stopped by the Copy Club on my way home after a church meeting. The place was about empty and they said they could run the 300 djs in about 15 minutes. Naturally I was delighted and said Go ahead. I got top, personal treatment. They took special care in the trimming, too. Each one is 7 3/8 inches plus about a hair. They look fantastic. I can mail them out tomorrow.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2002 4:41 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *[David]*
- > *I got a quote of \$1.18 each for color photocopying 300 dust jackets at the*
- > *same place. That means the whole job would cost us well under \$400 for all*
- > *the dust jackets cut to size. I doubt the other place I've been going to can*
- > *match that price, but either way it's a good price. Not as good as the 75*
- > *cents each we used to get, but even that place went up to \$1.05 last time we*
- > *had a run of djs.*

The quote of \$1.18 at Copy Club was so good, and they could do the run immediately while I waited, and the quality was good, and the customer service was very fine, that I went ahead and had Copy Club do the run without checking the price at the other place I frequent.

The other place, which has a normal price of \$1.79 per copy, told me a few weeks ago that they could offer "some kind of discount" for a run of 300 but I had the impression it wouldn't be that great. Well, this morning I had to go by there for another purpose and just asked them, for information's sake, what they would charge for 300 11x17 color photocopies. The quote was for 65 cents each or \$ 195 for the whole run!!!!!!! This is better than ANYTHING we've seen before even when my father was getting a spectacular discount!! So, since I didn't really make SURE before I went ahead last night, I ejected \$159 of our hard-earned money into the Asteroid Belt. Well, we learn. Sorry.

In the meantime, I mailed the packages with the DIE djs to you two by priority insured mail. Please let me know when they arrive.

Now we just wait until next Tuesday.

And while we wait, LROM 10 beckons...¹⁷³

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2002 6:05 PM

> *Friesens has shipped us all the fourth Starman book! They mailed it out
> yesterday; it looks like they are expected to arrive at our doorsteps on
> Tuesday of next week. Very exciting!!!*

Excellent! Distribution within a week!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2002 9:44 PM

> *Ah well, at least we now know about the other place's offer! You live and*

¹⁷³ Even while we were producing DIE, David was writing the next book as well as producing the Inter*Stellars. At this point, LROM was almost a third completed. It was this kind of work schedule that was burning us out. After LROM, we took a break for several months and now work at a slower pace.

> learn. We -do- have the dustjackets made, and it looks like they'll get here
> as soon as the books do, and that is a blessing! Don't worry too much about
> it, David. We can always take advantage of this offer for LROM!¹⁷⁴ It's good to
> know that it's there.

Yes. If I'd gone to the other place it would have delayed the djs by at least a couple of days. Leslie [Owens], who does this kind of thing for a living—buying and stuff—says that indeed it would have been better to check both places (although even the checking would have delayed the shipment by a day), but there are other factors to put into the decision-making process: convenience, my time, speed of work done, building customer contacts, etc.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2002 9:49 AM

Dear Jon,

> Now that I think about it though I think we made a mistake. Did you
> remember that these books are 270 pages long and hence will be a bit wider
> than usual? If you didn't then the dustjackets are going to look kind of
> funny...

Yes, I remembered it, and I think (and hope) they'll be fine. Let's hope that the books are not TOO much thicker than before though!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2002 3:35 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> I just wanted to let you know that the books have arrived!! They look

¹⁷⁴ At this point we were still thinking about doing the LROM dustjackets ourselves.

> *stunning: I am impressed at how cool they look! The dustjacket fits*
> *beautifully. Wow!!*

My books came today too! Yes, they look beautiful!! We really got a good company with Friesens, I think!

It seems to me that the dustjackets might be a hair too large. It is easy to fix, if you feel moved to do so. Locate a print shop, copy shop, or someplace in your area that can do guillotine cutting, take the stack there and tell them you want a hair taken off. It'll probably cost about a dollar to do the stack with one cut.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2002 7:53 PM

Dear Jon and David,

140 books arrived at my house today also .They look feel and smell great! I say we stay with Friesens. I tried a dj on and there is just a little bit too much dj...but it is not critical.

We really have a nice product here.....and it sure makes us look professional!

I noticed a space for hand numbering the books...do we have a plan for this yet?

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2002 10:29 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *Amazing! We all got our shipments on the same day. Friesens is really on*
> *the ball! I say we stay with them as well: everything has gone beautifully.*
> *I would also recommend making our dustjackets with them next time: it will*
> *save time and we'll get much sturdier DJs. These DJs seemed very very thin*
> *and delicate to me: they are almost transparent.*

>
> > *I tried a dj on and there is just a little bit too*
> > *much dj...but it is not critical.*
>
> *I've tried mine on (I've packaged quite a few and have a lot more to go)*
> *but to me the dustjacket fits absolutely perfectly. Could my dustjackets be*
> *a slightly different size from yours? Maybe I am just blind but I am not*
> *seeing even a trace of size difference. Very strange!*

Well, they were all made at the same time and produced with a single cut, so they must all be the same size. Mine are a little too large also. I notice that when I fold them very carefully and accurately, they seem to fit just about right. I only made them "a hair" too large—that was what I told the cutter and I checked it personally before receiving the final product. Probably not enough to worry about, but if you have a local copy or print shop with a guillotine cutter, Mike, you can get your stack trimmed for about a dollar. I had them made a bit larger than the dimension Friesens gave just to allow for error. Oversize is easy to fix; undersize isn't.

...

Also, regarding errors in DIE, someone will no doubt notice this so I may as well be the first: check the headers for the chapter called THE SCARLET LAKE MYSTERY.¹⁷⁵

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2002 7:40 PM

> *After a lot of hard work I managed to package and (as of this morning) mail*
> *all of our domestic orders.*

Fantastic! A lot of work! Our readers will appreciate it. We got them out in March after all.

> > *Also, regarding errors in DIE, someone will no doubt*

¹⁷⁵ It's funny: after all that editing and checking and rechecking we did for the manuscript on the fourth Starman book, we actually missed the fact that one chapter has incorrect headings. Amazing!

> > notice this so I may as well be the first: check the
> > headers for the chapter called *THE SCARLET LAKE MYSTERY*.
>
> Oh dear! That's not good at all. It is amazing, after all the times we
> looked over that book for errors, that that slipped through. I guess it's a
> little too late now though to fix it! Should we say something about it or
> wait until someone notices?

Yep, it's amazing that something will always slip through. I guess only God is perfect. I wouldn't say anything about it. If anyone notices and wants to mention it, let 'em. Then we can just say, "Yep, it's amazing that something will always slip through. I guess only God is perfect."

David

DATE: SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2002 9:20 PM

The Binding Group, by the way, will meet on April 27 to put together a bunch more AOMs. And I'm also working on putting together a group of our college students, and maybe a few others, to go to the Anza-Borrego Desert May 4-5. We'll camp overnight at the mud cave. I'll bring a video camera and get some good shots of the mud cave for a "Starman documentary."¹⁷⁶

David

DATE: MONDAY, APRIL 01, 2002 6:24 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Friesens sent me the bill. They sent it as a total without regard to the check we already sent and I'm not sure how much that was, but the total is \$3,305.80 for everything. That

¹⁷⁶ This was done and the documentary, with a lot of extra stuff on it besides the desert scenes, can be viewed at: <http://www.mydfz.com/starman/>

comes to precisely \$6.12 per book. Not bad at all—actually a little less than their original quote of \$6.16 per book.¹⁷⁷ Each dust jacket cost \$1.28, so total cost to us is \$7.40 per book, plus postage.

Shall I send you the bill, Jon, so you can write a check and send it on to Friesens?

David

DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 02, 2002 10:34 AM

Last night I put book numbers into the remaining, partially-bound AOMs. Sadly, we only have a total of 465! I do have the master copies and we can make more books with photocopies if we want to bring it up to 500—or more. Naturally, we're not going to be selling any more copies of TRA, JTP, DIE, etc. than we have AOMs. Without making more AOMs, we'll have a lot of excess copies of the later books on hand. That's a problem we'll have to solve when we get there.¹⁷⁸

David

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 04, 2002 10:42 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

- > *Another thing we ought to decide is whether we want to go*
- > *paperback or stay "series". I am personally leaning toward going*
- > *paperback.....the material has grown greater than the old hardback*
- > *series....paperbacks are the book "currency" of today.....let's share it with*
- > *as many folks as we can! We can always find a way to make a few hardbacks for*
- > *the folks who want.*

I agree with this too.

¹⁷⁷ A big difference from Sheridan, wasn't it?

¹⁷⁸ We eventually did get to the point where we ran out of copies of the first Starman book, and when we did we simply reprinted it through 1stBooks, a print-on-demand company.

Attached is LROM 13.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, APRIL 05, 2002 9:48 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *It's been a long night tonight! I've spent it packaging up Starman book*
- > *orders. I seem to live at the post office now:¹⁷⁹ ... I have been kept very busy in the*
- > *past few weeks filling out orders... it's nice to see them go out the door*
- > *for a change instead of clutter up my closet!*

I imagine it'll slow down before too long,¹⁸⁰ but yes, it is very nice to see them getting sold. Eventually, no doubt, we'll be having to tell people that we are very sorry, but we are SOLD OUT! Then we'll be seeing them go up on eBay.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 09, 2002 1:05 AM

- > *What would you think about having Friesens do the dustjackets for book 5?*

I've thought about that since you first mentioned it and I think we should go for it. They'll be better quality and the books will come with the djs already on them. That'll be a BIG help. And we'll know that they fit just right. And we can afford it.

David

¹⁷⁹ Needless to say, everywhere I have lived I have become a familiar sight at my local post office...

¹⁸⁰ It did.

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2002 7:48 PM

Dear Kevin [Anetsberger],

Greetings! Jon and I have been working feverishly to complete the fifth Starman book by the end of this month, and we expect to do so. That'll leave us July for revisions and other details before submitting the entire package to Friesens.

How are things going on the 3D endpapers? And could you put the printing and Starman logo on the cover artwork for #5 and send me a CD the way you did for DIE? Jon isn't able to do so easily and you and I certainly worked out the details on the arrangement of the lettering last time! If so, how much extra work is it to add the printing that appears on the ends of the dust jacket? I'm not sure yet what Friesens will require but I hope to know soon. This time we're going to have Friesens print the dust jacket when they do the book. That'll save us a lot of effort and give us a better quality product, although it'll be more expensive. Do you have a file of the artwork? If not, Jon can provide that, I'm sure. He has a scan of it that he's put on the Starman web site.

I'll be out of town from Sunday evening through Thursday, so if you respond during that time, I won't be able to get back to you until the end of next week.

Best regards,

David Baumann

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2002 8:52 PM

Dear Kevin,

> *I can do the cover prep without difficulty. Just send me a high resolution scan of the artwork.*

Jon, may I assume that you can provide this for Kevin?

> *As far as the endpapers go, I have worked a fair bit on them. The problem is*
> *that the scene is visually complex, which leads to two difficulties. A good*
> *3D effect generally requires several distinct "planes" to work in. The canyon*

- > *scene is one flowing scene which is hard to create in 3D. The other*
- > *difficulty is that it is hard to render such detail with a profusion of*
- > *light and shadow in black and white. It tends to become a confusing jumble.*
- > *Do you have another interesting scene? Something in space or more in the open?*

Feel free to adapt any way you need to, Kevin, but if you prefer a space scene, how about this? Use your imagination.

Joe piloted the *Star Ranger* toward what most people simply called the Asteroid. He had no trouble spotting the numerous ships that hovered around the dark object, guarding it from any unauthorized approach. A few metallic glints on the surface hinted at the presence of even more ships.

The Starmen's well-known spacecraft made the approach. Far below the eastern bulge of Brazil was visible under moderate cloud cover.

Moments later, the brick red spacecraft that had been issued to Starman Zip Foster nearly two years earlier moved in close to the primary port of entry to the Asteroid. Joe set the *Star Ranger* on automatic pilot and let the computer handle the complexities of guiding the Starmen's ship from the weightlessness of space to the artificial gravity inside the Asteroid. Engineers from Starlight Enterprise and Space Command had repaired the colossal airlock that Lurton Zimbardo had destroyed. The *Star Ranger* came through the outer opening into the iron-dark throat of the floating base ...

Thanks!

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 01, 2002 11:23 AM

Dear Kevin,

- > *This came over as about 1 x 2 inch at 300dpi with noticeable jpeg*
- > *artifacts. I could use it, but I think you would be better served*
- > *by doubling the size and using the highest quality jpeg setting.*

Jon, this was the scan of the cover of LROM that I received from you for making posters. Could you send it to Kevin with the specifications he needs? If that's not possible, I'll have to ask my father to get a really good professional photograph of the original artwork but that'll cost a little money.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 05, 2002 6:34 PM

Dear Jon,

> *Any word back from Friesens? We really need to get things going...*¹⁸¹

Yes. Ryan and I have spoken on the telephone and things look very good. He sent me an email yesterday and says that the estimate and a book of fabric samples is in the mail to me. He added that if we get the package to them by midsummer they should have no problem getting the books to us by mid to late September.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 02, 2002 6:15 PM

Dear Kevin and Jon,

Attached is the text for the dust jacket flaps. The dimensions of the dust jacket and the spacing of the letters will be the same as last time, Kevin, except that the spine will be just under an inch wide. It should be 0.93 inches to be precise. You gain more than a quarter inch over the spine for Descent Into Europa. DIE was 272 pages and LROM will be about 404 pages. Jon, do you think we ought to include SETI, the third short

¹⁸¹ At this point we were thinking about printing the fifth Starman book. We had a strict deadline for this volume: it *had* to be done in time for the 2002 Series Book Conference in Charlottesville, Virginia, which was going to be held in early October 2002. It was quite a struggle to finish the book so quickly, but we did it!

story, at the end, the way we included the first two shorts with DIE? That will add a few more pages.¹⁸²

I just talked to Ryan Hildebrand at Friesens and he said that if we get the package to him by the end of this month, there should be no problem whatever in shipping the 500 books by mid-September. He will send me a sample of cloth so I can pick a red color for the book, and he said that all they need for the dust jacket is a good file on a CD. The quote will be coming very soon. It all looks very good.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2002 1:31 AM

Dear Jon,

Here's the Friesens quote. It comes to \$5480 with 408 pages and dust jacket included. How are we fixed for funds right now?

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2002 12:09 AM

> > *Here's the Friesens quote. It comes to \$5480 with 408 pages and*
> > *dust jacket*
> > *included. How are we fixed for funds right now?*
>
> <*gasp*> <*choke*> <*wheeze*> *I can see I should have drafted a shorter book! Oh*
> *my goodness. I can't believe how expensive it is. Well, I can believe it,*
> *but it is still enormous.*

Yeah, I thought about it too, but it does include the dust jacket and that alone is about an extra \$1000, and we don't get the winter discount. We won't have to pay for photocopy-

¹⁸² I was always in favor of something that would make the books longer!

ing the dust jacket this time, so we get a professional, ready-fit dj for about \$2 each instead of a thin color photocopy for \$1 each or so that then has to be cut and put on by hand.

> *By the way — don't forget to ask them for an ISBN number!*

Whoa, that's right! I'll have to make a place on the dust jacket for it too!

> *As crazy and insane as this seems, I do have a suggestion. I noticed something:*

>

> *500 books cost \$5480*

> *1000 books cost \$6790*

>

> *For another 24% (or \$1310) we can get *twice* the books.*

It's tempting, but that leads to storage problems, and having extra copies of book 5 won't help us if we don't have extra copies of 1-4. I'd suggest that we pass on this and if we get to the point where we need more, we go with print on demand.¹⁸³

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2002 9:30 PM

I got your package of comments in the mail today and Valerie's¹⁸⁴ final comments by email. I'm taking Monday as a personal day off to complete everything. There's a good chance that by Monday evening the entire book will be done, both text and illustrations including map. I HOPE I can even get the authors' copies bound by the time you arrive, or at least while you're here.

¹⁸³ This turned out to be a very good idea: for the cost of those extra \$500 books we could easily have the book reprinted via print-on-demand. Besides, in the first year of the book's release we have only sold a little over 250 copies of this book; we definitely didn't need 1000 of these things lying around. I still like the cost effectiveness of printing more books, but I think it's good that we didn't.

¹⁸⁴ Valerie Kramer, who helped edit the manuscript for the fifth Starman book

I also got the package from Friesens for the cover material and I think there's a great color in there for us. I can wait to commit to it until you're here¹⁸⁵ so we can decide together.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 15, 2002 10:01 AM

Dear Jon,

For your information, here is an exchange I had with Friesens over the price of our project.

[To Friesens] Thank you for sending this quotation for our project. I have a question. As I recall from our previous project with Friesens, there was a discount given if we paid in full up front. We plan to do the same with the current project. Does this quote include that discount? If not, could you let me know what the difference would be?

David

- > *You're correct...as long as you're not planning to pay with a credit card,*
- > *we allow a 3% discount if the entire project is pre-paid.*

Thank you for the information. We plan to pay the entire amount by check when we send you the package. With the discount that would come to \$5315.60 for 500 books. I spoke to Ryan Hildebrand last Thursday and we've added an ISBN for \$30, so we'll add that amount and send you a check for \$5345.60.

Regards,

David Baumann

¹⁸⁵ I made a trip out to California, both to see David and to wrap up the fifth Starman book

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2002 10:20 PM

Dear Jon,

Is there anything you can do about this?

My message to Donovan Bergman:

Dear Donovan,

I can't believe it, after all the painstaking proofreading we did. I found a teeny mistake in our manuscript for *The Lost Race of Mars*. In the dedication on page 6, toward the bottom it says, "The dialogue in the first two paragraphs at the top of page 158 is adapted slightly from actual exchanges in court..." The page number should be 168, not 158. Can you make that correction without too much trouble?

Our artist said that the endpapers and cover design should have been mailed to you yesterday. I will follow up with him right now and make sure that he did so.

Many thanks!

David Baumann

And he replied:

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2002 8:00 AM

Good Morning David,

If I remember correctly, your job was supplied in PDF format. If this is the case, we will only be able to make the change after we have output the DBL. We would also need a new PDF of that page. If the files were supplied in another format, we would be able to modify them here prior to proofing. I am waiting for your job to come back from pre-flight, and then I'll let you know what we can do. Thanks for keeping me up to date on where things are at with your files.

Cheers,

Donovan

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 01, 2002 1:14 PM

Dear Jon,

> *Don't worry. I know it's not right in our author's copies, but we caught
> that mistake and fixed it before sending out the CD.*

That's good news. But how difficult would it be to add something to a page at this point? Kevin sent me the 3D endpaper art and it looks great, but the viewer might need a line or two of instructions on how to view it. Similarly, it would be nice if we could add a line or two about Mark Johnson's appearing as a character. If it's too late, no problem, but if you can easily send a page or two of a PDF to replace what's up there, even better.

I've thought a lot about the short story, A Matter of Time, and I think I've got some ideas you'll like. I hope to get that done in the next day or two, or by next Monday at the latest.

I'm off now to make the master copy of the Starman video!!¹⁸⁶

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 02, 2002 8:45 PM

Dear Jon,

If possible, put this wording at the bottom of page 3, after the word about Valerie Kramer.

THREE DIMENSIONAL ENDPAPERS

¹⁸⁶ The aforementioned documentary

The endpapers are a cross-eye stereogram created by Kevin Anetsberger. To see the image in three dimensions, look at it and cross your eyes until you see an image between the original two. Concentrate on this central image until it comes into focus. You will see Joe Taylor approaching the Asteroid as described on page 34 of this book.

And on the acknowledgements page, page 8, after Dafydd Neal Dyar, add

MARK JOHNSON for organizing the series book convention in Charlottesville, Virginia in October 2002 and allowing the Starman Team an opportunity to release this book at that time. Further, as the prize-winner who identified Harry Tanwick VII in Descent Into Europa, Mark was made a character in *The Lost Race of Mars*.

How's that? Be sure to italicize the titles of the books.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2002 8:14 PM

Dear Jon,

> *Sounds outstanding!! I'm sure they did a terrific job. It's great that*
> *they're moving so fast!*

It arrived today! Wow—one day to get here. A few minor problems, though. I haven't gone through the blueline in detail yet, but I noticed that the two pages we changed were not included—adding the instructions on seeing the 3D endpapers and adding Mark Johnson to the acknowledgements. Did you get those two revised pages to Friesens as a PDF? Also, in one place one of our fonts shows only V V V rather than the cool font we used. This is on the donors' page. What do I need to do to get them to use the right font?

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2002 10:54 PM

Dear Jon,

I can't believe I missed it. They did make the corrections according to the additional pages you sent—they just weren't formatted as I expected them. It's fine.

They ought to be able to make the line of three v's into the original design, however, since they did so on page 12. I'll point that out and have them make that change. Everything else looks fine.

They also sent me a fax yesterday with the gold foil proof for the cover. It looked fine and I approved it and faxed it back.

I should have the proof of the endpapers and the dust jacket waiting for me when I return home next Wednesday afternoon. If they look good, I can send the entire package back to them on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning. Then we just wait for our packages to arrive. Things are looking good!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 2002 9:44 AM

Dear Jon,

How difficult would it be for Friesens to fix typos in the PDF text? I found a couple. Can it be done easily or would it be expensive? In other words, shall I skip them or ask them to fix them?

To be specific: in the contents, the font size for INTRODUCTION and WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE is smaller than the font size for AHMANYAN PEOPLE, CULTURE, and I've found two small typographical errors on page 289.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2002 5:47 PM

Dear Jon,

> *do you really think it is worth it? ...*

No, we can live with the imperfections. They're small.¹⁸⁷

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2002 5:50 PM

Dear Jon,

Oh yes, there is one thing we might want to fix in the LROM PDF. Remember the line of v's on page 7? They did put in the right symbols on page 12. The symbols on these two pages should be identical. Is the problem with page 7 their fault or ours? If ours, do we want to fix it or leave the v's? I lean toward fixing it for \$31.¹⁸⁸ Let me know what you think before I get back to Donovan.

Thanks!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2002 6:13 PM

Dear Jon,

The Friesens proofs of the dust jacket and endpapers arrived today and look fine except for two tiny things. There is an extraneous period in one part of the text (not a problem)

¹⁸⁷ We probably would have made the fixes except for the fact that it was going to be fairly expensive. Book five was already expensive enough as it was without adding more to its cost!

¹⁸⁸ The cost for resubmitting one corrected page to Friesens.

and we had the same problem with the change in fonts as we had on page 7 of the text. What I sent Kevin as Monotype Sorts came through on the proof as something else. However, the new symbol is not bad. We can live with it.¹⁸⁹ I will send back the proofs to Friesens today with the one correction for the text of page 7. Then you will need to send them that one page in a PDF with the right font. Then we wait for delivery in mid-September!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 2002 11:29 AM

Dear Jon,

- > *Strangely, the response to LROM has been very lethargic: while*
- > *almost a hundred people reserved copies of it, only a handful*
- > *of people have sent in their checks. I don't know if they're*
- > *waiting until it comes out or are going to get it at the series*
- > *book convention or what, but it does seem a bit odd.*

Hmm. We had the same thing with DIE, too, but I know that nearly everyone on my list has been waiting eagerly for LROM. No doubt orders will pick up eventually.¹⁹⁰ People know they won't get their books until mid-October, so most are probably waiting to send in their checks until the time gets closer. They're in no hurry.

As you say, everything else looks good, and once we cover the \$2500 loan¹⁹¹ and get enough over that to pay for the cost of mailing out the books, all income after that will

¹⁸⁹ The three symbols on the front endflap of LROM should have been identical to the three symbols on the donors' page.

¹⁹⁰ We definitely needed preorders at this point to pay for the cost of printing the book, and while we had a lot of preorders we didn't have a lot of paid preorders. It took a long time for all the people who preordered the book to actually send in the funds, and it made us a little nervous.

¹⁹¹ We didn't exactly have enough money to pay for book five when the printing bill came due and had to borrow \$2500 from David's brother. He gave us the loan interest free, and we were able to pay him back within a couple of months.

be profit. We'll be okay, but it does show that 1stbooks is indeed the way to go for the future.¹⁹²

The only non-confirmed part of our order with Friesens is the color of the book. I've just sent an email to Donovan to confirm that it will be crimson. Once that's done, we just WAIT for our packages!!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 03, 2002 10:10 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Nice to hear from you Mike! I'm really looking forward to the three of us being together again next month. My father will be with us for the first day of the convention, so even the artist for the first and fifth books will be there too. We'll be able to do our signed books on the spot.

Donovan Bergman said that, as of Monday morning, Friesens still had not yet received the return of the blue line and proofs of the endpaper and dust jacket. I sent it to them by priority mail on August 23. The delay is not too much of a problem yet since it will only delay the shipping to us and we have about a three-week window—just as long as we have the books in time for Charlottesville. But if the package has been lost, it could be a big problem. [The Post Office said] it could be as long as ten days to get to Canada, even by priority mail, so we're on the long side of that figure. I don't understand that too much since I got the packages from Friesens in a day or two and they didn't seem particularly marked up to indicate overnight mail. Donovan told me he'd let me know right away as soon as the package arrives.

¹⁹² Book five showed us that it was just too expensive to continue to print the books the way we had been doing: we simply couldn't afford it. Print-on-demand was far cheaper, and so after book five we switched to 1stBooks to release *Doomsday Horizon*. It meant that we had to go to a different-sized book, but obviously we had gotten to the point where it was costing us two to four thousand dollars per book to maintain the traditional series book size. With 1stBooks, the initial cost is much less, but we also get much less income from the books since we only get royalties—a percentage of the sales. It's too early to tell if we'll get enough income now to pay for future books. As of the date of this writing, October 3, 2003, and at the rate things are going, it is possible that by the time we get to the tenth book, we will probably have brought our treasury down to zero. We'll find out when we get there.

Mike, your copy of the fourth Inter*Stellar went out in the mail first thing this morning.

I hope ya'll have a great week. I'll tell you as soon as I hear from Donovan.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 03, 2002 12:22 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

I just got off the phone with Donovan at Friesens. As of this morning the package had still not arrived. I am to check with our post office and see about tracing it.

In the meantime, Donovan said that since our changes were small, they can go ahead with production by merely running another proof copy of the dust jacket for their pressman—they need this to guarantee color accuracy. He will check with his end to see just how things can be done without our package in hand. He does have both changes that Jon sent in his in box so they can be accommodated.

Shipping date has been moved back to the 20th of September, so that delivery to us is expected the following week—the last week of this month. He is well aware of our necessity to have the books in time for the convention. It looks as if that can be achieved without a package although having the package would be helpful.

The maximum ten days the post office was last Friday, so we're into Plan B now. However, the package still may arrive, and Donovan will let me know if it does appear. He and I will keep in touch regardless.

Breathe a little easier.¹⁹³

David

¹⁹³ The package eventually arrived and everything was all right, but it did give us a few hairy moments!

DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2002 8:05 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I also had a call from Earl, our Friesens man in Victoria. He said that LROM will be shipped tomorrow (Thursday) or Friday at the latest—so we're on target! We should have our precious cargo by next week easily.

Great news all around.

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2002 12:42 AM

- > I have been doing some thinking recently and a thought has occurred to me.*
- > Right now we have the first Starman book, Assault on Mars, available as a*
- > print-on-demand book, correct? We have liked the fact that 1stBooks makes*
- > the books extremely available and at the same time charges a fraction of*
- > what Friesens charges, and for that reason we were considering offering the*
- > sixth Starman book only as a print-on-demand book.*
- > That is when a thought occurred to me. Suppose that, after the sixth*
- > Starman book is released, an average Joe is surfing Amazon and comes across*
- > our books. ... He just sees that books 1 and 6 are available.*
- > Do you see the problem? ...*

I've thought about this. It seems to me that we have a certain window of opportunity: while AOM is available through Amazon and the other books are not (and before Book 6 is offered). We cannot control the number of orders we get, especially after the Analog review takes hold. Maybe we'll have a lot and maybe we'll have a few.¹⁹⁴ But we CAN control when book 6 hits, and that's likely to be at least until next fall and proba-

¹⁹⁴ As far as we can tell, the Analog review brought in very very few orders, if any. There is no recognizable jump in our sales that occurred in the month the review hit the stands, which was a big surprise to us: we were expecting to get at least *some* orders.

bly later.¹⁹⁵ The problem we had with AOM before is that we only had 485 or so total, but about 540 of the other books. We therefore had more than 50 of books 2-5 that no one would buy without having AOM. We also have a number of people who got copies of AOM who didn't buy more books. Current estimate is that we'll be sold out of first editions of AOM by this year's end.¹⁹⁶ I'd suggest that we not submit book #6 to 1stBooks until we see how sales are going of the stock we have left. We need to sell AOM through 1stBooks and then have those purchasers acquire 2-5 through our remaining stock. We can submit 2-5 to 1stBooks anytime we want. From here on, sales are going to bring us income and we don't have any major expenses ahead, so we can set up 2-5 with 1st books for less than the cost of putting one book through Friesens.

Anyway, the deal is that Surfer Joe won't find #6 until we put it up. If he likes AOM, he'll have to go to us and our web site to get 2-5. We can put #6 up on Amazon whenever we want. In other words, I don't think there's a problem.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2002 3:10 PM

> *The books came today and man, do they look good!! I am completely 100%
> pleased with them. Way to go! We have something here that we can really be
> proud of.*

Mine just arrived too! I thoroughly agree!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2002 6:20 PM

Dear Jon and David,

The shipment of LROM arrived at my house todayand they DO look great! Something for you guys and Friesens to be proud of.

¹⁹⁵ For once we were right about when a book was going to be released! *Doomsday Horizon* really was released in the fall of 2003, a year after this e-mail was written.

¹⁹⁶ This turned out to be correct!

I am looking forward to seeing both of you next month.

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2002 9:09 PM

Dear Jon,

When I mailed out LROM today, I found that it weighs more than a pound! That means it goes into a higher postage bracket than \$3.85 and the amount depends on how far it is going! The postal clerk gave me a flyer that tells how much items cost depending on weight and destination. For example to send LROM anywhere in California will cost me \$3.95, but to send it to Mark Johnson cost \$5.75. Since you'll be doing most of the mailing, I'd suggest you get ahold of your post office and get the same handout—then you'll know how much postage to put on your packages without having to take each one to the P.O. and weigh them individually. The flyer makes it easy. To save us money, you can also ask me to fill the orders on the west coast—it can cost a dollar or two less each to mail them from Placentia than from Knoxville.¹⁹⁷

David

DATE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2002 6:46 PM

Dear Jon,

I just got the Friesens bill, and it's big. They did make a few mistakes on it, and I'll go over it and discuss it with the right people before we get to an acceptable number. Right now they say we owe \$1384.75!!!!!!!!!!!!!! They didn't give us the 3% discount for pre-payment and they added shipping and endpapers, but only 1 correction not 2. Anyway, I'll go through it but it looks that somehow we're going to have a bigger final payment than we thought. If necessary, we can make payments rather than pay all at once so whatever happens it won't be a big problem.

David

¹⁹⁷ We really did do everything we could to save a few dollars: dollars were very precious to us!

DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2002 9:13 AM

Dear Jon,

- > *The quotation we received (which I still have*
- > *and have attached to this message) DID include both endpapers and*
- > *dustjackets; it didn't include shipping but I don't think that will amount*
- > *to \$1000.*

The quote you sent me was dated July 9. I have a second quote dated July 19, which upped the price since the size of the book increased the number of pages from 408 to 444. That alone raised the base price of each book from 10.96 to \$11.62. That's an extra \$344.52 right there for 522 books. Shipping is \$513.32, and they added \$316.32 for the endpapers, and charged us for one correction. That's where the additional charges came in. I don't know if we also paid for the ISBN and the making of the new die for the gold foil, and we made two corrections, not one. But they failed to give us the 3% discount for prepayment in full—I have an email from Frank [Friesens] telling us that we get the discount for prepayment. Do you know what date you sent in the payment of \$5,345.60? And do you have a copy of the cover letter you sent? If so, could you send me a copy?

For DIE, our prepayment was right on target and we owed nothing at the end. That tells me that shipping was included in the price, not an extra. Do you have a copy of the quotation on DIE that you could send me, as well as the final bill? I'd like to compare that to LROM. When I have all this material, I'll start negotiating with Donovan.

Don't despair yet. We've been in tough spots before and it always proves to be the time when we have to depend on God to get us out. Even if we ARE stuck with this higher bill, we can pay at least \$500 now and still have enough left over for mailing the books out, so we'll only be in the hole for \$800-900. We ought to be able to make that much by the end of the year. Further sales and income will determine when or whether we go to 1stBooks with TDP,¹⁹⁸ not to mention books 2-5, or whether we're done with our project.

¹⁹⁸ At the time we were still calling book six *The Doomsday Problem*. It would not become *Doomsday Horizon* for another six months or so.

We'll be okay. Ungasp.

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2002 7:53 PM

Dear Jon,

- > Now — you also volunteered, for postage reasons, to take care of all the
- > California boxes. ...
- > That comes out to eight books. If you're willing to take these, eight of my
- > low numbers will then go over to you, meaning that you will have eight fewer
- > high numbers and I will have eight more high numbers. Instead of 154-304,
- > you would have 154-297, and I would have 298-422. Does that sound good?

I'll confirm the numbering when I check my list, but sure—looks great.

...

- > > That tells me that shipping was included in the price, not an extra. Do you
- > > have a copy of the quotation on DIE that you could send me, as well as the
- > > final bill? I'd like to compare that to LROM. When I have all this material,
- > > I'll start negotiating with Donovan.
- >
- > Yes I do; I've got two of them and I am attaching both of them.

Thanks. Big help. The second quote for DIE DID include shipping at about \$1 a book. None of our quotes for LROM included shipping. Too bad we didn't catch that.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 01, 2002 9:44 AM

Good morning, Donovan! Jon Cooper and I have a few questions about the invoice I received, indicating the balance of what we owe Friesens for printing The Lost Race of Mars. It is invoice 3812 for job # 3395 and customer # 602200.

First, it indicates that we owe \$6,730.35. It also shows that we prepaid \$5,345.60 that obviously was not deducted, so most likely we owe \$1,384.75. We have a few questions about this amount.

The final quote of July 19, 2002, # 45377R1, included preparation cost of \$1203.00. Did the preparation cost include the making of the die for the gold foil and the ISBN, or is their omission an oversight? Also, the invoice shows that there was one customer alteration. In fact, there were two.

The invoice also shows freight charges of \$513.32. As we look over the quote, we do note that shipping was not included. It was our oversight that we did not notice this at first, but our quote for our first project with Friesens, dated February 12, 2002, # 39176R5, did include freight costs. For that reason we were taken by surprise to have the freight added later on this project.

Our primary question is the additional charge for the endsheets. They are described in the invoice as “print process colors one side of each instead of 1 PMS.” This comes to an additional charge of \$316.32. However, our quote included the endsheets, so this charge comes as a surprise to us. The original quote reads “100 lb. Offset, white; one PMS color, one side only.” We do not understand why our endsheet design necessitated something other than the quote for an additional cost. Although the endsheet design we submitted for The Lost Race of Mars was different from the design we submitted for our previous project, both submissions were made in the same way and we did not ask for any special process for the endsheets for The Lost Race of Mars. If what we submitted required a more costly process, I do not think that we were informed of this.

Finally, it was our understanding that a prepaid order would reduce the overall cost by 3%. I have an email from Frank dated July 15, 2002, responding to an inquiry I sent and assuring me that a prepaid order, if not paid with a credit card, would gain a 3% discount. Our intention was to prepay the order with the \$5,345.60 we sent on July 26; that amount accorded with our best figures of cost at the time. The packing slip, delivery # 7781, indicates that our order is billed as prepaid. We therefore ask that the 3% discount be applied to our overall cost.

Would you please, therefore, contact the billing department with our questions and ask them to refigure the invoice or, if necessary, explain to us where we do not understand these charges?

Thank you very much, and thanks again for coordinating our most recent project. As I wrote before, we are completely delighted with the result!

David Baumann

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 01, 2002 7:45 PM

Anyway Donovan was very nice and helpful. Apparently we got really nice endpapers on their mistake. They should have been printed on the normal stuff we got in DIE. So he took that off the bill. And we got 3% of the July 26 payment off. The die and the ISBN were provided in the setup cost, and the second correction we made was included in the first—i.e. they only billed us for one. That removed \$476.69 altogether, and our final owing is \$908.06. A second, revised invoice will be sent out at the end of October, but we can pay at any time between now and then if we want to.

I have to run now, so we can discuss the payment plan later.¹⁹⁹

David

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 01, 2002 7:47 PM

Total cost of Friesens bill is then \$6,253.60.²⁰⁰ For 522 books that comes out to \$11.98 per book.

David

¹⁹⁹ We sent them a check for the entire amount. I think we just barely had enough in the bank to cover this – I don't even think we had \$100 left. Still, it was good to be in the black!

²⁰⁰ As of one year later, *The Lost Race of Mars* has yet to gross that amount. It is still two thousand dollars short – a rather significant sum! Had we charged \$10 more per book (and sold it for \$45 a copy instead of \$35) and still sold the number of copies we have sold, the book would have paid for itself and then some.

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2002 8:32 PM

Dear Jon,

This morning I had \$50 left in my Starman account, so I went to the copy shop and asked for \$40 worth of DIE djs. They gave me SEVENTY-FIVE of them!! That's the best price I've ever run across—even better than the deal my father was able to get until he moved. I'll get a package off to you before long. I have the djs, but now I have to wrap them for shipping, and that takes a bit of an effort because they are an awkward size. Certainly by Thursday. I'll keep a few since I only have 4 left, but I'll send you 50 or 55.

David

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2002 4:05 PM

Dear Jon,

I just received a paperback copy of AOM from 1stBooks, and have the hardcover in dj coming in a few days. It looks really good! One error, though—on the spine, the title reads Assault on Mars.²⁰¹ Can you ask them to fix it? If it's easy to do, great. If not, let's not worry about it. What do you think?

David

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2002 7:49 PM

> *What an error! Goodness — and I missed it completely. I just checked the
> hardback version and saw that it has the same problem. I'll try to contact
> them and see if anything can be done...*

²⁰¹ In other words, it was “Assualt” instead of “Assault.” A rather tragic error!

While you're at it, you might mention that the frontispiece refers to page 96 when it's really 74 in the 1stbooks edition.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2002 10:30 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *1stBooks got back to me this morning and told me that the only way to fix*
- > *the problem would be to resubmit the entire book at a cost of \$225 per*
- > *format; hence, fixing it on both the hardback and paperback would cost a*
- > *total of \$450.*

That's not bad.

- > *We could also (and this is*
- > *worth thinking about) put off fixing this for a few months, go back to the*
- > *AOM text, and alter it to make it conform to the real distances on Mars, and*
- > *then make the change with that text: if we're going to resubmit the text*
- > *that would be the text to resubmit.*

Sounds good to me. I think that changing the distances will not be as hard as we think, since I probably only have to do a word search on "miles" and fix whatever comes up.

I'd suggest that we finish book 6 and get it off to AWB, then see how much money we have to get AOM 3rd edition out.²⁰²

David

²⁰² The third edition text of AOM is already completed but has never been made public. It has a few new paragraphs that were added after books 2-5 were written to provide a more cohesive overall story. At some point we still plan to go back and revise the distances in all of the books so that they match the actual distances on Mars. Our setting of Eagle Crater, the palisade with the mud caves, the ravines where *Imlah Taltahni*, is located, etc. are all set in actual Martian terrain. We acquired a detailed map of Mars for the purpose; however, we were not careful with the distances in the books and now want to go back and make the distances correct.

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 05, 2002 5:04 PM

- > I got a letter today with our third quarter 1stBooks sales! The third
- > quarter is from July 1, 2002 until September 30, 2002. During that time we
- > sold one eBook and six paperbacks, and earned a total of \$12.65 in
- > royalties.²⁰³

Whoo hoo!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 05, 2002 8:10 PM

Dear Jon,

- > No kidding! I can see that we can at last buy that stick of gum we always
- > wanted.

Very funny!

- > We ought to frame this check and hang it on the wall ...

Right next to that letter from Sheridan demanding seven cents.

I assume you received the dust jackets for Descent Into Europa.

David

²⁰³ It must also be admitted that we hadn't advertised that a second edition of AOM was available through 1stBooks yet since we wanted to sell out of our first editions before telling the public that a second edition was already available.

Printing Picture Covers

“It is very difficult to do this kind of work...”

Letters

This section could use a little introduction to explain what is going on. You see, in the good old days of series books, titles were offered in two formats: books with dust jackets and books with the dust jacket image printed right on the cover itself. The books with the image printed right on the cover were often called "picture covers," and quite a few collectors became fond of them. Picture covers were widely introduced in the early 1960s and dust jacketed books were eliminated, probably as an economic measure. They were cheaper to produce and probably easier to assemble. Before that time, nearly every series book came with a dust jacket. Most collectors of books from that era, of course, prefer to find a book with a dust jacket, and books with jackets are pricier than those that had lost their jackets over the years. (Personally, I always liked the picture cover format more than I did the dust jacket format, but that's beside the point.)

When the Starman books came out, they were initially released only as hard-backs-with-dust jackets. A few collectors asked us if we could make some picture covers, and we eventually did make about a dozen copies of each title in the picture cover format. Why we made only twelve, and how we came to make those twelve, is the subject of the following pages.

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 24, 2000 6:22 PM

*> Also, a request: my cousin Ben wants to know if we can make some copies
> of AOM in a printed-cover format.*

Is that what is usually called "picture cover"? I.e., the illustration on the dust jacket is imprinted right on the book? Most people prefer dust jackets, but pc's would sure be easier and probably less expensive to produce. I don't know how to do it for AOM, except by printing up more dj's and using those for the cover paper. Could be done that way. Or is he thinking of a second printing professionally done?

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 24, 2000 10:17 PM

I also like the idea of making some picture covers available...this would make our series even more similar to the old DAs.²⁰⁴

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000 8:57 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I wonder if we could get the image printed right on the hard cover of the book?....as in the DA series.....perhaps this will be too expensive.....or perhaps it is one of the finer points in series books to do it via dust jacket...you guys are the experts on the collectable series books. If it turns out to be not too expensive to go that route and it will not offend any "series book principles", perhaps we should consider.

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000 9:21 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> *I wonder if we could get the image printed right on the hard cover of the book?....as in the DA series*

This is called a "picture cover," and is generally considered to be a level below a hard-cover with dust jacket. As long as we can provide dust jackets, I'd like to maintain this practice. It's a little more expensive and a little more complicated, but we get a better quality product. This is one the first points we were praised for—the excellence of the

²⁰⁴ Dig Allen books

appearance of the books. Picture covers began to be used by series book people in the early 1960's, to save money. We may have to go that route at some point, but I hope not.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2001 10:40 PM

> *An idea occurred to me, David: would it be possible for us to make
> printed-cover copies of AOM?*²⁰⁵

Yes ... What you're suggesting, I think, is gluing the dj's right onto the boards, right? Yes, that would be easy. I'd have to enlarge the dj a little bit for the overlap and then do with it what I did with the covers of the authors' copies of JTP.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 02, 2001 10:27 PM

So some people are requesting the "glued on" dj...I like that.....and am glad that it can be done for them.

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 04, 2001 1:18 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *Just wanted to let you know that, earlier today, I sent our customers a
> short message asking how many people would be interested in a printed cover
> edition of Assault on Mars. I didn't mention pricing or anything like that,*

²⁰⁵ As you can see, this question was raised a number of times in the early days of the series!

> *and I didn't promise that we were going to make them: it was just a query to see if anyone was interested.*²⁰⁶

Sounds fine.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 05, 2001 5:23 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *I'm starting to get a response from people interested in printed cover editions of AOM.*

Looks good, then. These are all new sales to old customers. Making them is not a problem. In fact, it is no more difficult than the usual binding process.²⁰⁷ Cost to us is about the same, so I think we can offer them for the same price we have before. Whenever I get to binding additional AOMs, then I can make some picture covers too. If you want to take orders now and have the customers send you checks, Jon, that'll get the money into the coffers, but the people will have to know that it'll be a few weeks until delivery.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 05, 2001 10:15 PM

> *I know it's impossible to make printed covers of the other books, but we do have some people who would love to have them.*

Actually it would be possible if I had a supply of endpapers. It would take some work, though, but it is possible. I'd have to cut the pages out of the boards, remove the end-

²⁰⁶ At this point there was a fair amount of interest in creating these, so we were starting to get the ball rolling! Since these were going to be made by hand by basically rebinding the book, we wanted to know how many books we were going to have to make.

²⁰⁷ Famous last words! It turned out to be anything but easy.

papers, glue the covers over the boards, then reglue the pages in with new endpapers. Very time-consuming, so I wouldn't want to do it for several dozen people, but if we have only a dozen or so interested people and we needed the money, I could do it.²⁰⁸

- > *One thing I am somewhat hesitant about is*
- > *asking for preorders again and again: that is, our customers are already*
- > *preordering book #3, and then the Inter*Stellar, and now these too. It seems*
- > *a lot to take without giving them anything! If we could deliver a few things*
- > *I'd feel a little better about it. Could we give them some dates when they*
- > *can expect the Inter*Stellars and books?*

Right, but preorders are pretty well all we can offer right now and the picture covers are special requests. I wouldn't want to make them until we've got some paid orders, because once they're made, we're stuck with them unless we've got customers. I've got the short story summarized pretty well but haven't started to write the actual text. I've also got to prepare the book package for Broadman and Holman, although that's not a priority, by any means—the I*S is top priority. And I've got to get going on binding more AOMs too—all of these are time-consuming matters. Somewhere in there we'll need a text to make available as an etext, too! Once in a while, I have to show up at the church and pretend that I'm working there too.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 08, 2001 11:38 PM

- > *At the moment, we have 8 firm orders*
- > *for the printed-cover edition of AOM (and by firm, I mean that they said*
- > *their checks were in the mail) and I'm expecting more.*

Okay. When the time comes for me to make them, then I'll need a firm number, and I'll make them as they are ordered.

²⁰⁸ We managed to find a dozen people who were interested at \$30 a book, and so we made picture-cover versions of the first editions of the first five Starman books. Since these took a long time and a lot of hard work to make we didn't want to make very many of them! They looked fairly good, but they tended to be pretty fragile: they're more collectors items than anything else.

- > *For the printed-cover*
- > *edition of TRA, interest dropped dramatically when I gave an estimated price*
- > *of \$30 per book, but it didn't evaporate entirely: so far we have 3 firm*
- > *orders for it,*

In that case, I'll need a few copies of TRA from you, since I am completely out. ... Also I'll need a good master copy of the Tom Narwid endpapers. I might just make the endpapers in black rather than midnight blue. The black ones will cost 5 cents each; the colored ones about \$2.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 09, 2001 5:59 PM

- > *I was*
- > *thinking that I could just give you a box of TRAs and the damaged AOM when*
- > *you come up in October,²⁰⁹ and we could make the printed cover versions then*
- > *(after DIE was sent off, and before starting on LROM). It's going to be*
- > *tough to bind more AOMs *and* finish DIE all before October!*

That'll be fine. I could bring the binding equipment to [West Virginia] and we could do some binding right there! Then you can see what's involved firsthand.

Not a problem with promising the pc AOMs soon. It'll just make me get a jump-start on the process, and your timing on the JTP shipment looks pretty accurate anyway.

More later.

David

²⁰⁹ David visited my home for two days in October 2001 as part of week's tour of Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia before a weeklong conference in Richmond, Virginia. It was on this trip that the three members of the Starman Team met in person for the first time—at Mike Dodd's parents' home in Richmond. During this visit we also planned a number of key scenes in *The Lost Race of Mars*, including a visit to Belle Isle in the James River. This became the scene for the iron foundry in LROM.

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 09, 2001 9:45 PM

- > *what might be smarter is to use these²¹⁰*
- > *copies as raw material for a printed-cover version of TRA. To make a*
- > *printed-cover version, all of the pages must be removed, right? Well, in*
- > *these, all of the pages have been removed nicely – the work is already*
- > *done. No sense in destroying another copy when we already have these!*

To make a pc, I only have to remove the bound pages from the cases, not loosen all the pages from the spine. I'd have to know precisely how these two defective books came apart to know if they are salvageable or not. If the pages came out from the spine so that we have a lot of loose pieces of paper, it's probably not worth the effort to reglue them. That's how we make AOM, but it is not the most secure process. If the pages and spine together came out of the hardcover so that they look like a paperback without a cover, that can be used to make a pc. But I suspect that that's not what happened, since that would mean the endpapers would have come loose from the boards, and that's almost inconceivable. I hope this is clear.

More later.

David

DATE: TUE, 28 AUG 2001 12:20:41 -0700

Dear Jon,

Today I painted to top portion of the pages for the remaining AOMs, and counted them at the same time. We have 214 of them. Just to confirm, I begin numbering them at 252, right? That means we have only 465 accounted for. I think you said that we have distributed more than 251, though, right? Maybe I should start numbering the new ones at the actual number we've distributed. If you agree, what is the new number?

²¹⁰ To my horror, a few copies of *The Runaway Asteroid* (printed by Sheridan) had fallen apart: all the pages fell out. Fortunately this only happened to a few books, but I was a bit upset about it! This was yet another reason why we ended up going with Friesens instead of continuing with Sheridan: the Friesens books were quite solid.

I have enough boards to make 18 picture covers today, and that'll happen this afternoon. By the time you get this message, it should be done. After that, I have to wait until Leslie's vendors provide the new boards before doing any more binding.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2001 1:44 AM

- > I knew you had 18 made and that I had orders for 17, but I assumed that you*
- > were going to keep one (since you went through so much trouble making them;*
- > you certainly earned a copy many times over!) and hence all the available*
- > copies would be taken.²¹¹*

Well, I hadn't thought about it, but maybe I will. They turned out okay, but the spine is a little brittle and will show creases when it is opened. If the book is used too much, the spine will break through. Not much we can do about that, except I think use the book-binder's glue for the spine in the future. We haven't had any problems with this before, but I think that using the dust jacket stock as cover stock may cause the problem. It's minor, but purchasers will have to keep in mind that these are going to be collector's books rather than reader's editions.

- > I don't think that the one remaining printed cover*
- > copy will be hard to dispose of; I think we could sell it without too much*
- > trouble. If you want to keep it there that's fine, or you could send it here*
- > and I could sell it to some customer (say, perhaps at the book fair this*
- > October).*

I have two more enlarged dust jackets that I can use to make AOM picture covers. If you get orders for two more, or even three if I send mine off (which I am willing to do), I can meet that order.

²¹¹ We made far more printed-cover copies of *Assault on Mars* than we did for the next four books because the next four books had to be taken apart and rebound, while the *Assault on Mars* books did not. We already had to bind all the book ones by hand, and making them into printed covers was pretty much just a matter of changing the paper put on the boards of the book.

More later.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 02, 2001 9:21 PM

Dear Jon,

I saw the exchange on the message board regarding the AOM pc's. It sounds as if Steve Servello is happy with his, and I note that he has become the 9th person to want a pc for JTP. I'll add him to the list.

I had an idea. Since you have all the unsold TRAs right now, how about if I bring the equipment for binding pc's with me when I come to Hurricane, and we can turn some of the TRAs into pc's. You can see first hand what it takes, and then you'll have them to distribute right away.²¹²

I finished making the book press tonight, and it looks pretty good.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 06, 2001 2:04 PM

> *The PC AOMs seem to have gone over very well,*
> *except for the flaw that you mentioned (which can hopefully be fixed for JTP*
> *and TRA).*

Have you got your AOM pc yet, Jon?

²¹² That's what we did! We bound them together and took some pictures of the process, which are available in the image library portion of the Starman website. It was definitely work but it was a lot of fun.

Since the boards are different for TRA and JTP, it should be easier to prevent the cracking at the spine. If the cover is too loose, however, it is VERY easy to tear, and a tear at that point is not repairable without ripping the whole book apart and starting over.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 08, 2001 10:23 PM

After everyone else left, Leslie and I began work on the JTP picture covers. It was EXTREMELY frustrating, to the point we had to stop work after an hour or so. It is very difficult to do this kind of work. Binding AOMs from scratch is much easier. I've probably bound at least 200 books and never had a serious problem or wasted any materials. However, the first JTP pc is so poor that I'll just put it on my shelf as a keepsake. It can't be distributed to anyone. The next two were ruined. I think I have the process figured out now, but will have to go back to the photocopy store and get more covers made. Then I will try to finish the binding on Thursday.

The process of making pc's from already-bound books is different because it involves replacing endpapers on books already trimmed. Also, and most significantly, the paper for the covers is more porous than the cover paper Fred used for AOM and certainly different from the cloth binding Sheridan provided. If the paper is porous, then when it is wet (that is, when it is glued) it is very fragile and very easily torn. Since the gluing takes place at the last step, if the paper is torn that means that almost all the labor is wasted. The porosity of the moist paper makes it easy to be scratched, also, which is probably what happened to the damaged one you got.

Anyway, for these and a few other reasons not important to explain in detail, the pc's are a major headache. Conclusion: let's not take any more orders for picture covers unless we really need the money. Taking the already bound books apart and then trying to put them back together is just not worth the effort. If we needed the money, I'd do it, but right now I think we don't. I also hesitate to send any questionable book to any of our customers, since they are our best-paying and most-supportive people, and I don't want them to feel that we charged them \$30 for a second-rate item.

I DO think, however, that I have figured out the problem and will find out for sure when I get back to the binding this Thursday. It will take very careful gluing so that the paper is not torn or scratched. When it is dry, it ought to be okay. The newly-bound pages for

all the pc's are done, at least. It is only the cases (covers) that need to be prepared now. If it works out this Thursday, maybe we can reconsider for the future.

Either way, I think it is important to make the pc's for TRA, so that customers will have at least a full set of the first three. We can do that in October when I am with you in Hurricane.

Do you have a paper cutter? That's critical for the success of the project.

More later.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 09, 2001 6:46 PM

*> I see the problem and understand what you are getting at. That really would
> be difficult, tiring, challenging work. Maybe, David, we should try a
> different method altogether. Do you remember how you made the author's
> copies? What if you simply photocopied the JTP or TRA manuscript (which I
> have got and can send to you), bound it with boards wrapped in DJs instead
> of the starry paper, and then had it sliced? That process certainly doesn't
> have these difficulties in it.²¹³*

Actually, now that I have thought about it, I don't think it'll be too difficult to fix the problem. I already have the pages bound up but not inserted into the cases. The cases will be made this Thursday when Leslie comes over for an hour or so after work.²¹⁴ I've already got the boards and the covers ready to be glued. By changing the way I measure the glue lines, I think I can fix the problem. The process you're suggesting, Jon, would work very well for future books—DIE, etc., if we decide to do pc's for them. I'll know this Thursday whether my plan will work or not. If it does, then future pc's will not be too difficult.

²¹³ Fortunately, David figured out a good way to make the picture covers and we never had to use this method.

²¹⁴ Like several other people, Leslie Owens has provided innumerable hours of tedious labor helping to support the Starman series.

- > *I do have*
- > *the manuscripts for TRA and JTP, and the final bluelines (which would be*
- > *easy to photocopy). That might save a lot of heartache.*

Putting the pages together is not the difficult part. I can do that easily by cutting them out of an existing Sheridan book. It doesn't really destroy a book since we're actually selling the book in a new format. The hard part is the picture cover cases themselves.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2001 9:56 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Good news and bad news about the picture covers—mostly good. The good news is that I FINALLY got the method down cold on how to make good quality pc's. The bad news is that it took me to the ninth and final JTP pc to get it right. The others aren't bad—better than the AOM pc's—but only the last one we did has the right combination of measurements.

Making the pc's involves a different process from normal binding. The measurements are justly a little off from starting from scratch; finding the right combination was a matter of trial and error. The boards have to be slightly larger and spaced a little farther apart. Even a difference of a sixteenth of an inch can make the binding too tight (in which case we get strain on the spine and easy rips) or too loose (in which case the spine is too loose and tears easily). The boards needs to be slightly wider, or else the pages come right to the edge of the book when they are bound in—that was the problem with most of those I did tonight.

But the process has been nailed down. I think when I bind the TRAs in Hurricane, it'll be easy and look good.

I hope to get the JTP pc's sent out tomorrow. Jon, you might edit this message a little bit and send it out to our customers so (1) they will know that their books are on the way, and (2) they will know why their books will not be letter perfect. They WILL, however, be better than the AOMs.

More later,

David

DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2001 12:09 AM

Dear Jon,

You can tell these fine supporters that if they are not satisfied with their book, then I will make them another book. I don't want to make that offer with an AOM pc because we need all of those we can get at this point, but I will do so for the JTP pc. It will involve a lot of work ... but we want to keep these customers happy.

I kept the first attempt at a JTP pc—at least the one that wasn't so bad that it had to be taken apart—but it is the worst of them all. ... The others are obviously flawed, but as I wrote earlier today, I've got the system down now and I think we can make some good TRA pc's when I visit you next month.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2001 9:19 PM

> *I didn't realize these would be so difficult to do or I wouldn't have*
> *suggested them.*

I didn't either until I got into it, but I have the process down now. Maybe after all the AOMs are done, I won't mind making 10-12 pc's for each future volume. Now that I know what to do, I can get them done in one long sitting. It is kind of fun if you have someone with you and nothing goes wrong.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2001 10:17 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I'm sure I can provide pc's in a limited number for all future volumes, but let's not advertise that until we get DIE printed. And then only advertise to those who have them already.

David

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2001 7:08 PM

Dear Dan [Henton],

I'm glad you're pleased with the pc copy of JTP. Personally, I was NOT pleased with the results, but I know how to improve the process now and I think that future pc's will be much more satisfactory.

I've been offline for three weeks with computer problems, but I'm back now. Sorry for the delay in answering your message.

Cordially,

David Baumann

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2001 9:25 AM

Sometime I'd like to replace the picture covers of JTP I sent out to our customers who didn't ask for a replacement on their own. Maybe when I make the pc's of DIE. I feel uncomfortable sending out the ones I did to our most loyal fans who sent us \$30 for them. They deserve better.

Blessings for the day!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2001 8:17 PM

Dear Jon,

Good news on the JTP picture covers that were not of good quality. When I made the dj's for the TRAs today and had them cut, on a whim I took in my copy of a JTP pc that had the pages sticking out too much. I asked if they could do a guillotine cut on the pages even though the book was already bound. They could and did. The book is fine now.

So you can email our customers who got poor quality JTP pc's and encourage them to go to a copy shop, print shop, or some place in their area that has a guillotine cutter. They can take their book in and have them cut the pages back about an eighth of an inch, and they should have a fine JTP pc. The cost is about a dollar. We might even offer them a \$2 discount on their next order if they follow this suggestion.

Thanks for the information on Brodart. It's a good company. They supply good quality mylar covers for dust jackets, so I am familiar with them.

More later.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2002 5:24 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Say, Jon, shouldn't we be getting the word out to the select group of a dozen or so about ordering DIE pc's? I don't want any new customers, but would be willing to make 10 or 12 picture covers for those who ordered them before.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2002 10:39 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Actually, the various members of that select group have contacted me and*
- > *told me that they definitely want a PC version as soon as we can make it. I*
- > *told them all that we intend to make it but that we probably wouldn't get*
- > *around to it until sometime in August since we wanted to get LROM off to the*
- > *printer first. They're all lined up and ready to buy it though! I*

Sounds good. We'll see how progress goes on LROM, but I'll get the pcs done. How many do we need?

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2002 10:32 PM

Dear Jon

- > > *I'll get the pcs done. How many do we need?*
- >
- > *Nine, I think!*

I'd better make a dozen, just to make sure. Easier, as you know now, to make them in a batch. When I'm able to do so, sometime between now and the summer, I'll crank them out.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2002 12:07 AM

Dear Jon,

Tomorrow Leslie is coming over in the late afternoon after work, and she and I will make the DIE picture covers. If you want to advertise those to our select few pc collec-

tors, I can either mail them out shortly for \$30 each postpaid, or I can bring them to Charlottesville for personal distribution for less. I'll be making 12: one for me, one for you, and ten for sale. I believe that's the right number, correct?

Preparing to put the DIE pcs together gave me an idea. You will recall that we don't have enough cover sheets to finish the last copies of AOM—about 25 books. What do you think about making these picture covers? That would mean that we wouldn't have to create new cover sheets or print additional dust jackets. It would save us approximately \$50 in photocopying charges and would be a little less work to finish off the lot of first edition AOMs.²¹⁵

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2002 10:52 PM

Leslie and I are almost finished with the DIE picture covers. You can offer them for sale now since they are truly done—or will be within the hour. I'm writing this now while glue dries. I have taken #204—the "trial" version that has a couple of flaws. There are 11 left for distribution, including yours if you want one. She is also willing to help assemble the last AOMs in pc format, so that'll happen before too long.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2002 11:00 AM

The picture covers for DIE are all done now. The surprising thing is that these books were done by Friesens and were definitely put together better than Sheridan did. It was more difficult to cut the covers off, and when we removed the endpapers, occasionally it also removed the adjacent page. The page that mattered was the very first page that read "DESCENT INTO EUROPA." Shouldn't be too much of a problem, and it is gratifying to know that Friesens bound them so well.

²¹⁵ We thought this would be a great idea, so that's what we did!

I hope you both have a great day!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2002 8:31 PM

> *What would you think about offering the others [picture covers of DIE] for sale on the*

> *Starman eGroup? We could say that we made a few extras and are offering them for \$30*

> *on a first-come, first-serve basis. Just an idea!*

Fine! Our regular customers should be informed that they have a limited time to place their orders, or we should ask them for a Yes or No on whether they are interested and get a commitment either way from all of them before we sell the extras. I'd like to get advanced, paid orders for LROM picture covers too so that I'll know exactly how many to make. It's not an easy job.

...

> > *Should we go ahead and start advertising the AOMs in PC format? How much*

> > *should we charge for them – the same \$20 as we did before?*²¹⁶

The price sounds right, but don't advertise them yet. We don't have any made.

David

²¹⁶ The first batch of AOM PCs we sold for \$20 apiece, and I was simply asking if we were going to charge the same for the second batch. It should be noted that we charged \$30 for the PCs for the other four Starman books because we actually had to take apart those books and rebind them as PCs, and that was quite difficult.

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2002 7:53 PM

I suppose we ought to take orders from our few pc customers for pc versions of LROM. We can certainly use the money now and I can make them when I get back from convention. I'll be on vacation for at least another week after that with lots of free time.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2002 7:24 PM

Dear Jon,

> *You asked for the address for the Starman PC LROMs; here they are!*

Boy, that list looks almost the same as the one I sent I*S#5 to! Great fans.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2002 6:27 PM

> *I received the LROM PC yesterday as well as the TRA DJ's. They look very*

> *nice! The PC is outstanding: it's one of the best ones yet.*

I'm glad you like it. I think I've got the process down now—now that we probably won't need to do this again.²¹⁷

David

²¹⁷ And we didn't – the 12 printed cover books of the first edition of *The Lost Race of Mars* were the last ones we made. They do look nice, though!

The Inter*Stellars

“We could produce it easily ourselves...”

Letters

DATE: SAT, 12 AUG 2000 17:56:43 -0700

Dear Jon and Mike,

The Key to Tharsos²¹⁸ is a terrific plot! Good work, Jon. I'm constantly impressed with your story-telling skills. I'll keep the background in mind as the writing progresses on the next few books.

It even gave me an idea.²¹⁹ At some point we may want to put out some short stories in the Starman canon. There's nothing about some of our ideas that demands that the story be told in a full-length book. It's unusual in the series book world, but then we're obviously not slavishly tied in to what others have done before. And the Cherry Ames series had a number of short stories that were printed only in England in Cherry Ames Annals. (I found four of them for a friend at my church—they are very scarce.) Maybe some of the Lost Starman Tales could be shorts—say, 50 pages or something. The Starman Appendix is similar to this idea.²²⁰ The Stones of Juno,²²¹ if I remember correctly, is a trilogy—[it] could be a trilogy of short stories making up one full-length story.

Short stories could be easily run off and bound up as a paperback, stapled in the middle. Very inexpensive.²²²

David

²¹⁸ One day I had an idea for a Starman story – a story a little outside the normal stories we told. I plotted the story out, saved the plot in a file, and e-mailed it to David. We never actually used this plot, though: it still sits in a file in a folder called “Lost Adventures” – story ideas we came up with but never used. We came up with quite a few good ideas that we never actually used. You can find many of these ideas right here in this volume of the Archives, under the “Lost Adventures” section.

²¹⁹ I had forgotten that *The Key to Tharsos* is what led to the five Starman short stories! Even though we never used that particular story, it was useful since it led to the five short stories that were later printed in Inter*Stellars.

²²⁰ The idea for the Archives kept popping up, but it wasn't until September of 2003 that it became a reality.

²²¹ Another story I plotted and we ended up not using...

²²² This is how we ended up producing the Inter*Stellars, and later, the Starman Chronicles.

DATE: SUN, 13 AUG 2000 14:52:47 -0700

> *There's a *lot* we could do with the short story idea.*

Glad you like the idea of short stories. Yes, we could do a lot with them.

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2000 4:57 PM

A short story would be a fine idea, especially using it as a fundraiser to support [book] #3.²²³ I could go either way. I can't wait to get started on Journey to the Tenth Planet, but like the concept and money possibilities of a short story too. I suggest we decide when we get TRA off to the publisher. Then we'll have a time schedule better in mind and maybe a better concept of our financial situation too.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2000 10:06 AM

> >*The image of a Space Titanic is appealing. I'm sure we can*

> >*do something with it!*

>

> *What would you think about doing a 40 page short story on it?*

Great idea! That's the exact thing to do!²²⁴

²²³ Finding the money to print another Starman book was always difficult, and every little bit helped! The Inter*Stellars were quite helpful in raising funds to print future Starman books.

²²⁴ And so we did it! *The Flight of the Olympia* (which was the only short story I wrote) was strongly inspired by the story of the *Titanic*, which had gripped me and I had been researching. People familiar with the story will see a lot of similarities between the *Olympia* and the *Titanic*. For instance, the *Olympia* in real life was the sister ship of the *Titanic*...

- > *Maybe we should think about putting out a short*
- > *quarterly newsletter, informing folks about the current status of the*
- > *series, etc. It would help keep interest high, and I don't think it would be*
- > *too difficult to do. It's something to think about...*²²⁵

That's also just the right thing to do. Great! How about putting the first one out January 1, 2001—the beginning of the new millennium? We can call it ONE CENTURY AWAY FROM THE STARMEN or something like that...

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2000 7:34 PM

Not a new idea—we've talked about this before but only in general terms. We've agreed to go with 500 copies of TRA and the extra expense for the printed endpapers, and now we're a little concerned about cost. How about if, before proceeding with JTP, we put out a few short stories in a simple folder? We could produce it easily ourselves. Maybe Fred could even do the cover, or it could be done at any local copy shop. In the short stories, we could address some of the issues the fans have raised. Possible short stories (from a few pages long up to maybe 20 pages or so) are:

- The news of the meteor impact on Mars in 2009 and the decision to jump-start terraformation
- An account of the first manned landing on Mars in 2014—Lee High Eagle steps foot on the red planet
- The evacuation of Mars in the late 2040's and the refusal of some settlers to return to Earth, i.e. the birth of the Wind People, which could lead to a mysterious, veiled account of a meeting with ancient Martians²²⁶
- Thomas Starlight's ruminations on the end of the Collapse and the founding of Starlight Enterprise
- An exploit of the three Starmen's fathers early in the 22nd century

²²⁵ We ended up doing something similar: instead of putting out one every quarter (which wasn't a bad idea) we put out one with every book. They sort of became companion volumes to the books themselves, explaining some of the book's background, revealing the book's timeline and characters, showing the latest sales figures, and so forth.

²²⁶ This story became a reality in the second Inter*Stellar, which published the story *The City of Dust*.

- The disastrous radiation accident that grounded Allen Foster²²⁷
- The mining accident that killed Thomas Starlight and his wife on Mercury
- The Starmen's years at Starlight Academy

We don't need to do all of these, of course.²²⁸ We should save some for later. Later also we could do short stories like "The Stones of Juno" or something similar.

The booklet could be about 60 pages long, and offered to our fans as a fund-raiser to help us product JTP. We could print up maybe 150 or so of these and sell them at \$7 each. Postage and printing might cost \$2 or \$3 each, giving us a profit of \$700-800, which would go far toward reducing the margin of expense we now have and which has to be covered by advance orders.

What do you think?

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2000 5:44 PM

- > *Would it be possible, say, to have Fred [Woodworth] bind*
- > *these – maybe similar to the paperback Seafearing by Hal Goodwin...Printing 150*
- > *sounds just about right. The good thing is that if we run*
- > *out, we can just photocopy a few more and have them bound – no big print*
- > *runs to mess with! Very, very convenient.*

Maybe, but keep in mind that it's a big job to do it all by hand and would therefore take a long time, which would delay the influx of cash. Sixty pages is only 15 sheets of paper, which will staple into booklet format real well. Production could be done locally and quickly. It wouldn't look quite as professional, but I think we're talking speed for income rather than looks here. Maybe Fred could print the covers.

²²⁷ This story also became a reality in the short story *SETI*, which was released in the third Inter*Stellar.

²²⁸ Of the five short stories we wrote, two came from this list and one came from the story of the Titanic. Of the other two, *A Matter of Time* was written when we realized we had completely forgotten about Richard Starlight's children and *Return to Europa* was written when we realized that *Descent Into Europa* left open a few loose ends.

> *All this talk reminded me of the short Starman story I tried to write...*

I'll read it a little later and then get back to you on it.²²⁹

Blessings!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2000 10:16 PM

About the shorts stories printed in magazine style...we could call them "Inter-Stellars" (#1,#2,#3,...and so on) ...get it?...in between the Starman books?²³⁰ It is a nice idea...and could be very good way of keeping the fans informed, maintaining their interest....and bringing in other readers. I would guard against using up too many really good plot ideas this way, but we can certainly use some.

Mike

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2000 11:42 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> *we could call them "Inter-Stellars" (#1,#2,#3,...and so on) ...get it?*

BRILLIANT NAME! And Jon, I was also thinking of having several of them over time—kind of a series within a series—to provide bits of information in between the

²²⁹ When I started writing *Flight of the Olympia* (most of which I wrote in the waiting room of a doctor's office) I got to the point right after the accident happened (Chapter 6) and then stopped. I later sent the story to David, asking him to look it over, polish it (which he did), and finish the story. I was vastly surprised when David just ended the story at the point I quit writing! I had expected the story to go on, detailing what happened after the accident, but instead that was all. We ended up adding the epilogue, which is inserted in italics at the end of the short story: I thought it would add some additional closure to the story, and David agreed. That, though, is why the story ends as it does!

²³⁰ Another brilliant idea by Mike! It's amazing how he comes up with these things.

books, and maybe some material from the Appendix.²³¹ So the Interstellars could provide four things: (1) short stories in the Starman saga; (2) "Starman moments" such as the origin of the Wind People, Thomas Starlight's founding of Starlight Enterprise, etc.; (3) bits and pieces from the Starman Appendix; and (4) news of upcoming books and other Starman-related events, e.g. the team's proposed first face-to-face meeting next October, a letters column, biographical information on our assistant team members like Kevin, Dan Henton, Tom Narwid, etc.²³²

Each Interstellar could have at least one item in each category. The first issue could have a brief introduction to the concept, and continue to refer people to the web site, message board, etc.

This can be GREAT, besides helping us raise some needed funds with not too much effort.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2000 12:17 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I just read the short story, Jon, and I think it is very workable. The most important part, of course, for the Starman saga is the account of the battle between the probe and the alien ship—this is, no doubt, the first incursion of the Xenobots into this Solar System, and the alien ship is Tharsos.²³³ Right?

²³¹ The third and fifth Inter*Stellars do include material that was taken from the then-unpublished first volume of the Starman Archives.

²³² This is exactly what happened! Kevin Anetsberger sent us fan art and eventually provided artwork for DIE; Dan Henton, a Ph.D. chemist, helped us understand the look of methane rain on Titan; and Tom Narwid was a backyard astronomer/photographer who provided the photograph we used for the endpapers in the second, third, and fourth books.

²³³ As you can see, we began calling the pirate's asteroid Tharsos in our letters to each other long before *The Lost Race of Mars* was released and we revealed its history. We actually had the asteroid's name before *Assault on Mars* was released, and it was very hard to keep it a secret until *The Lost Race of Mars* was released!

The story [*Flight of the Olympia*] is about the length of 2 normal chapters and after revision would be a bit longer. Right now, it is 21 pages long. That is an ideal length, I think, for an issue of *The Interstellar*. Great work!²³⁴

David

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2000 10:28 PM

Perhaps the InterStellars should be spelled INTER*STELLARS....you know, with a star in the middle if the two base words.²³⁵

Mike

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2000 9:16 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Here is a quick draft of what the first Inter*Stellar could contain. Let me know what you think. There is an attachment, too, for Jon so you can get a quick glance at what the fonts might look like. I envision it being the same size pages as the books, so they can be on the same shelf²³⁶—however I haven't formatted the text that way yet. Let me know what you think.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 03, 2001 5:11 PM

When I put together a draft of the first Inter*Stellar, I'll need some financial figures from you, Jon. I think the readers should know exactly what the project costs us.²³⁷

²³⁴ The short story *Flight of the Olympia* was the *only* Starman story that was not written by David Baumann. Do I see myself writing more Starman short stories in the future? Nope. In my opinion, David is the only person who can write Starman stories: his style is excellent, and adds a great deal to the books.

²³⁵ Another great idea! This is exactly what we did.

²³⁶ And this is what we did. That means that each copy has to be cut by hand on a paper cutter.

²³⁷ We've always been very open with our financial data, and from time to time we have published our current sales figures, current grosses for the books, and current bank balances. We like to keep our read-

They'll know that we're not getting rich off our labors and that their contributions are a necessary, essential part of the success of the project. I'll let you know when I'm ready for 'em.

I'm glad to put together the first draft of I*S, but you two should feel free to contribute something, too! A little biographical material, whatever... I think Mike offered to write something. Anything. Just email something to me and I'll put it into the first issue, then send the whole thing to you for comments.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 06, 2001 7:30 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Thanks for the figures, Jon. That's just about what I'll need for the first Inter*stellar. But don't forget we still have to pay for the photocopying of the dust jackets for TRA, and that'll be about \$200.

For the first I*S, I'd like to include some figures on how many customers we have and where they are located. You've included some of that in this email, but how about location? –something like, "44% of you live east of the Mississippi, three are in Canada, one is in Tierra del Fuego, and one is on Yap Island in the south pacific."

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2001 9:08 PM

I'd like to write an article for the first I*S about the "theme" or "message" we are putting into the Starman books.²³⁸ We're getting comments like Mike's on the message board

ers abreast of what is going on and how things are going for the series: it may be unusual, but it's the way we do things. (The latest figures, as of Nov 10, 2003, can be found in issue number 4 of The Starman Chronicles.)

²³⁸ The Starman series, as our readers know, has a definite message in it. When we were first starting the series we spent quite a bit of time discussing this, trying to figure out how to best fit the message into the

about the only successful series books²³⁹ today being from Christian publishers which are therefore preachy ... I'll draft something and get it off to the two of you for approval. ...

This Monday afternoon I meet with the reporter and photographer,²⁴⁰ then will take time the rest of the day to work on the I*S.

Blessings!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2001 10:07 PM

Last night as I was going to sleep I had a brief flash of inspiration.....the manufactured word " STELLAR-GRAM" came to me²⁴¹ (like TELE-GRAM). If we didn't already have the name INTER*STELLAR for the newsletter, then STELLAR-GRAM might have been a good choice...perhaps we might have a section in the newsletter with this title....perhaps the comments from us section , OR the fan letters section. ALSO, we might use the term as a technical one in the series, to describe radio messages from deep space.

Mike

books and what approach to take. (None of those letters have been published in an Archive; I have them in a separate file, and while they are fascinating I don't see them being published anytime soon.) At this point there had been some discussion on the messageboard about the message in the books, and we thought it would be appropriate to write something about what we were doing. We did this, and what we wrote can be found on the Starman website.

²³⁹ I think that the example mentioned at the time was the Chip Hilton series.

²⁴⁰ They were interested in writing a newspaper article about the Starman series! When the interview came out it was really great, except for one thing: they *completely* botched all of the contact information for us they placed in the paper. Not surprisingly, we didn't get any orders out of that interview...

²⁴¹ Another brilliant idea! This phrase became the title of the letters section of the Inter*Stellars.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2001 1:37 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> *David, the INTER*STELLAR looked great,*

Glad you both liked it. A couple more sittings should finish it up. The term "Stellar-Gram" is good! How about using it for the letters section? I was trying to think of "star" words for every section, but stopped part way through. That one's great.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 07, 2001 8:39 PM

> *Just wanted to let you know that we now have one order for our*

> *Inter*stellar: ...When can we mail it out, David?*

> *At least, when can we mail one copy out to this person?*

It's likely to be at least a week. The body is pretty well finished, but I have to do the short story, too, and I'll be away this weekend. Maybe I can crank it out this coming Monday. Then I can run off one copy real fast and get it out before the rest of the copies are run. Give me a name and address and I'll get it out as fast as I can.²⁴²

> *Also, don't forget*

> *about the illustrations: I think that Kevin [Anetsberger] can do them quickly, but he*

> *can't do them until we tell him what we want.*

What illustrations? I hadn't counted on any, unless you want an illustration or two for Flight of the Olympia.

David

²⁴² It was always important to us not to keep people waiting, especially if they had placed an order.

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 08, 2001 8:14 PM

> > *What illustrations? I hadn't counted on any, unless you want an
> illustration or
> > two for Flight of the Olympia.
>
> Really? I thought we'd talked about putting illustrations in: I know
> you'd asked me to get the quote from those copy people about cost per
> illustration, cost per color cover, etc. If it won't be done until Monday, I
> could ask Kevin to do some illustrations and see what he comes up with
> before Monday. We don't have to use them, but I think they'd be nice – but
> if we really don't want illustrations that's fine too. Just let me know
> whether or not to ask him...*

I'm sure you're remembering correctly—I just forgot. Sure, if Kevin can do a few illustrations and if they can be emailed to me by Sunday evening, I'll print them up and include them in the I*S. They need to be black and white, or at least look nice when reproduced on a b/w photocopier. You already know the basic theme of the I*S so you can give Kevin some ideas to work with.

Mike, if you want to put in some of your illustrations, that would be terrific, too! I really like your artwork! You could do a landsailer or maybe illustrate Jon's story about the Olympia.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 09, 2001 12:04 AM

> *That would be way cool!! How about using Mike's Xenobot fighter drawing?*

I thought about that! I think I'd need it done a little smaller so I could print it. If you can shrink it down and send me an image, I'll use it.²⁴³ And anything else Mike has done

²⁴³ I shrank it down and sent it to David, and he used it! It can be found on page 20 of the first Inter*Stellar.

that would work. This'll give the fans a taste of work by the artist who will be doing the JTP cover, too!

David

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2001 1:11 PM

I haven't had a chance to look through all the illustrations you sent me for the I*S,²⁴⁴ Jon, but the one from Kevin and yours, Mike, came through fine. I'm sure I've got plenty to work with—keep in mind that adding illustrations adds to the amount of paper needed that adds to the weight. I've got to keep the first I*S down to two ounces to keep the cost of mailing down. I'm sure that we've got enough material now to get a good start on I*S#2—meaning some of the stuff we've got will have to be cut out and put into a file.

David

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2001 7:47 PM

Questions on the short story. We decided to change the Starmen Ken and Larry to Richard and Thomas Starlight, right?²⁴⁵ Well, that leads to some problems, but I'm sure we can overcome them.

If Richard is aboard and the visit with Professor Kinley goes as planned, then Richard will have advance knowledge of the warship disguised as an asteroid. When it appears in TRA, he'll leap to his feet and say, "WOW! I remember this from 40 years ago!" etc. etc. Naturally that didn't happen, so he can't have seen the video or even heard Professor K. talk about it.

²⁴⁴ Since David was looking for illustrations for the Inter*Stellar, I sent him a whole bunch of them – mostly 3d art I had done in Bryce. I don't think David actually used any of them, but he did find a lot of other good artwork to put in the five Inter*Stellars.

²⁴⁵ When I wrote *Flight of the Olympia* I had the main characters be two Starmen named Ken and Larry. After talking over the story we decided to alter the story to make it about Richard Starlight's childhood. I'm glad we did: it gave the story a little more meaning and turned it into an important episode in his life.

How about if we have the Martians who stowed away on the Olympia (who appear in light cloaks and then are never heard from again) destroy the video and the sealed material aboard the Olympia? And we can make the video so grainy that when Professor K. describes it, he doesn't recognize anything except a huge blob and can't describe it as an asteroid? That way Richard won't think to make the connection 40 years later.²⁴⁶

Also, I've added Jan to the party. Okay? Thomas often went places with his wife, and it seems likely that if they're traveling in luxury on the Olympia, then maybe it was a family vacation. They can be among the wealthy now beginning to vacation on Mars.

Finally, why is Professor Kinley going to "advanced labs" on Mars? Surely labs on Mars wouldn't be ahead of those on Earth. Unless maybe there is some special equipment in the labs on Mars that Earth doesn't have, specially outfitted to study artifacts from space?

Except for these trifling details, I've finished the first draft of the revision of the short story.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2001 10:38 AM

- > *The story seemed a little thinner than*
- > *our usual Starman tale (that is, it had less detail, was more rushed, etc.)*
- > *but then, this is a short story:*

Short stories will be "shallower" than a novel, but I do plan on going over it again and adding some detail. No character is described, for example, and I hadn't read it carefully for flow, details, errors, etc. I spent several hours on it and it was getting late when I finally sent it off, so it's not REALLY the final draft—but what is left is just a little polishing.

- > *Do you have any clear idea how the story should end, David?*

²⁴⁶ As you can see, David had to tweak the story a little bit in order to get it to fit into the canon. It worked out well, though!

Actually, although it was rather truncated it seemed to me that it was already complete. I noticed later that I had neglected to close the quote at the end, but I thought that it could end with the Starlights sitting in their stateroom waiting for the Captain's announcement. As a short story, it needs no powerful resolution. It is clear that the Captain will make the announcement on HIS time schedule, people will pack up, the three rescue ships will arrive, everyone will get off safely, and the Olympia will blow. We know everyone got off safely because Richard Starlight survived to appear in later Starman books, so all those events don't need to be described. The real value of the story from the Starman series' point of view is not what happened to the Olympia, but (1) showing an event in the formation of Richard Starlight and especially (2) the introduction of the asteroid/warship and the presence of the aliens who steal the artifacts. None of the Starlights knows anything about these things—but the READER will know what they mean!

If we put a "to be continued" line, many people will be miffed. At least I always felt that way whenever I was reading a story or watching a TV show that had a TBC, especially without warning.²⁴⁷ In our TRA letter, we advertised the I*S with a short story, so I think we should have a complete short story for them. It would be a good idea, however, to offer another I*S shortly before the publication of JTP to help with finances. Let's hope that we get enough orders to make the effort worthwhile.

David

DATE: TUE, 13 FEB 2001 22:28:24 -0800

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *The ending just needs something – ...If it were me, and I wanted to*
- > *end the story on that note, I'd stick a little epilogue at the end that*
- > *would read something like this:*

²⁴⁷ Now you know why we never, ever put that line anywhere in the series! (Except, of course, for the seven-part serial, The Lost Tomorrow, which was advertised from the beginning as being in parts.)

Looks good! I'll do it!²⁴⁸

> *For me this works: it makes the ending pretty clear*
> *and even gives a good plug for book #3.*

Fantastic idea!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2001 9:21 PM

Dear Jon,

My ISP has been going haywire recently. It has returned as undeliverable messages that the recipient has later responded to and therefore obviously received. It has held onto messages for five or six days and then sent them. It has taken one message to someone (like Mike Dodd) and returned it to me when three other messages to the same person went through just fine. (I sent TFOTO to Mike in 3 parts, for example, seconds apart. Parts 1 and 3 went through, but 2 has been returned to me 3 times.) I hope that SE doesn't have to deal with this. The financial records message you received is from me, but I sent it last week sometime. It appears that you may have received it twice!

Also, for the I*S, could you give me some current figures? How many AOMs have we distributed? How many TRAs? I don't need financial figures except in the most general terms. If you can get the numbers to me overnight, I'll put the I*S into the mail tomorrow. Also provide names and addresses of any paid customers for the I*S. ...

I have weighed the paper, and each I*S can be 48 pages long, maximum, to remain under 2 ounces, if the pages are cut the same size as one of the books.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Once again, David surprised me: he took the sample off-the-top-of-my-head epilogue I wrote and put it almost verbatim at the end of the *Flight of the Olympia*. It's still there – it's the section in italics at the end of the story. It's interesting to look at that section and think that it might not have been there, and how different the story would have been if it were missing!

²⁴⁹ For postage reasons we made every single Inter*Stellar 48 pages long, except for the very last one which was 68 pages long. 48 pages was simply the most pages we could send and still keep the postage at a certain level; adding one more page increased postage by quite a bit.

Blessings!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2001 2:10 PM

I*S's should go out this afternoon in the mail.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2001 7:19 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Inter*Stellar #1 has been completed, copied, and mailed to our first customers... Jon's and April's copies were put into one envelope. It looks, if I say so myself, good!

Sorry, Mike—I was writing really fast at one point so I could get it all done and in the mail today, and referred to you at one point as "Mark Dodd."²⁵⁰ Had Mark Seaton on my mind, I'm sure.

I'll look forward to your comments when you receive it.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2001 11:03 PM

Putting 20 together was a lot of work—about 6 hours today just doing final rewrite, printing, photocopying, collating, stapling, folding, and cutting to size. Now that it's done,

²⁵⁰ An interesting bit of trivia! If you want to see if you have a first-edition of the first Inter*Stellar, check for that mistake: if it's there, you most likely do.

though (and corrections made for a second edition!), it should go faster if our orders pick up.

Yes, those first editions that went out will be rare.²⁵¹ I don't even have one of them, since I corrected mine already, and have changed the master to fix errors! I also fixed a line in the short story that had a small error in it. I noticed that two chapters ended with "and closed the door behind them." So I changed one of the endings.²⁵²

David

DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2001 12:08 PM

> *Be sure to check out [my sister] April's review of the Inter*Stellar on the messageboard! She pointed out something good: we missed something important (we got the name of Thomas Starlight's wife wrong). It was my fault, but I should have known! It amazes me that April noticed it.*

I fixed the entry in FOTO so that Tom's wife now reads "Sandra"—the name we originally gave her. I won't print up an entire new master of I*S, though—that'd be a lot of work. We can print a correction in I*S#2.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 06, 2001 10:50 AM

> *Kevin Anetsberger received his copy of the Inter*Stellar today, and he really liked it! He did notice a mistake in it, though. The picture of DIE on the artwork page is credited to me, which is kind of right: I made the full-color original. However, Kevin converted it to a cool line-drawing and made it look the way it did, so the picture in the Inter*Stellar is really his: I could never have done that. We might want to correct this (I'm thinking about a correction in I*S #2).*

²⁵¹ They certainly are! I don't even have one; I must have given my first-edition copies to someone and replaced them with later editions.

²⁵² Another item to look for when hunting for real first editions!

Okay, I'll correct it. Sorry about the mistake. Please pass on my apologies. Thanks.

David

DATE: SAT, 21 APR 2001 17:55:05 -0700

Benjamin²⁵³ had a marvelous suggestion: he wants the short story in the next I*S to be about the first encounter of Earthmen with the Titanians on the Deep Space Exploration. Sounds like a great idea to me!²⁵⁴

David

DATE: MON, 23 APR 2001 07:35:58 -0700

- > *I do have a question, though: in the end of I*S #1*
- > *we had a blurb to the effect that the next I*S will*
- > *have a story on the origins of the Wind People. What's*
- > *going to happen to that story?*

Well, we'll have to put out I*S 3 with the Titanian story!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 07, 2001 7:03 PM

- > *What would you think about trying to get out an Inter*Stellar while JTP*

²⁵³ Bennett, a boy about 11 years old at the time, and a member of the Reading Group.

²⁵⁴ It was a great idea, and we used it! This idea became the short story *SETI*. We ended up typing this in with David's earlier idea about discussing Allen Foster's radiation injury, which later became an important part of *Journey to the Tenth Planet*.

- > *is being printed? I know that the response to the last I*S wasn't exactly*
- > *overwhelming,²⁵⁵ but we did want to get another one out anyway – and besides,*
- > *any funding we can get to raise money for JTP is a good thing.*

It would be fine with me. We unloaded a total of 39 last time. (I printed 40 and have one left) and that includes the few free ones we gave to ourselves and Fred W. I*S #2 is pretty well drafted except for the short story. I could do it with a day or two of work.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 08, 2001 12:08 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *could you send me 7 of the I*S? I'd like to have a*
- > *stack to take up to Fort Wayne and sell to my relatives – and then, too,*
- > *I'd like to have a few extras (right now I only have one and that's it). I*
- > *know that you only have one left, so it looks like it's time to print up*
- > *another batch!*

²⁵⁵ The sales figures for the Inter*Stellars were never overwhelming, and that is why we stopped writing more after the fifth issue: the first five issues are still for sale, but we're not writing any more – it just wasn't worth it. As of 9/24/2003, our sales figures were:

Inter*Stellar 1: 68 copies
 Inter*Stellar 2: 58 copies
 Inter*Stellar 3: 42 copies
 Inter*Stellar 4: 32 copies
 Inter*Stellar 5: 26 copies
 Total copies distributed: 229

This is why we later reprinted *Flight of the Olympia* and *The City of Dust* with *Descent Into Europa* and later *SETI* with *The Lost Race of Mars*: very, very few of our customers had read them. Two very important short stories have not been reprinted: *A Matter of Time*, which deals with the very important issue of what happened to Richard Starlight's children, and *Return to Europa*, which takes place after *The Lost Race of Mars* ends and is in fact another adventure on Europa with the Starman! People who want to read these are going to have to go to the Starman website (www.StarmanSeries.com) and order Inter*Stellars #4 and #5, since that's the only place they are available.

I'll print up ten more in the next week or so.²⁵⁶

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2001 1:13 AM

P.S. Some new characters came to mind today, for a Wind People short story in I*S #2. Colin and Kevin Teagarden, identical twin brothers who are the leaders of the first generation Wind People. I know we have a scenario somewhere about a tyrannical leader,²⁵⁷ but I haven't looked it up for a while and don't know how this might fit it. Still, these guys popped into my mind, and usually I develop details of story lines around the personalities that pop up, like George St. George and Montezuma Vly. I've got some good ideas for a Wind People story that is growing around these two guys. I've done some reading recently about Antarctica, and saw the IMAX film last week about Ernest Shackleton's survival story in Antarctica, and can use a lot of information there for Wind People scenes in mid-21st century Mars. Should be good!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2001 8:21 PM

Dear Jon,

Please ask Kevin if he can make me the following illustrations in black and white for photocopying in I*S#2 for the short story:

²⁵⁶ The Inter*Stellars are essentially available now on a "print-on-demand" basis. David can print them up from the master copy he keeps in his files.

²⁵⁷ I have vague memories of this; it was something about a Martian tyranny that gripped the planet in the days during the Collapse, before contact between Earth and Mars was resumed. I've forgotten the details, though, and the file with this information has been lost. (It amazes me how much stuff has been lost, especially since I took such great care to save everything!) I do remember, though, that this tyranny was part of the reason why there were tunnels underneath Eagle City.

A number of land sailers crossing a desert.

A man flying in a heavy wind, like Icarus, wearing something like a hang glider but a bit more billowy, for being captured in wind.

A few people, 2 or 3, cresting a ridge like the rim of a crater, and seeing a thoroughly ruined city below—I mean REALLY ruined—scattered mounds and a few sharp edges, and maybe a hint of an opening into the ground like a cave mouth.

Each should have a Martian sky in the background.

Also, maybe a man lifting a light deep in an artificial tunnel and shining on blocks of stone which make the walls, as he peers into the darkness ahead. The man should be rather gaunt and leathery, probably unshaven.²⁵⁸

Thanks! And Thanks to Kevin!!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2001 10:24 PM

Dear Jon,

Instead of having a man flying in the wind with Icarus wings, please ask Kevin to make it a girl of about 14 with long dark hair. He may not be putting that much detail into it, but if he is, this is a better illustration for what I have in mind. I think you'll like it.

Thanks!

David

²⁵⁸ You can find this rendering on page 23 of the third I*S. The scene was also described, without an illustration, on pages 413-414 of *The Lost Race of Mars*.

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2001 10:40 PM

- > *Here's another message from Kevin! He brings out a really good point:*
- > *wouldn't the people in the artwork be wearing spacesuits? Hence, you*
- > *couldn't see the long black hair of the girl riding the hang glider, and the*
- > *person in the tunnel would have a suit on, and so forth...*

Blast! Yes, he's right. In that case it doesn't matter how he draws the figures. The flyer, however, will be a teenage girl, and not a full-grown man.

- > *Also, David, I hate to tell you this but I think that Mars does not have*
- > *enough atmosphere to support a hang glider. The Martian atmosphere is very,*
- > *very thin, and from what I have heard it would be extremely challenging to*
- > *build an airplane that could fly on Mars. I'm not sure a hang glider would*
- > *work at all. If I were you I'd research this a little and find out before I*
- > *put it in the story...*

Hmmm. Without really articulating it in my mind, this is one reason I changed the flyer to a teenage girl instead of a large man. Could we just say that 40 years into the terraformation process there was enough of a change in the atmosphere that it was possible? There are the powerful winds, and that's what I'm counting on. I have a GREAT scene in mind. I can just indicate that the atmosphere is thinner than on Earth, as we did in the parachute scene in AOM, and still write the scene in. Fiction, the way we described the crowdedness of the Asteroid Belt. I'd hate to give the scene up.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 01, 2001 7:03 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I spent around four or five hours last night*
- > *working on the plot outline for LROM, and found out that the plot outline*
- > *included the use of a very large glider!²⁵⁹ I'd hate to get rid of my glider as*

²⁵⁹ This glider later morphed into the dirigibles that the Starmen tried to get from the Banjoman in *The Lost Race of Mars*.

> *well. I think we could assume what you suggest and get away with it.*

Okay, then. For whatever reason, in the mid-21st century there will be enough atmosphere on Mars to sustain a glider.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 04, 2001 1:18 PM

You can also email our customer base, Jon, and begin to take preorders for I*S#2, if you like. All we need now is the short story and that won't take long to write. By the time checks come in to you, Jon, I'll be just about ready to mail the things out.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 05, 2001 5:23 PM

> *Yesterday, for the fourth, we had some of our relatives over who live*
> *nearby. One of our relatives told me a story that just astounded me,*
> *although she didn't think it was very unusual...²⁶⁰*

This is a GREAT inspiration for the Wind People. You have to depend upon yourself for everything! I'll take that story and adapt it for the short story. Great input, Jon!!

²⁶⁰ I still remember this story! At the time we lived 'way out in the country, at a very rural place in West Virginia called Turkey Creek. One of our neighbors wanted to build a chicken coop, but they didn't have the wood to build it with. They had a lot of trees on their property and thought about using them, but they didn't have a chainsaw. So what did they do? Well, since the father of their family was a blacksmith, he decided to *build himself a chainsaw*, out of various parts and bits of metal and other things lying around. He did, and it worked fine, and he then used it to cut down the trees, turn them into boards, and build his chicken coop. I was pretty impressed: I had heard of people turning trees into cabinets before, but this was the first time I'd ever run across someone who built their own chainsaw! Now there is somebody with survival skills.

More later.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 06, 2001 10:50 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I started writing the short story [The City of Dust] last night, and I really like it! I'm rolling now and hope to get it done very soon—a matter of a few days.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 06, 2001 10:50 AM

> *I've been thinking, David: it looks like you are doing an awful lot*
> *here. I know it's too late for this I*S, but what if in the future I wrote*
> *the Inter*Stellars?*²⁶¹

The Inter*Stellars are not too time-consuming. I assemble them as time passes. An article here, an item there, come across our screens, and I just copy it and put it into the draft. Then when it comes time to put out an I*S, I just clean up the text a little bit. The only thing that takes any time is the short story. Other than the short story, I*S#2 only took a couple of hours.²⁶²

David

²⁶¹ I was concerned that David was starting to overwork himself and needed a break...

²⁶² These things were a lot of fun to do! I miss them.

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 07, 2001 12:52 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

The short story is almost finished. Probably one more sitting will do it—I may have time to do that tomorrow afternoon. If so, I'll get the first draft to you in less than 24 hours. It will be about 3,500 words long—about 1 1/2 times the length of a normal Starman chapter. This will be the first Starman piece that doesn't feature a Starman! The story is called "The City of Dust." Inter*Stellars can be mailed out by next Wednesday or Thursday.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 07, 2001 3:16 AM

Dear Jon,

Here is the short story. I stayed up to finish it, since I couldn't put it down.

It's only a very rough first draft. I haven't even read it through myself, so it'll be much more refined when it's finally done, but this is the basic story line. Let me know what you think.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 08, 2001 1:27 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

The second Inter*Stellar is now ready for printing. The short story has been edited and brought to final draft, all illustrations are in hand, and the formatting is done. In the next day or two I will prepare the master and then print, collate, staple, and trim 40 copies. By Monday evening for sure I will be ready to mail them out to our fans.

Jon, please let me have the addresses of our paid customers. I think they will like this one. I hope you got to Fort Wayne okay. I checked the map, and saw that it is about 250 miles from Hurricane [WV]. Is that right?

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 08, 2001 8:48 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

This afternoon I put together 40 copies of I*S#2. It looks really good! All the orders are now in their envelopes and sealed, and will get put into the mail tomorrow. Another big job behind us.

Now all I have to do is mail them out as new orders come in, and that's a snap.

- > *I had my sister read over the I*S, and she really*
- > *enjoyed it. She especially liked all the science articles we put into it,*
- > *showing how our series relates to real science: I have a feeling that others*
- > *will too!*²⁶³

I had to take out one science article and one letter to make room for the short story. They will appear in I*S#3—which I have already started to draft!

I'm sure you noticed, Jon, that I put your sister into the short story. I hope she likes that! I described her as exactly as I could remember from the photos of her that I have seen, and guessed at a lively personality. I know her name is April Renee, so I made her twins.²⁶⁴

David

²⁶³ Scientific realism was fairly important to us, and we tried to make sure that the various things we worked into the series made sense scientifically. We also tried to work the latest scientific developments into the series, and we occasionally printed excerpts from scientific articles that showed our readers what we were doing.

²⁶⁴ Now you know where April and Renee Teagarden came from!

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 08, 2001 11:38 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Jon, would you please thank Kevin for me for the illustration he sent? I ended up using a combination of both versions, cutting one and laying it over the top of the other. You'll see when you get your I*S—I think it turned out fine. You ordered 4, but I sent you 5 since I figured the team ought to get a copy or two for free, like the authors' copies of the books. I have about 20 left, and can always make more.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 16, 2001 11:18 PM

I received INTER*STELLAR #2 today and was very pleased with ALL of it! A great fan-zine! Thanks for sending, David.

I was especially pleased to see the quote from David Bowman²⁶⁵it really fits right in with DIE.

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 21, 2001 8:32 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *The sales of the second I*S are encouraging! They still seem pretty small*
- > *to me (only a small portion of our customers are actually getting them), but*
- > *they will probably grow with time.*

Yes indeed. It took a long time to sell 20 of I*S#1, and then I ran another set of 20 copies and it took a while to sell those. I don't recall if I ran another 10 or not, but I'm al-

²⁶⁵ Of Arthur C. Clarke's "2001" fame.

ready up to 50 copies of I*S#2, with 43 already distributed. ... In such a short time, that's very encouraging.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2001 9:15 PM

By the way, I've got a name for the third short story for I*S#3. This is the tale when Allen Foster and his ship encounter the Titanians. How do you like the name "Seti"? If you both like it, I'll include it on page 2 of DIE. The third I*S will be coming out at about the same time as DIE, maybe even sooner.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2001 5:00 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Including the title of that story in DIE is a*
- > *good idea – I forgot that completely. You're right. SETI sounds good to me!*
- > *Is it too obscure, though? Will people know what we mean – especially if*
- > *the last three letters are in lower case?*

I'll call it SETI.²⁶⁶

I'm home now for the afternoon and expect to finish the editing of DIE by this evening.

David

²⁶⁶ It's amazing the things we discussed! Here we pondered over whether the title for this short story should be in all caps or in mixed case. We were at times almost obsessive over the details: we wanted to get as much right as we possibly could.

DATE: SUN, 03 FEB 2002 17:06:42 -0800

Dear Jon,

Yes, I received your summary for SETI but neglected to respond. Sorry. I think it is excellent! It makes a rather plain idea into a fine story. Thanks!

The last time I'll be able to check email before heading for the mountains will be Tuesday about noon. Then I won't be back at home until Saturday. At that time I hope to have SETI completed and a good beginning to LROM.

I'm glad you're totally blessed! Me too!

David

Editor's Note: Here is the SETI idea draft I sent David!

2/2/02

I've been thinking over a subplot for I*S #3 and I think I have one. It has been difficult to think something up because of the fierce constraints: the book has to be about the discovery of the Titanians and has to involve a long trip into outer space. We can't do another crew mutiny because we already had that in JTP.²⁶⁷ We can't bring in Xenobot opposition because there really aren't any Xenos in the solar system at this point. We also don't want to distract from the main thrust of the story: the discovery of the Titanians and the first glimmerings of the existence of the Benefactors.

So, here is my idea: say that it takes quite some time (maybe a year or so) to get to Saturn and back. Seven months out the ship's nuclear reactor begins getting into trouble. The ship is on a predefined course with limited fuel; they can't turn around and go back because of the laws of orbital mechanics. They have to wait until they get to Saturn before

²⁶⁷ This is something else I was concerned about: once we did something in one book we couldn't do it again. If, for instance, the Starmen ran out of food in one story, they couldn't run out of food again in another one – we'd already done that. Each obstacle and event had to be something new: there was no way, for instance, that we were going to have the Starmen kidnapped in every volume as was done with the Hardy Boys, or have our heroes knocked unconscious in every volume as was done with Tom Swift. I never liked such repetitiveness, and we tried to avoid it as much as we could.

they can return home (kind of like Apollo 13 – they had to go clear around the moon before they could return to Earth and land).

So, the people on board the ship tinker with the reactor and manage to calm it down – in fact they think that they've fixed it, but they've got to keep a close watch on it. What they don't realize is that the situation is worse than they had imagined.

You see, the ship is in a tinkertoy-type design. Look at the scan of a ship I've attached. See how there is a small sphere and a big sphere connected by a long tube? That's how the ship looks. The big sphere is where the crew lives and the small sphere is where the reactor is. The long tube is shielding to protect the crew from the radiation of the reactor in case something goes wrong.

The reactor used involved a lot of intense radiation. At the time this journey took place, fusion reactors were too new and so fission reactors had to be used. The far compartment was so radioactive that the crew could not enter it; they had to work with it via sensors and robotics.

When the reactor had its first accident 7 months out, the whole area of the far sphere became so intensely radioactive that they lost the ability to send robots into that area – the robots couldn't handle the radiation. Using sensors and computerized controls (which, unlike the robots, had been built to withstand a lot of radiation) they managed to keep the reactor cool – but they could no longer enter the compartment. They -thought- that things were fine, but what they didn't realize and in fact couldn't know was that the radiation and heat was eating away the protective barrier. Shortly after they left Titan their radiation detectors in the big sphere started detecting radiation – it had penetrated the barrier. All along the way home the level of radiation gradually increased from minimal to lethal. That is why they were able to survive long enough to reach the Moon again: the level built up slowly and only became very bad toward the end after it all accumulated.

The story could be about courage: courage in the face of desperate situations and a refusal to lose heart even in the bleakest of circumstances. They had a problem and they fixed it: they did not give in to fear. They turned what could have been a terrible tragedy into a memorable victory against incredible odds (although it was surely a tragedy as well).

What do you think? Will this work?

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2002 11:20 PM

Dear Jon,

Could you please send me Kevin's grayscale artwork of Colin in the tunnel?²⁶⁸ It suddenly occurred to me that I can use it to good advantage in the third I*S. I put an hour

²⁶⁸ This image eventually worked its way onto the cover of Inter*Stellar #3!

or two into I*S#3 this evening and need the artwork. Additionally, if there are any other creations Kevin made that we didn't use or maybe didn't come out well in DIE, please send those along. They'll be good for the I*S. Thanks!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 05, 2002 6:58 PM

Dear Jon,

- > *The timeline is a -great- idea! I like it. Only one thing: if we are really*
- > *going to have a complete timeline for DIE in this I*S and if we are really*
- > *going to mention Robert Nolan's temptation, we had better not release this*
- > *until after Starman #4 comes out! This I*S would ruin the story in short*
- > *order.*²⁶⁹

Naturally, I thought of that and expect that we would send this out after DIE was out. If we prefer to get the I*S out now, then this material could be excised. I'd kinda prefer to keep it in and issue the I*S after DIE. What do you think? We could always take orders and tell them that the I*S will be sent out a week after DIE so that plot issues will not be revealed prematurely. If Friesens is moving as fast as it seems, maybe that'll be sooner than we think. If we get a bunch of order for the I*S, it'll be a bit of work to package them up in the envelopes anyway and I'd like to get a start on it.

In the facts and figures section, I altered the numbers slightly on the number of books received—for TRA because I remember the number of books I received and counted at that time. Also AOM, since I've got all those unbound books still. I counted once and I think the total is about 485.

Still a lot of work to be done on the I*S but you can see where it's going. Unless I add a lot more stuff, it may be a bit shorter than the first two. They were 48 pages each. Maybe as I fill out the stuff that still just in note or headline form, it'll approach that length. If necessary, I can always add some stuff from our files.

²⁶⁹ We were always concerned about ruining the surprises in the story for our readers, and we took great care to ensure that the surprises in the books remained surprises. I hated movie trailers that revealed every important event in the film, and we wanted to make sure that we never did anything like that.

More later. Have to go back to work now.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 07, 2002 7:32 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I think this is pretty close to a final draft. It needs a little something on the back page, and if we want it to be as long as the previous Inter*Stellars, I'll need to add four more pages. But please read through this and let me know what you think. Note any errors or any other changes that need to be made. Then I'll print up a master and get 50 of these things printed, stapled, trimmed, and ready for mailing. It'll be a relief to have it done!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 07, 2002 10:15 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > I have an idea as to what to put in the extra 4 pages! Why not some Starman*
- > correspondence? I have hundreds of pages of that. It would be an interesting*
- > test of sorts to see what people think of it.*
- > I think that the most interesting one to add would be excerpts from the*
- > "From Dig Allen to David Foster" document. I admit that it's twelve pages*
- > long and that adding it to the I*S would seriously increase its size.*

Not a problem. I edited a central portion down and will put it in to swell the I*S out to 48 pages. It's a terrific idea, Jon, and should be fascinating for the die-hard Starman fans. Man, three years ago. Imagine how long ago that seems now! You've done a wonderful job of organizing that correspondence and even footnoting it!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2002 9:52 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

41 copies of the I*S rolled off the photocopier before it got too hot to continue without frequent jams. I'll finish a run of 50 in a few days. I am now looking at a stack of finished Inter*Stellars. How many shall I send to you gentlemen? Let me know and they'll be in the mail immediately.

They look nice, if I do say so myself.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2002 9:57 PM

And you may start advertising the third Inter*Stellar, if you want—just tell people that it won't be mailed out until a week after the DIEs are sent out, since there is material in I*S#3 that relates to that book and people should read the book before the I*S.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2002 9:44 PM

Now, you know that I'm not sending out the third I*S to anybody until DIE has been out for a week or so, right? I've got all the orders addressed, sealed, and stamped, but they're piling up in my office until the second week of April or so. Okay?

...

> *I meant to tell you that I got my Inter*Stellars*
> *yesterday and was VERY impressed with them. You did a fine job! I love the*
> *yellow cover. It's a very nice looking production and I was impressed with*
> *it.*

Good. I even found an illustration/photograph of Saturn with Titan for the short story.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2002 10:33 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Had an hour or so after a busy day and decided to relax a bit by doing some random Starman work. I actually got a good start on the fourth Inter*Stellar. One item that struck me as a good entry would be a review of Leigh Brackett's 1954 book, The Star-men; also a photocopy of a portion of the Boy Ranchers book that mentions Zip Foster; and maybe a brief summary of Bob Janoe's situation. It'll be a fun I*S!

Have a blessed Lord's Day.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 01, 2002 4:15 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I need to be thinking over a plot for Return to Europa!*
- > *That short story is coming due in the next I*S. I don't know if we will*
- > *write another I*S or not, but I'd like to have a plot ready for it all the*
- > *same.*

I think we definitely ought to continue with the I*Ss. At the very least, the short stories are becoming an important part of the canon, and they can be written relatively quickly.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2002 10:09 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > I do have one little*
- > critique, though: while the ship will appear at the exact spot it left, the*
- > solar system and the Earth and the Moon will have moved during that time and*
- > won't be at that spot, so the ship will not reappear in the base²⁷⁰*

I thought about that, and then just assumed that the "default coordinates" will bring it right back to its place on the Moon—i.e. its place of origin—not to where it was when it disappeared. I think all time travel stories assume this, beginning with H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*.

- > It sounds like the Starman children will reappear a year after LROM ends,*
- > which puts it right around book 7 or book 8. Very interesting!*

I picked the return time so that they will reappear one year after LROM. That gives the Starmen a chance to "Return to Europa" and then still be present on the Moon for the return of the children. The draft timeline is as follows:

LROM ends on May 7, 2153 with the Starmen and Richard still on Mars for an extended stay with the Ahmanyans. Then they return home in the summer for time with their families. On October 15 the Starmen begin their return trip to Europa and they return to Amundsen City on February 22, 2154. The return of the children takes place three months later.

...

AMOT²⁷¹ still needs a little detail work, and I do plan to provide one illustration. Next week I'll be at church camp for three days and will take my laptop. That should give me plenty of opportunity to write *Return to Europa*.

²⁷⁰ This was concerning the events in *A Matter of Time*, which involved a spaceship traveling five years into the future. I didn't think it was realistic to have the ship appear in the same hangar from which it left, since Earth and the Solar System and the galaxy will have moved considerably by then. David was right, though: mentioning all that does add extra levels of complexity, and time travel stories in the past always involved reappearing at the exact same spot from which you left. It may not be realistic, but it makes writing a lot easier.

Have a great day!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2002 10:52 PM

I'm glad you like the finished version of AMOT. Yes, the illustration [of Thomas Out-base] does look just like a farm. I thought so when I finished it. Both structures are really places I really liked and wanted to put into an illustration somewhere, but they are not fitting for the Moon. I'll redo it.

David



Figure 1: The famous "farmhouse" illustration

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2002 11:05 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I agree with Jon about the "farmhouse on the moon" effect.

²⁷¹ Our abbreviation for *A Matter of Time*.

However, it is a very nice drawing.

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2002 11:00 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

- > *I agree with Jon about the "farmhouse on the moon" effect.*
- > *However, it is a very nice drawing.*

Thanks, Mike. I saw this really fascinating building not far from where I live and snapped a photo of it, and that's what appears as the farmhouse. When I was drawing it, I was actually thinking, "Hmmm, a sloped roof on the Moon—weird." And when it was done, I thought, "Looks like a farmhouse with a silo—oh well."

But with both of you thinking it looks like a farm with a silo, I can see I'll have to redo the illustration. Not a problem. Fortunately, now we have time for this kind of thing!²⁷²

With two short stories coming up and so much material, I suggest that we produce TWO Inter*Sellars at once.²⁷³ Kevin Anetsberger is sending me an article on how he made the 3D endpapers. The fourth Inter*Stellar could contain material that doesn't compromise LROM and could be offered for sale at any time. "A Matter of Time" could be put into that one. The fifth one could be brought to the convention and offered with LROM—or we could wait and include an article on the convention itself, and put that magazine out in November. That one could contain "Return to Europa." What do you think? Otherwise we're looking at a huge magazine that will probably need to be professionally stapled and cut (my machines won't be able to handle a magazine that size) and will cost more to mail out.

²⁷² Yes, folks, that illustration was originally intended to be of Thomas Outbase! Mike and I thought it looked *exactly* like a farmhouse and silo, which would be very out of place on the moon. I told David that the solution was simple: in *Return to Europa*, have the action start in Montana at Mark Seaton's ranch, and have that illustration instead placed in that story and labeled as depicting Mark's ranch. That is why that short story begins in Montana: that whole first chapter would not have been written if it had not been for that illustration.

²⁷³ This sounded like a good idea to me, so we did!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2002 8:31 PM

- > *It looks like we all had the same reservations about it! It would be a nice*
- > *lost Starman illustration – and I'm sure I could come up with a story to go*
- > *along with it. If the Starmen stayed over at Mark's ranch in Montana before*
- > *leaving off for their return to Europa, you could put it as an illustration*
- > *to that story!*

Good idea!

- > > *With two short stories coming up and so much material, I suggest that we*
- > > *produce TWO Inter*Stellars at once...*
- >
- > *Sounds like a good idea! That way we would have five Inter*Stellars and*
- > *five Starman books. I think we certainly have the material! Let's go for it.*

Okay then, we will. In that case, I can have I*S#4 done pretty quickly—early September, I'd guess.

- > *Let's wait on the fifth one, put a Convention article in it, and get it out*
- > *in November. A lot of people would love to go to the Convention but just*
- > *can't make it, and they'd be interested in hearing about it!*

Excellent.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2002 5:47 PM

- > > *Tomorrow begins three days of karate camp ...*
- >
- > *Hope you had a great trip! Sounds like a lot of fun.*

It was good. One or two children asked if you were going to be there and were saddened when I said No.²⁷⁴ I only managed to write the first half of Return to Europa—spent almost two hours just on the first chapter, which is only about 850 words, but I think you'll like it. The unsuitable illustration I did for AMOT will fit right into this chapter of RTE. I've got the Starmen and the Ahmanyans to Europa now, and will continue to write when I can until the story's done. Then I'll put together I*S#4 and hope to have that ready for orders by early September.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2002 6:17 PM

Dear Jon,

Do we have any readers in Montana? If not, who is our reader closest to Montana? Could you give me a name and email address? I need to check some facts for Return to Europa, and would rather ask someone who lives in the area than research a whole ton of things separately.

Thanks.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 2002 3:12 PM

Dear Jon,

Thanks to Neil Lindholm who contacted his brother-in-law for me, I got all the information I need to make the first chapter of RTE accurate. Only had to make one change!

²⁷⁴ I had spent a week with David the month before, working on LROM. That week included spending a session with the karate class when we made a videotape of the fight scenes in the Starman series.

So far we have Zip born on the moon but with family in West Virginia, and Mark born in Montana. Joe doesn't have roots yet. Shall we make him a Canadian?

David

DATE: MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2002 8:29 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I'm almost finished with "Return to Europa" and thought I'd send it off to you two as a work in progress. Mike, take note that the upside-down crabs are included this time!²⁷⁵ I've got the party back to the abandoned city and have indicated where the story goes from there. It looks as if it'll be a little more than 5,000 words long at the end, or about the length of two average chapters in a novel.

Curiously, this is the first time the Starmen have appeared in a short story. The story takes place five months after the end of LROM, and is the true completion of the first Starman segment.

I spent more than two hours on the first chapter alone, which is just under 700 words long. This little package of words has had more attention to detail, I think, than any other part of the Starman saga.²⁷⁶ The gap in the text is for the illustration, which you received a couple of weeks ago.

Anyway,²⁷⁷ let me know what you think and if we need a better, more blockbuster-type ending.

David

²⁷⁵ Mike had suggested the upside-down crab-walkers for DIE, but there was no place in that book where they could appear without forcing it.

²⁷⁶ And just think: if it hadn't been for that "farmhouse on the moon" illustration, that first chapter would never have existed!

²⁷⁷ I thought it was fine, so we left it as it was!

DATE: MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2002 9:34 PM

By the way, I indicated in chapter 1 of RTE that Mark Seaton's ancestor was named Temple, who founded a cattle ranch in the late 19th century. I wonder how many readers will realize that that will make Mark a descendent of Bardwell Manley, father of the X Bar X Boys,²⁷⁸ Teddy and Roy Manley, the grandsons of Temple Manley, whose ranch was in Montana—at least according to the later books.

Teddy and Roy had a sister Belle. Somewhere along the line, the ownership of the ranch must have descended through the female line, and that female married a Seaton. With some imagination and nothing else to do, I could create a family tree.

I assure you, it was real fun describing the Manley ranch house with a spacecraft parked in front of it.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2002 3:29 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Delete the previous version of RTE. I made a major mistake in it that I have corrected in this version. In the first version, I had the mantaship equipped with a communicator that made conversation with the Europans possible. I'd forgotten that it was the Europans who had the communicator and initiated the first contact with the Underbird. It's all fixed in this version. Also, this version has a bit more stuff in it, although it's still incomplete.

David

²⁷⁸ No one ever caught this plug.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2002 6:04 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Neil Lindholm and I had a few exchanges over the past few days about Joe Taylor's background. He's the only one we hadn't given one to. The discussion arose since Neil was the fellow who provided the information to me about Montana, which I needed for the short story *Return to Europa*.

Anyway, the upshot of the exchanges is the following, which Neil provided:

Born in the rural Québec town of Coaticook, in the Eastern Townships. (I've been there. Nice little town.) Mother was Québécois and father was American from New Hampshire. With English and French-speaking parents, he became fluent in both English and French. Laura is okay for a French name but if you have not yet used her name in a book, a good Québec name is Denise or Julie or Annick. Joseph has a brother, Pascal, and three sisters - Anick, Denise, and Julie.

He spent his youth working on his father's farm, where his parents were taking a sabbatical from the busy world of interplanetary travel in order to raise their children in a rural setting. However, they ensured that the children were not isolated and made many trips with them and worked with the children in order to ensure that they were ready for whatever career choices they decided to follow. Joe was a very ambitious child and desired to travel and experience new things so he spent his summers in various work programs across Canada. He worked on a cod ship in Newfoundland, had a stint at an internship in Ottawa, worked on a wheat field in the prairies, worked a logging camp in British Columbia, and panned for gold in the Yukon. (Okay, this is going overboard, but I have actually met young guys who have done things like this. Maybe not all of these things but perhaps some of them.)

His parents, being wealthy, sent Joe to Upper Canada College, a very exclusive private school in Toronto (the most exclusive, actually) but he found the pretentiousness too overbearing and persuaded his parents to send him to regular public school in Shérbrooke, where he excelled in all of his studies. Once he graduated from public school, he spent a year in Montréal at McGill University for a prep year prior to his going to the academy. He had a fun time living in Montreal and shared a small apartment on the island with two other students. Upon his acceptance to the academy, he bid farewell to Québec and made his way down to the States.

Is that enough to work with? If you don't want him to be French-Canadian, it can easily be changed. I thought that you could work the language thing in there somewhere.

What do you think? I like it, although I told him that was a lot of activity to pack into one life before Joe started Starlight Academy at age 15 or thereabouts. Some of the rich experience Neil suggests could have been done by Joe on summer vacations—what Neil calls "work programs." We can certainly adapt from this background, and take out the year at University and the small apartment and have Joe go directly to the Academy. The only possible inconsistency is that I think we said before that Joe was an only child. However, I think that there is enough good stuff here that we could just take on this family portrait and see who notices the inconsistency.²⁷⁹

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2002 10:58 PM

Dear Jon,

I made a lot of progress today on the fourth I*S. Can you provide me with copies of our exchanges on the Starlight Children that led to the writing of *A Matter of Time*? I don't think I have that anywhere in my files.

Thanks!

David

²⁷⁹ We decided to make Joe's siblings into cousins. This biography for Joe is presented in the first chapter of *Doomsday Horizon*.

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2002 11:09 PM

Dear Jon,

I did find an old email with your ideas about what could have happened to the children. What I need is the email when I wrote to you and said, "Hey, we forgot the children!" and you wrote back and said, "Wow! How did that happen?"

Thanks!

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 02, 2002 11:42 AM

Dear Jon,

> It's wonderful! Really wonderful – this is the best issue yet.

Great. Production will start immediately. It was fantastic to wake up this morning and see that we already have orders! It was good to be able to do this one gradually—a day here, an afternoon there, another day later. It made for a better result than cramming all the work into a couple of days.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 04, 2002 9:22 PM

Dear Jon,

If you can believe it, I started work organizing I*S#5 today and already have just about enough material for the entire issue. I've got a sizzling idea for the cover that I think you'll like.²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ This was our first full-color cover, with the photograph of the young Palestinian girl in David's church who was the model for the Ahmanyah child in LROM. David kept this idea a secret even from Mike and

What would be helpful would be a review of the 1960 Lost Race of Mars story. If you don't have time to write a paragraph or two, maybe Michael or April²⁸¹ could do so. Something very brief. It seems odd to write that such a book exists and then say nothing else about it.

We're in a great place as far as LROM goes—everything set, approved, and rolling. I got an email today from Friesens production asking me to approve the two new PDF pages, which of course I did.

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2002 12:42 AM

Dear Jon,

- > > *These [Inter*Stellars] aren't exactly selling like hotcakes yet, are*
- > > *they?*
- >
- > *No, they're definitely not. It's kind of strange. ...*
- > *The odd thing is that the people who bought them before are still our*
- > *customers, and they're still buying our books – they're just not buying our*
- > *Inter*Stellars. ...*
- > *Do you have any recommendations? Maybe we need to advertise these more heavily.*

If our regular customers who've bought them before know about them and aren't buying them, then they just must not appeal to them enough. I can do almost a print-on-demand thing so we're not out any money. Maybe after I*S#5 we can let them go. We started the Inter*Stellars in the beginning to ensure that we'd have enough money to continue to publish and we don't need to do that now. They cost \$1.20 each to produce, plus .60 for postage and bit more for an envelope. Our overhead is less than \$2 per I*S. We can reduce the price to \$4 or \$5 and still make a good profit, or maybe we can issue them less

me until we got our copies of this I*S in the mail. Color covers have to run on a separate photocopier from the one David uses for the Inter*Stellars, and then collated later.

²⁸¹ My brother and sister

frequently.²⁸² They do take a lot of time and work. Altogether the four we've done amount almost to the same amount of pages as a complete novel! Each one is 48 pages, but I*S#5 will be larger.

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2002 6:51 PM

Dear Jon,

- > *What if we e-mailed the egroup and told them that I*S #3 and #4 have not*
- > *sold very well and so we're planning on discontinuing them after #5? It*
- > *would be interesting to see what happens and if anyone says anything about*
- > *it. I have immensely enjoyed these and think they are worth doing, but they*
- > *really haven't been very successful and the sales haven't been strong at*
- > *all.*

Well, they haven't hurt us by any means. They have the highest profit margin of anything we've offered, except maybe the Starman Store. Even a sale of only 10 gives us a profit of \$50 or more, and once they're written, it is very easy to make additional copies. I've made about 10 of each issue for the convention,²⁸³ but after that I'll probably just do print-on-demand. The fifth one, however, is going to be a major issue, and the short story will be the most integral of the five shorts since it alone of the five features the Starmen and brings the real conclusion to the first segment of the saga. It could just as easily have been the last two chapters of LROM. People who like LROM will want I*S#5!

- > *Perhaps, instead of putting work into the Inter*Stellars, we could just*
- > *write short stories now and then, and when we get enough we could release a*
- > *book of them – something like what you were talking about before, David.*
- > *That might get more interest.*

²⁸² We ended up simply not writing any more of them after the fifth Inter*Stellar: the demand for them simply wasn't there.

²⁸³ Mark Johnson's series book convention in October 2002 in Charlottesville, Virginia, where LROM was released.

Could be a good idea. We're at a crossroads now in the series and have a number of exciting ways we can go.²⁸⁴

David

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2002 7:40 PM

Dear Jon,

Could you please send me the particulars about that "tenth planet" in the Kuiper Belt? Was it Quaoar?²⁸⁵ How big is it and how far out? 4 billion miles, wasn't it? How far beyond Pluto? Thanks.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2002 7:59 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Here is a slight expansion of one of the last paragraphs in *Return to Europa*. Now it includes Quaoar.

Stenafi leaned forward excitedly. "You mean direct travel? Without a spacecraft?"

"I think so," said Saadervo. "Whether they could travel without some kind of vehicle, I don't know yet, but they could indeed travel through hyperspace. This is the first proof that they could do so in ways other than spacecraft, whose capability to do so is well known. The evidence is unmistakable. The warping of space has altered the atomic structure of the supports in the side chamber of the great hall. The equipment shows settings

²⁸⁴ This idea later turned itself into *The Starman Chronicles*, in which we wrote min-stories and serialized them.

²⁸⁵ A new, rather large planetoid had just been discovered beyond Pluto, and so, of course, we immediately worked it into the series! We were almost certainly the first science fiction authors to mention this planetoid in a science fiction story.

for eight receiving beacons on Ahmnya: the six largest cities of our ancient civilization and two spaceports. Another is set on Hol-Phobos. Two others are fixed on terminuses on the farthest outskirts of the Solar System: Quaoar, which we call Olancha, and Mtala-the planet you call Nyx. There are a few others that must be set on spacecraft that no longer exist.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2002 8:30 PM

Dear Jon,

Are you able to post the Starman [mini-documentary] video on the web site?²⁸⁶ Or are you able to send it on a CD to interested fans for a fee?²⁸⁷ If the answer to either or both questions is Yes, let me know the details and I'll include the matter in the next Inter*Stellar.

I've been working on I*S#5 and hope to have it ready for mailing early next week. I'll send the contents to you and Mike first, of course, for your approval.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2002 11:51 AM

Dear Jon,

Aren't vacations great? Just think of all the work you can get done. Here I am bleary eyed and irritable, having slept only about five hours—down after midnight and up at 5 a.m. The palm of my right hand is developing a blister. Why?

²⁸⁶ I wasn't, but Valerie Kramer was, and she kindly agreed to post it on her website!

²⁸⁷ I was able to do that; information about this can be found on the Starman website – as well as a link to Valerie's webpage.

Because I have spent many hours preparing the fifth Inter*Stellar. Couldn't put it down. A massive 68-page fanzine has been printed (only 30 copies so far), collated, stapled, trimmed, and put into envelopes. I will be on my way to the post office in a few minutes to get them into the mail.

I am sending you 7 copies of #5 and one of #4, since that is all I could jam into a box.

I also made a few extra copies of the previous Inter*Stellars, just in case people want them.

Next job: binding twelve pc versions of LROM. After that, the remaining copies of AOM. After that—maybe I can try to get used to some real rest.

Watch for the box. I think you will like what's in it. I REALLY like this I*S!! The cover is really something!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2002 10:39 AM

Dear Jon,

*> By the way, I received the fifth I*S! It really look outstanding – it's a
> great issue. Well done! I like the color cover and the color back page: it's
> a very nice touch on a great issue. Our readers will like this one!*

I think so too. I ran the color covers on my printer/copier at home at the highest quality setting. Took a LONG time to run them but the result made the effort worth it.

David

Tidbits

*“The blue ink used on the [Assault on Mars] endpapers was
an old unopened can from about 1965...”*

Letters

DATE: THU, 25 FEB 1999 23:05:35 -0800

Apparently I don't have a map of the moon. If either of you has a map and can name a crater closer to the south lunar pole than Plato, let us know; otherwise I suggest that we go with Plato Base,²⁸⁸ commonly called "The Pole." Unless I can get to the library and research it a bit more.

David

DATE: AUGUST 11, 1999

I've now been before the screen for about 10-12 hours today (with breaks), and am near the end of the working draft of *The World of David Foster*. This has included going through all my Dig Allen files to make sure that we had not overlooked any really cool ideas. There are, in fact, a few that I think would be worth considering incorporating into the DF world. I'll summarize them and mail them off to both tomorrow for your thoughts before I print up the final draft to send to you by postal mail.²⁸⁹

While going through the files, I noted that it is exactly one year ago that I joined the team you two²⁹⁰ had already started, hoping to put together a new Dig Allen book called

²⁸⁸ That's right! At first we weren't going to call the city on the lunar south pole Amundsen City but instead were going to name it after the crater nearest the lunar south pole. It was Mike Dodd who suggested Amundsen City, and so that is what we named it! (As to the significance of Amundsen - well, I'll just let you do your own research on that!)

²⁸⁹ At first we passed around drafts of plot outlines by regular post: David would type them up, print them out, and mail them off to Mike and I, and when we got them in the mail we'd take a look at them and let him know what we thought. We only did this for the first *Starman* book; all the later ones were done exclusively via e-mail.

²⁹⁰ Mike Dodd and I. David must have officially joined the *Starman* team on August 11, 1998, although I had met him via e-mail roughly a month or so before when he e-mailed me about my Tom Swift page. Since my e-mail address at the time was ednacoper@compuserve.com (named after my mother, Edna Cooper, whose account it was), he thought my name was Edna Cooper and he addressed me as "Dear Edna" in the first few e-mails he sent me. I eventually corrected him when I realized that we might end up e-mailing each other for quite some time.

Mutiny on Mars.²⁹¹ I woke up after an hour's sleep and dashed out the preliminary idea for the Tenth Planet²⁹² and mailed it off to Jon on August 11, 1998.

Believe me, it has been really exciting to read through in one day all of our files from Day One,²⁹³ and get a picture of the development of our work from the first idea of writing Dig Allen #7 to assembling the complex world of David Foster and its 22 volumes.²⁹⁴ I truly think we have a fantastic idea, and the results will be worth the effort.

David

DATE: MON, 23 AUG 1999 08:29:34 -0400

1. One of the proposed Dig Allen titles I really liked was The Martian Mummies. Can that concept be worked in in some way? If not as a book title, maybe as a chapter title. Will there be mummies somewhere in the saga?²⁹⁵
2. I also liked the concept of going into the Oort Cloud, and would love to see a book title with that in it somewhere.
3. In one of the books, counterfeit Martian currency plays a major role.²⁹⁶ However, if people are using compads, money will have been replaced. Will Mars retain currency? Can something else be counterfeited? Maybe compads.

²⁹¹ I actually think that this is a better title than *Assault on Mars* – there's just something Dig Allen-ish about it. Maybe I'm just crazy.

²⁹² David wrote the very first summary for this book! The whole Tenth Planet thing was, I think, his idea. I no longer have his original summary, and only remember it vaguely.

²⁹³ Files which, I think, unfortunately no longer exist!

²⁹⁴ I don't remember what book we were leaving out, but we ended up with 23 volumes, not 22.

²⁹⁵ Wow! I had forgotten all about this. *The Martian Mummies* eventually turned itself into *Operation Luna*, which was slated to be the fifth Starman book. When we realized that this book was scheduled to be written before *The Lost Race of Mars*, we moved it to be after it instead – and when I got the idea for *Doomsday Horizon* we quietly filed *Operation Luna* away and removed it from the series title roster. It's still there, and maybe one day the saga of *The Martian Mummies* will see print...

²⁹⁶ This was the original plot of *The Lost Race of Mars*: they went to Mars to find some counterfeiters and along the way stumbled across the lost race of Mars. When I first thought of this book I had forgotten that they wouldn't be using currency in the future, and so we replaced currency with fillox.

4. How will the Xenobots recruit and communicate with their earthly agents? Why on earth would any earth citizen want to cooperate with them? This concept has not been addressed.

David

DATE: 9/9/99 8:34 PM

And here is the first portion of actual text (first draft). This is the teaser. I guess it should be an additional link, the very last in the list. It was kind of fun, and a little nerve-wracking, to write it. The part about "hearts beating fast palms getting clammy" described my actual condition at the time of writing. I haven't written fiction for over thirty years. Where italics are intended, I used html notation rather than asterisks, just to make it clear and maybe make it a little easier for you to post on the site, Jon.

Let me know what you think and be brutal if necessary.

David

DATE: 9/17/99 10:39 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Glad we're getting lots of hits. I included a lot of my friends in the notice I sent out, and have several who have told me directly that they want copies of the first Starman book. One asked if we are planning to include poetry, as Tolkien did in his books, and offered to write some. His stuff is pretty good.

I responded that we hadn't thought of it and said I'd run it by you. I kind of incline toward having very little or none. X Bar X Boys had a bare squeaking minimum of poetry, like cowboy songs, but it doesn't seem too appropriate. On the other hand, it might fit in somewhere.

What do you think?²⁹⁷

David

DATE: 9/18/99 8:59 AM

Dear Jon,

- > *We don't want to sound like professors, and yet we want to keep the quality level*
- > *consistently high. It will be a challenge! Perhaps one way we could do this*
- > *is space slang, like was in the original Dig Allen series.*

Slang which is made up sounds too "made up" to me—as in the Tom Corbett series, "Stand to!" when everyone else says "Attention!"²⁹⁸ Maybe what I'll have to do is pay attention to the slang I use in ordinary conversation and see how that works. It will indeed be a challenge, but then that's how I usually talk with my friends—educated people who still have a sense of humor and use conversational rather than professorial language. Jim [Ogden] just suggested words like "gonna". That's a place to start, I guess. In the sample, I only did that kind of thing when Steve called in to Eagle City. I think it can be done, with a little thought.

He's right on the word "scrounge." I noticed it this morning, when I logged onto the site as visitor number 97. The description of the Xenobots on the home page says they are the scrounge of the solar system—should be scourge.

Gonna log off now and get ready ta go ta work.

David

²⁹⁷ As it turned out, we did add some poetry to the series – to the first Starman book, *Assault on Mars*, on page 73 of the first edition. I don't think we have anywhere else.

²⁹⁸ This is why we didn't carry over the space slang from the Dig Allen series. Imagine how different the books would have been if we *had*!

DATE: 9/18/99 7:40 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Some more response to Jim Ogden. (By the way, the entry on the Tom Swift Book of Science Experiments is great, Jon!)

- > *The dialogue needs to be a bit more slangy. At times they sound like English*
- > *professors. Use gonna, gotta and other pseudo-words that people use in*
- > *everyday speech. I'm not suggesting that you dumb-down anything, just make*
- > *the dialogue more natural.*

Yeah, the more I think about it, the more I think he's right. I'll do my best, and you guys might have ta help me.

- > *I always thought the future was metric: as in it's only 20 clicks from here*
- > *or that spaceship stands 500 meters.*

I thought about this, actually, but thought we might stay where we are since our readers are still non-metric. But I have no problem whatever in going metric. I wish we all would. What do you think?

- > *Where are the one-syllable names?*

Okay, I think Joseph could become Joe easily. David is going to be Zip most of the time. I don't care for "Dave" though. Shall we go to Joe?

David

DATE: 9/18/99 10:45 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I don't remember seeing much slang in Rick Brant or Ken Holt, but I could*
- > *easily have missed it. This is something that will have to be done with a*
- > *gentle touch!*

Amazing how we think along the same lines almost all the time. I'm with you on this.

- > *We could either put it [the metric system] in for realism, or leave it out to*
- > *make sure no one gets lost. I'll leave it up to you...*

I lean more for using what we've got: miles, etc. It's the system I'm used to and what our readers will know. There's no guarantee that the future will be metric anyway. I think we ought to change as little as necessary from what we've have now.

- > *Shall we go to Joe?*
- > *I think that sounds fine, unless we wanted to give him a nickname*
- > *of some sort. Joe works for me, though.*

Joe it is. Feel free to update the segment on the web site, putting Joe for Joseph. I'll do the same in my file.

David

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 04, 1999 6:12 PM

- > *Also, I was thinking: what would you think about printing something on*
- > *the (currently blank) dustjacket flaps? Perhaps on the front flap we could*
- > *have a summary of the books (as on Tom Swift Jr. books) and on the back flap*
- > *a listing of all 23 titles. It's just a thought: I do hate to see space go*
- > *to waste...*

Absolutely!

- > *in the Ken Holt reprints, I noticed that he has listed*
- > *inside the edition number of the book and the number of copies reprinted.*
- > *What would you think about doing that on our Starman books? Then there would*
- > *be -no question- to future collectors as to what edition a book is or how*
- > *many of that edition are in existence.*

Excellent idea!²⁹⁹

David

DATE: SATURDAY, APRIL 01, 2000 9:09 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> > *Have either of you ever heard of the World Calendar?*

>

> *Nope, I haven't! What is it? How does it work?*

The World Calendar has the same number of days and leap years as our current calendar, but the days are renumbered as follows.

January and February each have 30 days, and March has 31.

April and May each have 30 days, and June has 31.

July and August each have 30 days, and September has 31.

October and November each have 30 days, and December has 31.

Each quarter, therefore, has precisely 13 weeks and 91 days. Therefore each financial quarter is of the same length and makes for better comparison. Also, each date will always be the same day of the week, regardless of the year.

Thus, January 1 will always be a Sunday.

This adds up to 364 days.

The World Calendar, therefore, puts a day between Saturday, December 31 and Sunday, January 1, called World Peace Day. It belongs to no week, and is a holiday kept throughout the world. It will always be New Year's Eve.

In leap years, similarly a day is added between Saturday, June 31 and Sunday, July 1. I forgot what it is called—maybe Leap Day or something like that—but it also belongs to no week.

²⁹⁹ And so it was done! We then took this one step further by numbering each book. Would we have done this if we knew what a pain it was going to be? Probably not – but it did make the books much nicer!

If you like the idea, I'd suggest that the new, post-Collapse world adopt the World Calendar and make it official on January 1, 2100. Thus, July 4, 2151 will be a Wednesday.³⁰⁰

David

DATE: FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2000 4:59 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *I was surprised how it turned out: it has a very interesting
> flavor to it – it's as if this book is a different color from the other
> ones we've done. AOM has red hues; TRA is more brown and gold; DIE has
> blues. JTP is darker, with blacks and deep shadows. I was surprised at
> some of the themes that cropped up on their own. Amazing!*

Great insight! I really like the theme of colors, and suggest that we design the dust jackets on that theme. It doesn't even have to be announced—just done.³⁰¹

David

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 01, 2000 11:06 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Excellent idea, Jon³⁰².....and I do like your further idea of not sending the readers on a wild goose chase by referring to the story that cannot yet be told.....perhaps the

³⁰⁰ We did like the idea, and so we adopted it!

³⁰¹ And so we did! We later took this further by color-coding the books: the fourth book was blue, the fifth book was red, and we had planned on the third book being black – and it would have if Sheridan hadn't messed up.

³⁰² I had suggested that we include references to other adventures the Starmen had experienced but could not be told. I saw this in Sherlock Holmes stories (Watson was always talking about the “other” cases he had locked up in the bank and might tell one day) and thought hey, that sounds like a good idea! We

BEST way to ensure that is to refer to the case as top secret for an indefinite period of time....those files are sensitive and involve "national security" and we cannot discuss.....(Mission to a Dark World,.....Xenobot InfiltrationCosmic Menace.....The Stones of Juno).

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2000 12:12 AM

Dear John and David,

Wow! A lot to think about!.....Glad the series is so well liked by Fred. I really liked the names especially Beowolf Denn! I once met a vet named Rockland Steele....honestly his name (Rock Steele)..he was a military intelligence courier in the Korean conflict....he had great stories to tell....he was a POW for a while...had a brave/faithful dog named "Combat" who hung around near the POW camp till his rescue by Commandos (but THAT'S another story, we should probably consider another book or series just for him, a very tough heroic type figure).

I love the idea of a domain name³⁰³that would be well worth the cost....however I also feel that we should be careful how "limited" we make the "teaser" info..... I think we need to provide SOME basic info (people DO tend to judge a book by its cover!)

About #24 and beyond.....WHY NOT!!!!!! Many other series have gone on way past their original series run.....I really like Jon's idea of the "Lost Books".³⁰⁴ Continuity can sometimes be a chore, but then if we ever get to that point, it will be a wonderful chore!

Onward and Spaceward!

Mike

started implementing this in *Doomsday Horizon*, which opens with a reference to an adventure on Mercury – an adventure that must have happened between books five and six...

³⁰³ This is when we were talking about getting the StarmanSeries.com address. Since everyone agreed we bought it, and we still use it. I'm glad we decided to do this! It makes the website look more professional, and it's a neat thing to have.

³⁰⁴ I had suggested the possibility of continuing to write Starman adventures after the end of the series, to go back and tell some "other" adventures that "couldn't be told at the time."

DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2000 1:57 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Putting up a Starman Domain is a great idea! Especially if it's so cheap! Wow! I had been thinking recently that we ought to revise our web site. There have been a lot of revisions, extensions, and rethinkings that we've done since the site went up. Let's give that some thought as soon as AOM is on the way into the hands of the public.

Actually, maybe we ought to do it right away, so that a new web site will be up when the book goes public and people begin to want to know more. Jon: can you get a site up within the next month or so? Or even get a start by next week? I want to put the URL into the book and if we have a new one, it should go in before the masters go off to Fred [Woodworth]. Even if all you have is a URL with the site under construction, that would be enough to go to press with.

I'm glad you guys like the name Beowulf Denn. I actually had second thoughts after I sent it out—thought it might be too contrived. I guess a cute name once in a while is okay. Montezuma now—would he be known as Monty? Zuma? Or how about just Zoom. Maybe he could be the captain of another Starman ship—then we'd have Zip and Zoom. (This is a joke—I am NOT serious!)

Lost Starman volumes? Absolutely!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 01, 2000 1:36 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> *a female daredevil scientist named Penny High Eagle!*

Awesome. I know a guy named Joe Taylor and just heard of a clergyman in the San Francisco area named David Foster. Haven't found a Mark Seaton yet.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 01, 2000 9:55 PM

I think the best way is to sign it as follows:³⁰⁵

Jon Cooper, "Michael D. Cooper"
Mike Dodd, "Michael D. Cooper"
etc.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2000 2:07 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Got a letter from Fred today with a fifth AOM book in it. In the cover letter, he wrote (in part): "The blue ink used on the endpapers was an old unopened can from about 1965. I have a lot of really old inks, & thought it'd be appropriate to use one on this."

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 06, 2000 8:34 PM

I'll bet you two guys can't wait to get the [Assault on Mars] books yourselves! It must seem strange to be almost the last to receive the product we've all worked so hard on!³⁰⁶

David

³⁰⁵ I had wondered how we ought to autograph the Starman books. This is what David suggested, and so this is what we ended up doing!

³⁰⁶ Mike and I were some of the last people to get a copy of the first edition of *Assault on Mars* after it first came out! That happens sometimes, and it happened in this case because David wanted to send me a lot of books and so he sent them via book-rate, which can be quite slow.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2000 10:54 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Remember when I told you that I had read an old book called *Boy Ranchers in the Desert*, published in 1924, which had a minor character in it called Zip Foster?

Well, I've just been reading an old Westy Martin tale called *Westy Martin in the Rockies*, published in 1925. In it, there is a tale told of a man who was away out in the wilderness looking for a teeny, teeny town: "population of thirty-two people in it—and two dogs. ... the name of it is Eagle City; I guess it's named after the Eagle Scout Award, hey?"

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 24, 2000 4:49 AM

Dear Team,

> *April*³⁰⁷ just now was talking to me about the *Star Ranger*, and pointed out
> that they never really use it very much – in fact they never really use it.

That's right, but that's not really a big drawback. I don't think we're emphasizing the main characters' spacecraft as much as the Dig Allen series did the *Space Explorers'* spacecraft. I kind of think of the *Star Ranger* as Rick Brant's piper cub.³⁰⁸

David

³⁰⁷ My sister.

³⁰⁸ I had been concerned that the *Star Ranger* was being forgotten about: here the Starmen had this cool spaceship and they hardly ever used it. This is partly why I gave it such a strong role in *The Lost Race of Mars*: it was one of the places where I could give the ship a really shining role.

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 24, 2000 11:24 AM

- > *Even the*
- > *revised listing on our site isn't right: I know that, somewhere down the*
- > *line, we're going to change the title for #22.*

You mentioned THE RISE OF MARS somewhere and that sounds good. And in my master list I've already reversed titles 5 and 6 and renamed #22 to reflect our recent changes.³⁰⁹

- > *I hate to think of all the*
- > *title listings that will be incorrect when that book comes out! We might not*
- > *be able to change it if we wait too long: the fans might revolt... ;-)*

A new series and already we've got phantom titles!

- > *Looking forward to TRA! I think that, if all goes well, we have a really*
- > *good chance to finish TRA and DIE this year.*

TRA for sure and a good bet for DIE.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2000 7:30 PM

I think the criticism we've gotten about Zip and Rip Foster should be addressed, but not in the course of the story. I think a note to the readers at the beginning of TRA would do, using something like the posting I put on the Message Board.³¹⁰

David

³⁰⁹ We were always revising the Starman series title listing while working on the first couple Starman books: we'd get new ideas and rearrange the titles to make the ideas fit. Eventually we realized that enough was enough, and so we just quit publishing future title listings and only listed the books that were currently available.

³¹⁰ At the time when we were considering nicknames for the Starmen, we thought that "Zip" would make a good one for David Foster. We didn't even think about how that nickname would sound when connected to the last name, and we did not realize that Zip Foster sounds really close to Rip Foster until someone posted about the connection on the messageboard. By this time, of course, it was too late to go back and change it: we just had to live with the similarity.

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2000 10:06 PM

Dear Jon and David,

About the name of David "Zip" Foster.....

Interestingly, prior to this current problem of criticism about the name, I was going to suggest that we reveal somewhere in the series that David Foster had an ancestor who wrote science fiction in the 20 and early 21st century (hinting at Alan Dean Foster...for no significant reason other than it would be neat!)

.....more seriously, I suggest we just go with the assumption that if ZIP Foster reminds some readers of RIP Foster, then GREAT!....after all we ARE trying to be retro here.....I bet that we have encountered ALL the people who even KNOW of RIP by now.....in other words, it will become a diminishing problem.....

If we can use ink from '65 then why not use a name similar to '52?

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2000 7:30 PM

Dear Jon and David,

If the ZIP and RIP issue ever becomes too serious a problem for us, we could kill off David Foster early (I know, its blasphemous) and have one or both Seaton brothers take over the central spot (this would also alleviate the "too many characters" problem.)

I am only half serious with this suggestion, but I figure I should mention it.

Mike

PS. Instead of killing him off, we could pull a Han Solo and stick him in some cor-bomite or a stasis chamber halfway to Alpha Centuari.

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2000 4:02 AM

> Our books do have lots of characters –³¹¹

Your comments, Jon, can make a fine post on the board in the section that Neil [Lindholm] and Mike have started. I'm trying to avoid jumping in to explain something whenever someone posts something, and only do so for information's sake (as in the case of the Zip/Rip situation and the name of Jogren); and when I do, I usually just sign it The Starman Team if it is something that we three have already agreed on. But on the other hand, your insights, Jon, would be helpful if they were shared. Fred [Woodworth] noted in his initial comments on the series that we had a lot of characters, but quickly added that in today's world most readers could handle that. And Jim Ogden called it "Volume One Syndrome." So several people have noted it but no one sees it as a big negative. But I like your insight even better, Jon—we are doing so because of the epic sweep of our vision. This is really where the uniqueness of our project comes out. You've said as much on the web site in the additions you wrote in the "How Do We Compare With Known Series" section.

*> But – as Mike pointed out – this has a drawback: you have got to
> be -good- to do this. We will need to be great at faking casts of thousands,
> and of making temporary characters seem extremely real.
> We'll also need to heavily rely on character reuse: once we have a
> character, we need to stick with it. We've established Commander Lewis, for
> example: let's stick with him. This might help some...*

Exactly. But I think we can do it. This is one reason I'm writing a glossary as we go along. And some secondary characters will definitely reappear. Those are the ones I'm fleshing out more, such as Steve Cliff, Stavri Thalassa, Uneven Stephen, the Presters, and now Montezuma Vly. They may not be in every book, but they can reappear from time to time as we need them. Once they are established, they won't have to be reinvented.

*> I had just never really realized this before. We have a unique challenge
> here! If we can pull it off, I think we'll have a truly fantastic result –
> and I think we can do it!*

³¹¹ One thing I am not very good at is reusing old characters. If an old character comes back, it's almost always David Baumann who brought him back: he's good at thinking of ways to reuse old characters.

Right! It's almost taking on a life of its own and going in a fantastic direction.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2000 4:06 AM

> *This is probably the right thing to do [not jumping into the message board all the time]; just let the fans loose and see what happens.*

Right. It's very gratifying seeing Mike and Neil discuss the series. This is probably the first time in series book history where the fans can discuss the series at a time when the authors are known and available and the series is still developing. It's a totally new phenomenon. Leo Edwards used to respond to letters from readers in his developing series, using a chapter he called "Chatterbox Chatter" or something like that. That's the closest to online discussions on a message board.

I hope all is well!

David

DATE: TUE, 08 AUG 2000 13:52:52 -0700

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *It still puzzles me how inactive the messageboard is: maybe it'll pick up once we have more titles floating around.*

Yes, very strange. I've had a number of people tell me that they plan to post something, but so far no one has.³¹²

David

³¹² At the time we didn't fully realize how many readers it took in order to have something like an active messageboard. We had maybe a hundred and fifty customers at this point, and that's not nearly enough to keep a messageboard active or to get a lot of feedback on our books.

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 2000 5:25 PM

- > *I realized something recently. The Dig Allen books*
- > *have dedications in them: some of them pretty*
- > *humorous. The Tom Swift, Rick Brant, etc. books do*
- > *not:*

Look at The Flying Stingaree and The Deadly Dutchman and Hardy Boys' Mystery at Devil's Paw. These are exceptions, but some of the mainline series books do have dedications. I think I recall one or two others.

David

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2000 10:14 PM

- > *I was thinking over the nandroids and #14 and I think I have a viable*
- > *plot idea. Let me know what you think!...*³¹³

I like it! The plot line is exciting. Very workable. These could be part of the First Races picture we're drawing up. But I do think we need to be careful not to overpopulate space. We have the Martians and Earthfolk native to our own System, but the Titanians are here also (as immigrants), the greegles (artificially intelligent evidence of the First Races), and the Xenobots. Another extra-solar race in our System doesn't stretch the plausibility TOO far, but I wouldn't want to go farther than that.³¹⁴

David

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2000 6:19 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I don't think the wars of the future will resemble the wars of the past: the*

³¹³ No, I have no idea what I was talking about.

³¹⁴ This is why we weren't always introducing new alien races! We've tried to keep it to a minimum.

- > *potential for destruction will be far greater, and I think robotics/machines*
- > *will play a large and perhaps scary role. I'm not sure I want to know what*
- > *Earth will come up with! I imagine that, whatever equipment we come up with*
- > *for #23,³¹⁵ our depiction will be very tame and peaceful compared to the*
- > *reality.*

Right. But our series is not really a science series, as we all know. We have played down the "inventions" and played up the adventure and morality.³¹⁶ I'm hoping that someone besides us sometime will figure that out and put up a posting. But what that means is that the weaponry for warfare will play a minor role in the storyline. We'll do fine and, as we have seen, what we need will be there when we need it for the story.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2000 9:53 PM

- > *we do have a lot of other plots and back-history: we have*
- > *enough material to make several other series...*

Great! Maybe another writer could develop those as a parallel series. There is a precedent. Percy Keese Fitzhugh, who did the Tom Slade series, also did the Pee Wee Harris, Westy Martin, etc. They were parallel series and the characters in one appeared in the others.³¹⁷

- > *I know this is moving way too fast (I haven't even*
- > *talked with him yet) but I have thought about what to do if we found another*
- > *qualified and willing writer, and that's the idea I had.*

³¹⁵ At the time, *The Last Command* (the last book in the Starman series) was slated to be #23. It was later moved to #10. Even as far back as the time when this e-mail was sent, however, I was already thinking about the book and trying to work out a good plot for it.

³¹⁶ The Starman books aren't really science fiction books as much as they are adventure stories that take place in the future. Sure, they've got some cool scientific gadgets in them, but that's not what they are all about: they're about adventures, and discovering the unknown.

³¹⁷ We did consider trying to find another writer and working with that other writer to either (a) write future Starman books while we were working on other titles, or (b) write another Starman series, perhaps taking place in a different era from the one we were working on. Nothing ever came of this idea, and I doubt we'll resurrect it: we're comfortable writing them all ourselves, and now have a hard time imagining anyone else writing them!

> *What do you think?*

Great!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 04, 2001 8:43 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Now here is an obscure error. In the TRA timeline, it shows the date August 31. But over a year ago we decided that, as of January 1, 2100, human civilization adopts the World Calendar. In that case, August only has 30 days!

David

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 05, 2001 1:17 AM

I think one of our neatest achievements in the Starman series is putting 1950's-style writing into the 2150's using technology of the 2000's—and have it all still make sense.³¹⁸

David

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 05, 2001 2:22 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I hope this is not adding frivolously to our abundant emails. I finished my letter to Fred [Woodworth] and was printing it up, when the printer added an extra page. It was the

³¹⁸ As I liked to put it, we're writing a new old-fashioned science-fiction adventure series, set with the most up-to-date science we can get our hands on. It's not an easy thing to do!

following, which is from about three years ago at least. Thought you'd like it, as it turned out to be rather prophetic.³¹⁹

David

What is your speculation on the reprinted Rocket Jumpers? What a tremendous thing to do! I admit that doing something like that has been a fantasy I have had now and then, if I had the resources—even to sending books anonymously to people who craved them. I am glad somebody is doing it!

Do I have the resources? Nah. I am an Episcopal priest with an average income, but I designate the honoraria I receive for weddings, funerals, etc., for series book collecting. Also the little income I get from very occasional free-lance writing. Therefore the amount of funds available to me for books can vary widely, depending on circumstances that are completely unpredictable. I expect a little income from some writing in mid-summer and will go after the X Bar X Boys then—and maybe the Ted Scott Flying Series.

Speaking of fantasy, here is another I've had recently. You and Jim Towe and apparently the unknown Rocket Jumper person have been involved in reprints of the hard-to-finds. How do you feel about some of the writers among us writing completely new books for old series, like Hardys, Ricks, etc.? Not a new idea, of course, as second authors have produced more Tarzans, Conans, etc. Doing this would no doubt involve some copyright problems if a new "Hardy Boys" book appeared, but there may be a way around it by making some changes, perhaps in the way August Derleth produced Solar Pons as a pastiche of Sherlock Holmes. These volumes could be printed up in limited editions like The Magic Talisman, and supported by donations made by enthusiasts.

Such books would certainly be different from the "canonical" books—maybe in some ways better and doubtless in others worse—but admittedly different. Yet they would be new and perhaps even good. Although they would be pseudo-Hardys, pseudo-Ricks, etc., not being crafted by formulas and not printed-for-profit, they could follow the best criteria of the Ken Holts and Ricks: no "coincidences," quality writing, no artificial crises, etc. If expectations from potential readers were realistic, we could get some great results and have a good time doing it. Kent Winslow, for example, writes well in the genre.

You would know better than I, but likely such books could be produced rather inexpensively, still be hard-bound, and even have a dust jacket. Perhaps in the beginning, for cost's

³¹⁹ This is pretty amazing: David was already thinking about writing series books before I met him!

sake, camera-ready copy could be produced on a word-processor, programmed to produce text looking like the original books—Caledonia font, proper quotation marks looking like sixes and nines, short paragraph tabs like the originals, etc. I would definitely order such books. I don't know what the initial investment would be required for a run of, say, 500 or so copies, but I would contribute funds toward an experimental first try. I even know a terrific artist, well known in the screenwriting field, who I am sure would do a cover and interiors for little or nothing—very high quality stuff, too!

On my recent one week vacation away, while lying back and doing nothing I toyed with this idea and actually puzzled out a new Hardy Boys—an extension of or sequel to my favorite in that series, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*.

Elroy Jefferson is at the point of death from a stroke or something, and asks the Boys to find his distant heir, from whom he had been alienated years before when his wife and son died. He wants to make amends and save Cabin Island from passing into strangers' hands. While the Boys are visiting him in hospital, Jefferson tells them about an important document that provides vital information they will need to find the missing heir; although it is several years old, it provides the name of the heir, his last known address, and other key information. The Boys leave the hospital and go directly to Jefferson's mansion, only to find that while they were at the hospital, it had been broken into and several antiques have been stolen, among them the one in which the document had been hidden. Visiting Jefferson's lawyer in the hope of finding a copy of the document in his files, the Boys learn that there were only two copies of the document made. The lawyer informs them further that over his vigorous objections, Jefferson chose deliberately not to leave a copy with him. Of the two copies, the one known to be at Jefferson's home but hidden in the antique is now missing, and the location of the other was never revealed. It is not known if the second copy has been stolen, is safe, or even still exists. Jefferson, now in a coma, can help no further. The Boys must determine whether the robbery was a coincidence or a deliberate attempt to foil the search for the heir. They do not know if the antique in which the document was secreted was stolen because it was an antique or whether the thief or thieves knew it might contain the document. The Boys must also find the heir without the help of the information provided in the document. Time, of course, for a number of reasons, is a factor. Their search will take them through Jefferson's mansion more than once, several antique shops in the local area, the county courthouse, and on an urgent autumn visit to Cabin Island. In their investigations, they are occasionally aware of intermittent spying on them by a person or persons unknown for reasons unknown. Though the book must be set in the fall of 1929 (to follow the chronology of Hardy Boys number 8, which took place at Christmastime 1928 if I remember correctly), the plot makes a concession to more cur-

rent interest in that Iola and Callie will play a little more active part than usual. Like it so far?³²⁰

David

DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2001 11:36 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Origami fan art.³²¹ Now there's something I never would have anticipated.

- > *will there*
- > *be a larger and/or different perspective picture of the Star Ranger*
- > *available anytime soon?*

Do you have the drawings from Introducing the Starman series? My father did a set of drawings for that, but that's all that exists beyond the logo. But I would think that these drawings are what Jim [Adams] is looking for. The drawings have never been publicized (I think we should put them into the next Inter*Stellar³²²), but there's no reason that you can't scan them and send them to Folding Jim.

Now wouldn't "Folding Jim" be a great nickname for a character?? –as long as we make it clear that he's not a poker player.

David

³²⁰ Nothing ever came of this, unfortunately, but it is an interesting idea.

³²¹ Jim Adams made some cool origami fan art for the Starman series! He's made origami models of a number of spacecraft that have appeared in the series, and has sent us both pictures and actual origami models. I've posted images of what he's done on the Starman website. Having origami fan art is very cool!

³²² We did. See I*S #2.

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2001 10:39 PM

Dear Jon and David,

About your sister's comment "you've got to stop making superplots"....she is right...for right now³²³but ultimately, I see no reason to stop "peeling the onion".....it is just a matter of pacing. After a few more books are behind us, then we can expand the envelope. Just remember these great words spoken by an unknown sage...

"An onion peeled too quickly will make you cry, an onion peeled slowly will make you the tastiest, most appreciated sci-fi team in the Universe!"³²⁴

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2001 9:14 PM

> *so far nobody has said a word about our book.*

Also curious. And we've sold fewer copies of TRA than AOM so far.³²⁵

David

³²³ This refers to a rather obscure passage in the short story *Flight of the Olympia*, which is the only Starman story I wrote. The passage is:

If the probe had sent that report, humankind would have been destroyed without warning. Earth would not have been given the opportunity to gather enough resources to give it a fighting chance against this ancient menace—and there would not have been anyone left to resist the growing cloud of darkness that lay in Earth's future.

What this passage is saying is that if the Xenobots devastate Earth, Earth will not have a chance to get enough resources to fight the growing cloud of darkness that is in its future. In other words, there is another, deeper, bigger menace out there *beyond* the Xenobots, lying in the distant future... This is the only time this is mentioned anywhere in the Starman series.

³²⁴ Mike was right, and so I laid the "cloud of darkness" idea aside for now. I might go back to it later, maybe...

³²⁵ At the time we didn't realize that in a series of books, each title sells fewer copies than the one before. This is the case for all series, not just ours!

DATE: SUNDAY, MARCH 04, 2001 3:25 PM

Also...I have been thinking about our slogans.....and I like the following:

THE FUTURE.....THE WAY IT USED TO BE.³²⁶

OR

THE FUTURETHE WAY IT USED TO BE AND BETTER

OR

THE FUTURE.....THE WAY IT SHOULD BE

or any of a multitude of witty variants!

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 05, 2001 5:02 PM

> *I have been thinking about our slogans.....and I like the*
> *following.....THE FUTURE.....THE WAY IT USED TO BE.*

This is a wonderful slogan—I like it VERY much!! By far my favorite of the three you suggest, Mike! Shall we go with it?³²⁷

David

³²⁶ Here we go: Mike Dodd comes up with the official slogan of the Starman series!

³²⁷ We certainly did! It was a lot better than our old slogan: *Making the 22nd century an age of hope and adventure.*

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 05, 2001 9:02 PM

I am glad you like the slogan.....THE FUTURETHE WAY IT USED TO BE.....it is also my favorite.

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 2001 8:54 PM

- > *Man, it sounds like you could use a break from writing! I don't wonder*
- > *you're tired out by the time you get to the Starman series. Sounds like*
- > *you're very busy indeed!*

I also write a weekly devotional for a national Christian magazine. These days I write a lot of items for the congregation as well. Not to mention sick calls, services, counseling, teaching classes, administration, etc. etc. Doesn't sound as if I'm as busy as a college student, though! And I do take time for rest.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2001 7:16 PM

- > *>I am organizing a Starman field trip to the mud cave...³²⁸ It'll be our first*
- > *"Starman Fan Convention"!*
- >
- > *I'm sure they'll have a great time. You*
- > *can point out the spot where the Starmen ate lunch, and where they heard the*
- > *pirate ship fly overhead, and the dangerous path Jogren stopped Joe from*
- > *going down...*

³²⁸ The scenes in *Assault on Mars* that take place in a mud cave are based on an actual series of mud caves in the Anza-Borrego desert, about a three-hour drive from where David Baumann lives. In fact, the illustration of the caves in the book was based on an actual photograph taken of the entrance to the caves. David took me to see them when I was out there one year, and I really enjoyed the trip! It is a very alien place, and it's not hard to imagine that you're on Mars.

Right. I can take some photos, too, and put them into the I*S. I wish I could scan and send you guys some photos. Then everyone can see what "Kathy" looks like and you two can see what some of the others you've heard about look like too.

David

DATE: MON, 23 APR 2001 07:35:58 -0700

Right. Another strength in our books is having some bad guys with good traits and some good guys with bad traits. They're more fully human and true-to-life.

Rick Brant had the strength of exotic locales; Ken Holt had the cerebral, Gothic tone; and we have the background of complex, realistic human relationships. I THINK it's working out that way, and I think it's good! It's a worthy series. Frankly, I think we are contributing a series that can stand up among the best.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2001 3:33 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

The mud cave field trip took place today. Nine people, including myself, went. I had hoped to take a camcorder and then send you guys tapes of the event, but unfortunately my son Nick—the only one in our family who has a camcorder—was sick and I couldn't ask him how to work it.

It was a twelve-hour round trip, long and hard, but we had lots of fun. The Starman fans loved it. It was a year to the day from the time I took Jon and his father and brother there, and used the same scenario—pulled up just short of the cave and read the scene out of Assault On Mars, then came in sight of the cave opening. Wow!

The day wasn't too hot—really not bad at all, and not crowded. We overlapped briefly with one group of Japanese students who were very fun to be with. Some photographs were taken, but I doubt they will come out. Inexperienced kids took them with throw-away cameras.

I am VERY tired and have a VERY full day tomorrow. Tomorrow night at this time I will be in the mountains for three days. When I return, I hope to have 2 or 3 more chapters done.

Back in touch with you midweek.

Blessings!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2001 7:21 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I have noticed something, though, about our dustjacket flaps: they are*
- > *definitely not aimed at children. ...I think, David, that clearly the market*
- > *we are trying to reach is not*
- > *children at all but adults – series book lovers, in short. If we are really*
- > *trying to market these books to children, we are doing all sorts of things*
- > *wrong...*

I don't think that we ever **were** trying to market the books to children—at least not as our primary audience. I've never written the books that way. Remember the paragraph in the Afterword in AOM: "Our target audience for this budding series is people like us, who enjoy series books and might be open to an addition to the genre. We also hope that today's children will enjoy reading the stories and will benefit from them."

We have achieved that goal. Series book fans first, and today's children second.³²⁹

³²⁹ This is a very good point. The Starman books were not written for young adults or juveniles: they were written for the middle-aged folks out there who enjoyed series books as a kid and wanted to find more series books to read. To put it differently, these books are children's books written for *adults*, not for

The vocabulary I use is deliberately aimed at adult fans of series books, with a hope that some children might be challenged by big words. ...

Series book lovers are the ones we are writing for and the people to whom we have done most of our advertising, with reasonable success. They are our best customers, too, so we **are** doing that right! There are children who love the books, but they are special—I hope that there will be more of them. If we try to market the books for children first, we will not satisfy our current customers and will have to redo our entire method of writing, advertising, and selling.

In order to have any shot at success, we had to market the books in the beginning to a ready audience—series book fans. Others are now buying into the project—family, friends, church members, others. That is gradually widening the circle of our customers, and is gradually coming to include some special children too. As it is, we're getting books out and we're covering our costs—hardback books with dust jackets, which haven't been seen in the series book world for forty years. I think we've succeeded better than we hoped when all we had was a dream.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2001 8:36 PM

- > *What we are doing is strange, though! You don't see very many children's*
- > *books targeted toward adults. I would be hard-pressed to call the Starman*
- > *series an 'adult series', even if it is targeted primarily toward adults:*
- > *everything about the book cries out 'children's fiction'. Yet, as you said,*
- > *it's definitely targeted toward adults. We may be the first ones to ever do*
- > *this sort of thing!*
- > *Well, maybe not the first ones: THE MAGIC TALISMAN probably won that*
- > *honor. This could be the first children's series, though, targeted toward*
- > *adult readers!*

children. This puts us in a unique category: the only other children's book that wasn't written for children that I can think of is the last Rick Brant book, *The Magic Talisman*. So, dear readers, if you've wondered why we use the vocabulary we use or why we've included some scenes, now you know! *The Starman series was not written with children in mind.*

I never thought of it that way, but you're right.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 02, 2001 10:27 PM

You know, if we picked one book out of the series to put on the net for free download, we might get a whole lot of readers interested that way. Maybe we could start with one of the shorts.³³⁰

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 04, 2001 10:53 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *I have thought and thought and thought,*
> *and it just is NOT possible to cram the "Martian mummies on the moon" plot*
> *into the "Starmen abducted to the 'future" plot."*³³¹

Right.

> *I think I have a solution. Let's make a new book that*
> *comes between books 5 and books 6. The book wouldn't be part of the Starman*
> *series, but instead would be part of another series – the same series that*

³³⁰ I had completely forgotten that Mike had suggested this! It was a good idea, and we ended up using it: roughly two years later we released the second Starman book, *The Runaway Asteroid*, as a free e-text. It's been a good thing!

³³¹ Someone (I seem to have lost that e-mail so I don't remember who) asked for the story about Martian mummies to be inserted into the sixth Starman book – the one that came after *The Lost Race of Mars*. By this point I had already started working out *Doomsday Horizon* (the book I referred to as the story where the Starmen are abducted into the future) and I didn't see how we could possibly get mummies into that story.

- > *The Stones of Juno*³³² is a part of. I'd suggest calling it *The Starman Files*,
- > and making book #1 "*The Doomsday Problem*" or something along those lines.

It's a possibility, but I'd rather see how things settle in as we produce DIE and LROM.³³³ We certainly don't have to make a final decision now; we only have to look at our options. Personally, I don't think we have to feel constrained to follow our original, published list of 23 titles.³³⁴ The only problem there is that we have already published them, but I also think we can override them as the series develops. I think most of them can be retained, and the overall major plot line will still work fine, but we may want the freedom to move things around, eliminate and add titles, etc.

I'm slightly uncomfortable with parallel series, forgotten tales, etc. That seems to me to be getting too complicated and from the writer's point of view feels a little daunting. The short stories are fine because they are set decades before the actual series.³³⁵

I'm not saying I'm against *The Starman Files*—just suggesting that we see how things develop. It's really only a small point and I could go with whatever you two prefer.

- > *What we could do is e-mail our readers, and tell them that we did our*
- > *best before writing book #1 to lay out all the stories it would take to*
- > *complete our superplot. However, once we got to writing things took a*
- > *slightly different direction, and a need has arisen for other stories that*
- > *just aren't represented in the title listing. Hence, every now and then*
- > *we'll write a book that takes place between two Starman adventures, to*
- > *explain something that isn't covered elsewhere. The 23 Starman books can*
- > *still be read in order without these Starman Files books, but some things*
- > *won't make sense. The books would vary in length: some would be shorter, and*
- > *some (like the Stones book) would be fairly long.*

³³² Another in-between Starman adventure story I've plotted. I have its summary in the files; maybe it will be told one day...

³³³ Work on *Descent Into Europa* had not even started yet; that book would be finished in December of that year. *The Lost Race of Mars* was still pretty far in the future for us – and yet I was already concerned about what to do with book six!

³³⁴ At this point we still wanted to closely follow the original list of 23 titles we had published, and *Doomsday Horizon* was causing some problems since it was clearly not a part of those original 23 titles and represented a radical departure from where the series had been going. As you can see, we gradually began to let go of that 23-title listing and take the series in a different direction.

³³⁵ At this point we had not thought of *Return to Europa* – a short story that involves the Starmen and takes place right after *The Lost Race of Mars*. When this e-mail was written, the purpose of short stories was to give a glimpse at events that happened outside the course and time period of the series.

I guess what I'm saying is that we just take these new books and count them as part of the series—a new number 7 or something. Then we would rewrite the list of titles that appears on page 2 of the books so that it reads something like.³³⁶

ASSAULT ON MARS
THE RUNAWAY ASTEROID
JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET
DESCENT INTO EUROPA
THE LOST RACE OF MARS
OPERATION LUNA³³⁷

(the following volumes and others in preparation)

THE STONES OF JUNO
THE MARTIAN MUMMIES
etc.

- > *This would give us a mechanism to use some of our other story ideas! If*
- > *Mike gets a red-hot story idea that we really want to use, we can just put*
- > *it in a Starman Files book and not worry about putting it in a canon in*
- > *which it really doesn't fit.*

I'm suggesting that these new stories BE part of the canon and that we not feel restricted to the list of titles we came up with a couple of years ago before we had published books and a fan base.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 04, 2001 1:18 PM

As far as the titles, etc. for the Starman saga, how about it we do this: Michael D. Cooper writes an introduction to DIE (which we hope will get it to the widest possible customer base) that says something like this.³³⁸

³³⁶ As you can see, at this point we were still debating what to do. It wasn't until about a year later that we decided to write five more books, finish off the series with book ten, and then possibly go back and write other books to "fill in the gaps."

³³⁷ That poor phantom title! I even had a plot for it. It was originally going to be book five, then it got bumped to book six, and then *Doomsday Horizon* took its place and *Operation Luna* fell from the series. A pity!

The authors are learning by experience that the Starman saga is growing in its scope. Like other authors, we are finding that our characters and story lines have taken on a life of their own. Now that we are getting the stories into print, we are finding that many details and ramifications of the stories are moving us in directions we hadn't anticipated. We planned 23 books to tell one long story, but that plan was developed two years ago. Since that time many branches have come out of the story line, and we don't want to be constrained by the previously published list of titles. For example, no one has mentioned it yet, but some may have noticed that between AOM and TRA we quietly reversed the order of two books, since our story line moved in a new direction. In the first listing, OL preceded LROM. We have also devised plotlines for several other stories which are becoming increasingly central to the developing story line. The classic series books never published their entire list of titles years ahead of the appearance of their books—of course, none of them ever set out to tell one long story, either. The authors of the Starman series are instituting a new policy with this book, then, of listing on page 2 only the titles through the newly-published book—the practice of all our predecessors. The grand sweep of our overall saga has not changed, and we expect to retain this broad story line and the previously published list of titles, but we will add more titles as the saga develops. We want to feel also to drop some titles, rename them, or put them in a different order. In the future, then, you may find not only the books whose titles you've already seen, but also such new titles as THE STONES OF JUNO, etc. At the end of each book, we'll give the readers a clue of what is coming next. Our intention is to expand our opportunities to write, and to let the Starman saga develop in an expanding vision without being restricted to a list of titles we wrote two or three years earlier.

What do you think?

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 04, 2001 9:39 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Whew!!! You guys are really coming up with a lot of things to consider....

³³⁸ That's what we did! A note very similar to this did appear as a forward in *Descent Into Europa*.

About the "extra books"I see both sides of the issue.....I definitely see a potential problem with deviating from a published list of titles. Some readers out there might have a pretty concrete plan to collect 23 books and have that be a complete "series" (I see no problem with a "forgotten stories" Afterseries). I also see how the overplot has taken on a life of it's own, and I like Jon's storyline. It is a dilemma. Is there someone in the business who we could ask?

The idea of an extra book inserted probably is best.

I am very excited about the re-emerging Ancient Martian culture.....what a great playground for ideas.

David's proposed I*S mention of our change in title sequence sounds like a good plan.

Jon's suggestion that the series be divided into three parts sounds good.

About going beyond the 23 books...I am for it....and if David ever needs a break from the writing, I bet Jon and I could come close to David's excellence....it just might take longer!!!!!!

Also, I see the wisdom in which both of you have argued not to make available for free download either a whole book or an I*S short story. (I agree that it would potentially upset those who paid.) How about a chapter?

People tend to be "visual" when making purchase choices (personally, I have bought sci-fi books and LPs based on the cover art .I think a lot of people do this.) Perhaps we could further the series by including more visuals on the website. If you guys like this idea, I will do some more sketches and submit them for approval.

Mike

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 05, 2001 5:23 PM

- > I also see how the overplot has taken on a*
- > life of it's own, and I like Jon's storyline. It is a dilemma. Is there*
- > someone in the business who we could ask?*

I kinda feel that we can just announce what we're doing through the introduction in DIE (not an I*S), and people will understand and support it. What we're really doing is opening up the possibility of additional titles and adding some real flexibility. I don't think that asking someone in the business would help much, because what we're doing is highly unusual if not unique, and besides experts give varying opinions anyway. We

ought to just decide and do it. Many series have phantom titles anyway, so that is not a new deal—it shows that titles were announced and then changed later.

- > *I do have one question for the team: are we being too ambitious? Right*
- > *now we have 23 books planned, and it looks like that could easily balloon to*
- > *25 or more. This represents at least 10 or 12 years of nonstop writing, and*
- > *that is a fairly long time.*

Actually, I've thought about this too, and have a suggestion. If for any reason we get to the point where we can't complete the series, then we put out one more book which is a summary of all the rest of the books—that is, close the series off with one last book that tells the rest of the story in one volume.³³⁹ It could be done fairly easily. That way no one is left hanging. It could be a real collector's volume, with extra items in it from the Starman Appendix, etc.

The time commitment is an issue, however.³⁴⁰ I've put off a number of writing projects to do the Starman series, and at some point might want to get back to them. That could mean a delay in the Starman saga of a few months, which probably won't be too much of a problem. I find I get jaded after a while if I really pound away on the keyboard getting a story out. A break helps the inspiration. It's almost impossible to conceive of any of us getting bored or tired out with the Starman series. ... Maybe after ten volumes we'll want to take a break for a while. Or maybe our customer base will evaporate or costs will go up to the point that people won't want to buy the books. Any number of things can happen. Overall, what we've done so far is just plan for the completion of the series and make major decisions when we have to and not before. We're always going on faith.

- > *I do actually have a suggestion about this: what would you think if we*
- > *wrote the series in "parts"?*

This works very well, too. I've considered the first five books to be a single set, anyway. I haven't looked too far beyond that, but I've really seen the first four books pointing heavily toward a climactic volume in book 5, with a new beginning to follow.

David

³³⁹ This is still our backup plan to this very day, and if for some reason we can't complete the series this is what we will do.

³⁴⁰ As time went by it became more of an issue, and this is one of the things that led us to decide to write five more books and end the series with book ten.

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 05, 2001 5:23 PM

- > > *Also, I see the wisdom in which both of you have argued not to make*
- > > *available for free download either a whole book or an I*S short story. (I*
- > > *agree that it would potentially upset those who paid) How about a chapter?*
- >
- > *Well, right now we've currently got both a chapter of book #1 and a*
- > *chapter of book #2 posted online. If people want a free sample of our*
- > *writing, they've got one right at their fingertips!*

I think what the idea was at first was some new text that doesn't exist anywhere else, right? Like a new short story or vignette or something that hasn't been in any I*S and is not part of an existing novel, or even anticipated novel, right? That could be done.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 06, 2001 10:50 AM

- > *I'd be glad to write the text that we'll make available as an e-text: I think*
- > *I could do that.*

That would be fine with me, but keep in mind that it is supposed to be representative text of the series, and your writing style is different from mine.³⁴¹ Maybe you could draft something and I could edit it, like the first short story. Or, since this is another of those items for which there is no hurry, I'm sure I could get to it in a month or so when I take my first week's vacation.

David

³⁴¹ This is very true: compare *Flight of the Olympia* (which I wrote) with *The City of Dust* (which David wrote).

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 06, 2001 1:08 PM

- > *I still haven't come up with a plot,*³⁴²
- > *although I've been mulling over the idea of a prequel. It might be*
- > *interesting to have a mini-prequel to the series: something that takes place*
- > *right before AOM starts, that would make people want to read AOM and TRA and*
- > *find out what happened. Our current readers would enjoy it, and our*
- > *potential readers could be interested enough to read the series!*

Great idea! I'll give it some thought too.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 16, 2001 9:04 AM

Dear Jon and David,

This is my e-mail #2.³⁴³

...

I almost forgot to tell you guys that the local newspaper ran a series of AP articles on space related stuff recently, and they covered the NEMESIS theory. In the real version it is speculated that this "brown dwarf" companion star is in an elliptical orbit about our sun and that when it comes close it disrupts things in the Oort cloud...and slightly alters the orbits of the outer planets....along with sending in a wave of comets. Its period is very similar to that of mass extinctions on the Earth. A friend of mine has saved the articles and I will soon have them for reference material. One question that does come to mind.....is it possible for a planet to co-orbit two stars even if the two stars are in a highly elliptical orbit themselves?

About the Starman movie idea.....Jon, I agree.....we are rapidly approaching a level of "home PC" based computer animation that just might allow such a thing.³⁴⁴

³⁴² I was trying to come up with a plot for this new story we were going to release online to get folks interested in the series. This story never happened, and I wonder if part of the reason was because we couldn't come up with a really interesting idea for it.

³⁴³ At this point we were numbering our e-mails so we could see if any were getting lost.

³⁴⁴ At the time I was wondering if maybe somehow we could produce our own Starman movie – or at the very least, some sort of Starman animation mini-film or flyby or something. I had been doing a lot of 3d modeling and thought that something like that would be fun. It's still on my mind, but I'm pretty busy and definitely don't have the time to work on something like that at the moment.

I was thinking about nicknames for sci-fi interest groups and came up with the rather obvious "STAR-FANS" for our series (you know, similar to Trekkies)

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 9:33 PM

- > This evening was spent landsailing across the beach (the wind was*
- > uncharacteristically perfect for this time of year) We had nothing but*
- > awesome ride after awesome ride! Just had to dodge some joggers and people*
- > walking their dogs. Speeds in the 35 to 40 mph range.*

Sounds terrific. Maybe when I'm out there in October we can go landsailing. Or maybe we can even offer it to the fans during Mark Johnson's conference in October 2002!

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2001 11:01 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Got back a while ago from the visit to the Griffith Park Observatory and Planetarium. We saw the "Oceans of Mars" show. The projector is really something, even if it does go back to 1964. The operator said, "This is not a computer, it is a projector. We had no Y2K problems here." It is able to reproduce the night sky precisely for thousands of years past and future, and uses 1000 watt bulbs.

The show was pretty good, but the title would have been better as, "The Astronomical Science Behind the Starman Series." It talked about how oceans were formed on Earth, then water ice on the Moon, the possibility of water on Mars, and then water on the four great moons of Jupiter. (Io has none, but the other three are strong possibilities.) There was even an extended computer idealization of sending a probe into the ocean underneath the ice of Europa, with a couple of videotapes from NASA. Just about everything that was said in the hour-long program I already knew from our research, and it was

completely consistent with our plans for the books. There was also a lot of astronomical art by a guy named Bonestellar who lived 1898-1996, and was the world's foremost planetary artist. His stuff was great! He had wonderful scenes of Saturn seen from Titan, etc.

There were also a lot of great displays, including huge globes of the Moon, Mars, an enormous one of Earth, and the various major Jovian moons. The moon globes were about the size of croquet balls. There was also a fine model of Phobos, about a foot long. GREAT displays. The huge globes (4-6 feet in diameter) were what I had in mind when I wrote about them in Richard Starlight's office.

David

DATE: MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2001 5:16 PM

Good news. I have three photographic models for the Starmen. I haven't taken the photos yet, but I've selected the men. They are all college students at my church...

I haven't been able to come up with anyone for Robert Nolan or Richard Starlight yet. I've got images in my mind but no real persons who come close yet.³⁴⁵

David

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2001 8:28 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I wrote a couple of hours ago that my older son's boss will make a good model for Steve Cliff. Then I hastened out the door to go pick up my younger son (Nick, the artist of TRA fame) at his work. As soon as I got there, Richard Starlight walked by. That's

³⁴⁵ To help with consistency in describing the characters, David set out to find people to use as photographic models for many of our characters. These photographs are posted on the Starman website. Photographs of the three Starmen eventually led to the painting Bill Baumann made for Starman #7, *The Starlight Manuever*. Bill also painted the covers to *Assault On Mars* and *The Lost Race of Mars*.

right, his boss is an ideal Richard Starlight. I went right up to him, explained the project, and asked his permission to take a few snapshots. He got a big smile and asked what kind of character he was. When I said he ran the entire company that's restoring world peace and prosperity and is everyone's father-figure, he said Okay!

I also have an ideal figure for Robert Nolan!! The people are coming out of the wood-work now!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 2001 12:51 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *We don't have to have people in this Starman book: in fact, it*
- > *might be interesting if LROM had the first people artwork in it! That could*
- > *be another reason to look forward to LROM.*

Good idea! I've already got the photos of Richard Starlight and Steve Cliff (boy, are they RIGHT ON TARGET!!) and I expect to get Kathy Foster and at least one of the Starmen (Mark Seaton) today. I'm taking close-ups of heads with profiles and "gazing into the distance" shots, and then one full-body straight on. Eventually I can copy the photos of each character on one sheet per character and distribute to ourselves, the artists, etc.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2001 10:45 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

No time now to respond to all of our recent emails, but this one needs a quick line or two.

The sketches look good. Of course, we want Kevin to change the window in the UB into a B-52 window.

Also, almost eerily, his portrait of David Foster is pretty accurate to the actual appearance of the fellow I've photographed for the role. This Sunday I hope to complete the picture-taking; then I can get the film developed and send color photocopies to you two. I will send a set to Kevin, too, if you give me a mailing address, Jon. He did a pretty good job with the face! I'm impressed.

This evening I am meeting with David Foster (aka Daniel Peckham), and his bride, since they are getting married on October 7. (His bride, Katie Grider, was the model I used for Kristina Bethany's face with sparkling eyes in JTP.) Dan's father is my model for Robert Nolan. He has been a lifelong missionary in Indonesia, where Dan was raised. Dan is bringing photographs of his father I can use. I've only met him once or twice—at college graduation last May—so I don't have access to him to get personal photographs. So Dan is providing them. That will complete my set of individual photos of major characters.

I have a GREAT model for Lurton Zimbardo, but I don't know if we need one at this point. I'll take the photos if you think we do. Might be nice to have. He is a Romanian Orthodox priest who uses my church on Sunday afternoons for a small congregation. He was persecuted for his faith in Romania—beaten by the police for refusing to divulge secrets he heard in confessions—and after a while fled the country. Worked in the mine two miles underground to finance his education. A very impressive fellow. He preached for us earlier this year, using a translator.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2001 9:19 PM

> > *I finally got the photographs of the model I propose for Robert*
> > *Nolan. His son (who is the model for Zip Foster), provided them for*
> > *me last night. This Sunday I should complete the picture-taking with*
> > *a group shot or two of the three Starmen, then I can*
> > *develop the roll and send you the results for your reactions.*

>

> *That's great! I am looking forward to seeing them. Taking pictures was a*

> *great idea, David: I think it will do a lot to get consistent artwork.*

The Robert Nolan pictures had to be scanned, enhanced, and enlarged, but somebody (Marge Avery, our model for Marjie Prester) has already done it. The sheet of photos looks fine!! The original photos were taken in Indonesia where "Robert Nolan" is a missionary. He's in our area now, but does not attend my church, so I won't see him until his son's wedding October 7. So his son (David Foster) lent me the photos.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2001 8:21 PM

I have now completed almost all the photographs of our characters. I finished a roll by getting two shots this morning of all three Starmen together, and opened a second roll with a set of shots of Father Marian Petrescu, aka Lurton Zimbaro. I'd like to get shots of Father Richard and Marge Avery, who are Richard and Marjie Prester, then I think I'll be done. April Cooper, of course, will be April Teagarden if we want a drawing of her at any time—if April is willing to be the model.

I'll get the film developed this week and get the sheets off to you.

...

I've given some thought to your response to Neil Lindholm when he said that he couldn't get into JTP and that the failure of the active shielding was just tacked on. You noted that the scene was necessary to bring about the collapse of Robert Nolan, which would be a major theme in DIE. The failure of the active shielding was also necessary for other parts of the plot: the Starmen had to land on Titan, thereby meeting Kristina which led to their being shown the base the Benefactors had made when they delivered the Titanians to their new home. From that they learned the history of the Titanians, and saw the 3-moon logo again. Seeing the 3-moon logo changed their perception about many things, and prepared their way for the landing on Nyx and exploration of the abandoned base there, and eventually set the stage for the entire story of DIE. If the failure of the active shielding hadn't happened, none of these other things would have taken place either. They would have seen the 3-moon logo on Nyx, but its significance would have escaped them. They needed to know that the Benefactors were the people who brought the Titanians to our Solar System and that they were the people behind the 3-moon

logo. For these reasons the failure of the active shielding was absolutely essential to the plot, both for JTP as well as DIE and eventually LROM.

David

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 01, 2001 10:37 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I will try to catch up in this e-mail.....apologies if it comes off sporadic and utilitarian.

Jon, I mailed a check for the two books I requested and received, THANKS, and sorry for the delay.

David, I received the photos of the character models. Here's my observations:

The STARMEN themselves are quite good, especially with a little "idealization"...(think DIG on the cover of THE FORGOTTEN STAR)

STEVE CLIFF is very different from the way I pictured him.....I was thinking along the lines of a HAN SOLO type...but your liner notes state he is heavy...so be it! I can adapt to this.....I might actually grow fond of the "fat" Steve Cliff!

RICHARD STARLIGHT is good...I would like to see same model without glasses if possible. (Actually Dan Bedard looks like a Steve Cliff adventurer!)

LURTON ZIMBARDO is perfect.....Fr. Petrescu looks like the only other Zimbardo I ever saw...Dr.Philip Zimbardo who used to host a psychology documentary series on TV.

Actually, Argo Silvestri might also make a great Zimbardo³⁴⁶.....of all the photos...his visage appears the most conducive to drawing.

Good work, David!

Thanks for including the BOY RANCHERS photocopies, I had not forgotten the ZIP FOSTER reference therein.

Mike

³⁴⁶ Argo Silvestri became the model for Yancy Dufaure in DIE.

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2001 4:20 PM

Zip Foster (Dan Peckham) got married yesterday in a magnificent ceremony. His dad Lloyd (Robert Nolan) was terrific. It was a real Starman occasion for those who knew of the series. Mark Seaton was a groomsman, Joe Taylor read a lesson from the Bible.

More later!!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 06, 2001 7:16 PM

> *Mom went to the South Charleston Public Library the other day, and she saw
> that the library was handing out a document of suggested reading for 5th and
> 6th graders. I've scanned that document and have attached it. Look who is
> right there near the top of the list!*

Hooray for us! Or in the language of the older series books, "hurrah!" Very gratifying!!³⁴⁷

David

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2001 9:32 PM

> *I spent a number of hours today browsing through our
> old e-mails. Do you realize that I have more than 2000
> Starman e-mails saved from you guys? There is a whole
> wealth of information in them and they are so much fun
> to read through. In fact, I've actually started
> compiling a document I call the "Starlight
> Correspondance." I don't know if we will release it to
> the general public or not, but it would be a neat*

³⁴⁷ I was quite surprised to see that the Starman books had made the recommended reading list for a public library!

> *thing to have.*³⁴⁸

Great idea! (It's spelled "correspondence," however.) I'd like to have a copy of it sometime. Unfortunately I don't have any email texts earlier than September 17 when my computer went down and lost every email file.

David

DATE: MON, 28 JAN 2002 20:01:35 -0800

> *I think you're doing an outstanding job! Your work
> never ceases to amaze me. The level of work you put
> into the Starman project is really enough to fill a
> full-time job – there are so many details to handle!*

Well, that's what I think about you, Jon!

> *That's one reason why I'd like to release that
> Correspondence book – our readers might be shocked if
> they saw all the things we had to go through to write
> and print a book. It's quite an education!*

Maybe at some point a summary could be posted on the message board and/or web site.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2002 4:32 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Remember the premise of our Starman series. Terrorist behavior such as we have seen in recent months is more than just crazy, in my opinion—it is evil.³⁴⁹ I suspect that cer-

³⁴⁸ At this point I had started gathering information for the Starman Archives. I was a long way away from releasing it, but I was thinking about it and had started work on it.

tain leaders of these cells are influenced by supernatural evil and gullible human beings are deceived into following. Our entire premise for Lurton Zimbardo is that he was demon possessed. In drawing his character, I researched and followed the classic symptoms very closely in describing his condition and progression into evil throughout the 3 books. His "journey" into evil and the followers he controlled are very, eerily similar to that of Osama BL. If this premise is correct, then an all-out war is the desired goal of such evil possessed persons. In TRA, when the followers discerned LZ's true bent toward evil, they were shaken—some to repentance (Gene), most to fear and looking out for "number one" (the smugglers and other pirates), and a few to further fanatical obedience (the last five). When Zimbardo's final hinges came unglued, then the last five turned back. It was all very carefully drawn up. I think that the way we have lined out the Starman history is extremely plausible and that reality is following course. That doesn't mean that there will be a nuclear terrorist incident, but there may be. This aspect of the Starman series—the moral and spiritual—may prove to be at least as accurate as the scientific hypotheses we're working on.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 01, 2002 1:04 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Check this out. Found it tonight in a reading from an obscure book called A Dish of Orts, by George MacDonald:

In the moral world...a man may clothe in new forms, and for this employ his imagination freely, but he must invent nothing. He may not, for any purpose, turn its laws upside down. He must not meddle with the relations of live souls. The laws of the spirit of man must hold, alike in this world and in any world he may invent.... In physical things, a man may invent; in moral things he must obey—and take their laws with him into his invented world as well.

³⁴⁹ I have no idea what gave rise to this e-mail (I don't remember a terrorist attack in late February of 2002), but it's interesting so I placed it here.

I think we have been scrupulously following this teaching without deliberately spelling it out.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 01, 2002 2:10 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Jon reminded us that we had talked about writing a hundred-page Starman story and posting it as an etext to generate interest. I had an idea. Suppose that instead of creating an entirely new story, we post an abridged version of AOM? Say, roughly half the length. This has several advantages:

- It is a LOT easier than writing an entirely new story.
- It doesn't really add to the canon.
- Current owners of the full AOM (or any other Starman book) won't feel that there's something that they don't "have" for their collection.
- It may generate interest in people who will want the full book and will buy it, and therefore perhaps the rest of the series.
- If (bless us!) we RUN OUT of AOMs at some point, people can still read the abridged version and then purchase our oversupply of TRA and the following books while they last.
- It could be achieved relatively quickly.

Of course our top priority is LROM. Already I am putting odd chunks of time into I*S#3 so that that will be ready before too long, but I really want to bore ahead on Starman #5. What do you think about passing AOM on to someone else who could edit it down to half size? I know one or two people I would trust to do so, with us having final approval, of course.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, MARCH 03, 2002 6:03 PM

Dear Jon,

I think the seven-chapter teaser and ad are much preferable to an abridged version of AOM. Let's forget the idea of abridgement and go with what you've done. They're excellent.

Where have my AOMs gone? Well, I gave you a suitcase full but only kept about 10 or 12 for myself. I've sold about half of those and we gave two away: Dorothy Markinko³⁵⁰ and Jeff Wilson (our model for Steve Cliff). I have two in my office at church for instant sales, and I've got two left here at home. So I've really got four unsold, but don't want to be in a position where I need to fill an order and don't have any available.

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 04, 2002 9:22 AM

- > *I take it that (regardless of what we decided to do about the prices) we're*
- > *going to release the long teasers for the first three and then wait to*
- > *release the fourth until after we've (a) got it from the printer, (b)*
- > *distributed it and (c) gave the last stragglers a little time to place their*
- > *order? That would keep the summary from ruining our cool surprises (like the*
- > *Rick Brant mention).*
- > *Just wanted to make sure I knew what we were doing!*

³⁵⁰ The literary agent for Sam Epstein, author of the Ken Holts. Jim Towey had kindly provided an introduction for us to Dorothy, who agreed to receive a set of Starman books and consider serving as our agent. We never received even an acknowledgement from her. After a half dozen similar experiences with professionals in the publishing field, we agreed with Hal Goodwin, author of the Rick Brants, who had said in 1984 that the publishing industry was the “most disorganized business” in the U.S. We had given away too many copies of our books, including hand-bound *Assault On Mars*, to “reviewers” and potential “agents” without getting any response of any kind, and after being burned too many times we decided to stop doing it. It is partially for this reason that *The Lost Race of Mars* contains a summary of the first four books—if we want to send a sample copy of our writing to someone, we send only a copy of LROM. We have plenty of those to spare!

Affirmative!

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 04, 2002 9:31 AM

Again, excellent work and good reasoning. I agree that the etext of DIE should wait until the book has been in our current customers' hands a while—may be post eDIE in early April. At the end of the etext for the previous 3 books, indicated that eDIE will be posted as of such-and-such a date.

David

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 04, 2002 9:04 PM

Dear Jon and David,

How about an article that mentions that The Starman series started out only as an homage to classic adventure series books, but ended up being an awesome space saga, quite a bit more than expected? Or perhaps a little blurb on what it is like working on a series via internet. When is the deadline for this?

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 06, 2002 1:55 AM

- > *I agree with all of this! I haven't done the DJs-are-optional bit yet*
- > *though. How should we do this? I'm thinking that we should offer a discount*
- > *for not using a dustjacket instead of offering the dustjacket at an*
- > *additional charge. How much should we give them off?*

I don't know the cost yet for running our dj's, but normal price for one is about 1.79.³⁵¹ They said they'd give me a discount for bulk, and I'm assuming it'll be about 1.50 each but don't know yet. I'd give people a dollar or 1.50 off at most. I agree with you that I think that most people won't take advantage of it. It's only a small discount and the dust jacket is a big appeal—especially since we've had such a good reaction so far to the artwork for the LROM dj.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 07, 2002 3:19 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Didn't Mark mention a do-it-yourself copy place that only charged a dollar?*
- > *That might be worth looking into. I'll put this discount thing on my to-do*
- > *list but I'm not going to give it a very high priority since I really doubt*
- > *that anyone will be interested.*

I'm sure you're right. I wouldn't even put the effort into giving people the option of a book with out a dj.³⁵²

A do-it-yourself copy place would not be practical for making our djs since we need to make 200 or 300 of them. That takes a long time. Then after they're run, they have to be cut. I think the reason we ended up with a white line across the top of most of the djs for JTP (has anyone ever complained about that?) is because the shop didn't simply put the original on the screen, set the copier for 200, and press "start." I suspect that they did the run in batches. That means that when I got the full stack, there were subsections in the stack that were off by 1/16 or 1/8 of an inch from others. I didn't know that and when I took the stack to another shop, I just had the guy cut the entire stack at once us-

³⁵¹ Getting the books printed and produced is a whole other subject, and will be discussed in a different Archive.

³⁵² We were always looking for ways to boost sales, but at the same time we wanted to produce a good book. Not issuing dustjackets might save a dollar, but the book just isn't the same without one – a lot is lost.

ing the top copy as a guide. If we have the same shop copy and cut, they can make sure that we don't get any white lines and if they do, it'll be their fault.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2002 8:28 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> *David, you did an excellent job of the letter to DAW!*

Thanks! Now let's see what happens.³⁵³ I have more hope of a response here than I do from McIntosh and Otis.³⁵⁴

> *I have been reading DAW paperbacks for years never really expected a chance to have them publish something I was involved in.*

A former member of my church, Cheryl Franklin, was published by DAW ten or more years ago. She had a series of adult science fiction novels. She just sent in her first manuscript and got accepted just like that.³⁵⁵

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2002 6:53 AM

Dear Jon and David,

What a cool way for someone to find out about the STARMAN SERIES....through a search for Mars info, then a totebag!³⁵⁶ We may want to look into maximizing this potential.

³⁵³ Nothing happened: no response, nothing. Once again we tried to contact a publisher and once again we didn't even receive as much as a rejection slip.

³⁵⁴ A top New York agency where Dorothy Markinko worked. Even though she was in her eighties, she still did a little work for them.

³⁵⁵ In late October 2003 we submitted *The Lost Race of Mars* directly to DAW for consideration. We'll see if they are interested in publishing it!

I also like the suggestion about advertising on senior's sites.

What if DAW does want to publish the series? I wonder if we could get a deal with them in which we can continue to have a couple hundred copies of future books printed privately in hardback....while they print thousands in paperback.(which I think is the only way they "do" books) Just thinking out loud.

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2002 9:18 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I can sympathize, Jon, and understand and agree. I am getting very tired doing all this too.³⁵⁷ It is quite fun and very rewarding, but many things in my home and life are getting dusty from lack of attention. There's a lot more than just writing the books. I do the djs, posters, Inter*Stellars, AOM binding, etc. I'm probably at about 15-20 hours a week right now.

You're right. Something has to happen. We can take a breather after LROM³⁵⁸ and see where we are. Maybe we'll have a publisher by then. Maybe someone else will come along who can take over the distribution.³⁵⁹ I am sure that Leslie can do it³⁶⁰ and I have a built-in group of people willing to help—her family and all the colleges students. But

³⁵⁶ One customer wrote and told us that they found *Assault on Mars* through our CafePress store: while doing a search on Mars they found our totebags and mousepads and such and ordered them, and from there they discovered the website. It was the first case I had ever encountered of someone buying series book merchandise and from that becoming interested in the series books!

³⁵⁷ Things were starting to break: we were getting tired, worn-out, and had just had enough. At this point we came very close to just ending the series and letting it go: we had worked too hard for too long. Something had to change, and something did change: after *The Lost Race of Mars* we slowed down, issued the books through 1stBooks (who handled all the orders, shipping, etc.), and tried to take a break.

³⁵⁸ And we did: we finished *The Lost Race of Mars* in July of 2002 and didn't start work on *Doomsday Horizon* until January or so of 2003. I'm so glad we took that break: we needed it.

³⁵⁹ We were getting very tired of being the ones who sold the books, packaged the books, mailed the books, etc. When we discovered that 1stBooks would do all of this for us we were very, very pleased. At this point we really needed them.

³⁶⁰ Leslie Owens, dedicated Starman fan who has donated many hours of volunteer labor, and a member of the Reading Group.

even that would be only a stopgap. Volunteers can only go so far, no matter how dedicated.

We need either to find a publisher, put books out only once a year like the classic series books (and maybe that wouldn't solve the problem), or perhaps even think about ending the series with a sixth and final book that tells all.³⁶¹

Right now, though, I think we don't have to do anything except endure. We'll face the question after LROM and that's still many months off. But you're right. We can't go on indefinitely.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2002 9:23 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Yes, this is very encouraging. How stimulating to have such good news of such support at the very same time we're noticing how tired we are and realizing that we can't keep this up much longer.

We've decided, I think, after Mark Johnson's suggestion, to list and thank our donors in LROM. If we do that, we have to be sure that we don't leave anyone out. If you can amass that list, Jon, including all those you sent, I suggest that we dedicate the fifth book to all these people.

Oh, in addition to the more than \$2000 we have in the bank, I have \$545.66 at this end. ... I imagine we'll still get a bill from Friesens that will knock a little dent in that balance too. But we're fine.

David

³⁶¹ We have tried to find a publisher and have failed, and we were really enjoying all this too much to stop, so we have stepped back a bit to releasing one book a year. It preserves our sanity.

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2002 9:00 AM

Dear Jon and David,

I think you both should "take a break".....

You both deserve a chance to drop the daily workload and take a vacation from this STARMAN stuff. Taking a vacation from something allows one to return with renewed enthusiasm and energy.....not to mention a new perspective.

I have been worrying about both of you for some time now and am not at all surprised by the recent confessions made by you guys. Sometimes I just can't even catch my breath before David is pumping out another chapter.....and how Jon balances all his tasks, I just don't know. It is an awesome amount of hard work and dedication you guys are giving to the series. (But there is nothing wrong with a little break here, and it might actually result in an even better series)

I know I am still a cyber-neophyte compared to Jon, but if there is anything that can be delegated to me, then please do so.

I have been thinking about a few things lately.....one of them being our approach to advertising. I think right now we are focused on promotion (a narrowly selected target audience that we tend to "nurture" quite a bit) The alternative would be "attraction".....the concept of allowing others to come to us. Examples of this are bumper stickers, posters, website URL in big letters on T-shirts...etc.

One thing you two want to avoid is "burnout".....where the effort seems like a daily chore to be done drudgingly. That kind of stuff can hurt the spirit of the series, not to mention yourselves.

Mike

DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2002 8:35 PM

Dear Jon and David,

One of the attractions of the Dig Allen series and juvenile books in general was that the main characters did NOT worry about how much they were paid.³⁶² The inference was that they were motivated by much more than money. It would have been con-

³⁶² This is the famous discussion we had concerning how much the Starmen were paid. At this point we were working on the fifth book and we had not had a single discussion about this topic!

sidered bad form to risk your life simply for money....it was for some noble cause or at least for the adventure. It has only been in the last couple of decades that money has appeared to become the prime motivator.

I don't remember whether SPACE RESEARCH³⁶³ was defined as a private or government entity (I always assumed it was some sort of government equivalent to NASA...making the Space Explorers somewhat like NASA astronauts or NOAA officers of today).....However, I am aware that SE is a private corporation.....and perhaps things might be different.

I would feel more comfortable if the guys simply mentioned that they were on the payroll, but mostly motivated by sense of duty and adventure. Kids of today probably don't see enough of that.

An astronaut starts out at around \$45,000 per annum these days (yes, shuttle PILOTS do make more) and are civil servants.

Judy Resnick, the brunette who was killed on the Challenger, was making \$35,000 a year. (1986 bucks)

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2002 10:31 AM

> > *The Starmen never seem to worry about*
> > *getting paid. Maybe we ought to have a line in there somewhere*
> > *about their pay.*
>
> *This will go right straight into the idea file! That might be an*
> *interesting item to bring up sometime. My gut feeling is that people as*
> *highly trained and talented as the Starmen would get paid quite a lot:*
> *people like them would be in extremely high demand in the industry.... It*
> *might be interesting to have very wealthy explorers for a change...³⁶⁴*

³⁶³ From the Dig Allen series

³⁶⁴ Having a minor in Economics, I looked at this from an economists standpoint. Highly trained, highly talented people with valuable job skills would surely be in high demand, especially if there were fewer than 60 people of this caliber in the whole Solar System. It was hard for me to imagine a multiplanetary company paying these guys minimum wage, especially since Starlight Enterprise had a great deal of money to go around.

A good point,. and another way in which we break new ground. Tom Swift obviously had unlimited resources and the Space Explorers seemed to have what they needed and wanted, but their resources were undoubtedly from company pockets. It might be nice, either in a book or a short story, to have the Starmen do something with their personal money.³⁶⁵

Your email, Jon, and Mike's comments on astronaut's pay, would be excellent for I*S#4.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2002 6:05 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *what -would- a Starman do on his vacation? Zookeepers, I know, go to see zoos. If we could*
- > *realistically answer that question I think that would be an indication that*
- > *we have really good characters.*

I suspect Mike is right. They'd go to Earth. Nice story. If we make it a short story some-time, we could have the "working" side of the vacation in there, but also maybe some scenes in which the Starmen visit Mark's family in Montana. We've already described West Virginia. Joe, I suspect, was born on the Moon.³⁶⁶

David

³⁶⁵ This is something I've always wanted to do but just couldn't figure out a way to do it until *Doomsday Horizon* came along. Remember the scene involving Zip Foster's bank account? This discussion is what led to that scene.

³⁶⁶ At this point, despite all the work we'd done, we really didn't have a good family history for Joe Taylor. It's amazing how we detailed so many things in the early days of the series and then left out some rather obvious items.

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2002 9:23 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Interesting exchanges recently on the message board, eh? I wonder if anyone has noticed that in the polls, the favorite book by far is TRA, which is the one that contained the most "subtle religion." I wonder if there's a correlation. Probably not.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 03, 2002 8:43 AM

Dear Jon and David,

About future "fast food" and the description of such in the series.....I have some reservations about including fast food restaurants in the world of the Starmen.....I think FF is part of what is wrong with our present world...far too many people are overweight and poorly nutritioned in our country...the FF corporations do NOT care about the health of their patrons....FF is often not all that fast....sometimes it gets slow as some uncaring server gets your order wrong and you have to repeat the ordering process and be served more "attitude" than food. I have long wished for a healthy FF alternative.....last night I actually ate a BK Veggie burger for the first time (perhaps there IS hope!). David's beautiful descriptions of eating SLOW FOOD have become a welcome staple of the series.....there is time to talk, relate, share an experience more completely than in the FF alternative.

I know that the need for a quick easy meal will always exist...so perhaps we could provide our readers with an example of a "perfected" FF experience.....a healthy food served by someone (or something) with some decent social skills.³⁶⁷

Mike

³⁶⁷ Ever wonder why the Starmen never stop at a fast food restaurant? (What, you never have?) Well, this discussion is why! We have some of the oddest discussions...

DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 03, 2002 10:36 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Good thoughts, Mike, and I agree. Fast food, I think is very much a part of our current culture but that doesn't mean that it will be a part of the 22nd century culture. We have to remember that we brought in the Collapse—your idea, according to the excerpt in the recent Inter*Stellar—to "clean out" the current excesses and overt evils in our own society. The post-Collapse world is supposed to be a "new morning" kind of culture, an idealized world of some kind. We all like the "simple, slower" world that appears in the classic books of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s; it's hard to put that same thing into the world of the 2150s. We've done that through the Collapse and the rebuilding of society. I doubt that there would be a fast food joint in Eagle City, even on the west side.

It's for that reason—putting in the slower, simpler world—that we have things in the series like Armstrong Forest, the small-town/farm culture in WV and Montana, etc. We've never described a huge city or major bureaucracy or anything like that. Our popular secondary characters are the counter-culture types like Montezuma Vly and St. George, the Wind People and the Tunnel People.³⁶⁸ Commander Gibson says it well in LROM when he talks to Dana, the reporter, when he observes that the Starmen don't spend time with the authorities in Eagle City, but with the people on the "west side" of town. Our only "big companies" are SE and NME, and NME became corrupt and fell apart. SE is presented as the ideal of a "big company," and it is actually run like a big family—Richard is very close to his employees and appears to act almost like a father.

In fixing the question in LROM about the errand runner just checking the computer data base before heading out to find a mascarian simulator, I did simply say that the computers were down! A bit of early 21st century reality in the mid-22nd. It seemed to fit in the slipshod management of the spaceport!

³⁶⁸ It is amazingly difficult for me to work these characters into a story. When I plot a story, I look at where the overall saga is going and then from there try to figure out what events would have to happen in order to move that saga along – and from there the stories start to tell themselves. *Doomsday Horizon* became the logical result of *The Lost Race of Mars*, and *The Starlight Maneuver* became the logical result of *Doomsday Horizon*, and on it went. This technique, however, means that I started with the story, not the characters, and going back into that story and putting those characters in it was difficult to impossible. What on earth would Vly or GSG be doing in *Doomsday Horizon*? Pulling them in would have been a stretch that didn't make a lot of sense. This is a problem I'm still working on.

I sent out all the Inter*Stellars yesterday, by the way.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 04, 2002 7:15 PM

Dear Jon,

There is much more to health than proper diet, although that is a vital part of it. Exercise too, but above all, a spiritual life—best of all, a life in Christ.

Fast food in stories? Well, there are many alternatives to fast food in the situations you mention. I hasten to add that I enjoy fast food one to three times a week myself. I find it much more spiritually "satisfying" to consider a meal with fruit, grains, cheese, etc. eaten in a place like Belle Isle or the road to Mordor,³⁶⁹ than eating in those situations from a bag with golden arches on it. Fast food is part of the culture, but one of the reasons I prefer the old series books is the immersion in a simple culture.

In a sermon or something two years ago I remember asking what people thought was the most significant change in the 20th century. Of course, the invention of the airplane, the moon landing, the nuclear bomb, the computer were all major items—but I suggested it was the opening of the first McDonald's in 1955. It changed the culture more than anything else until the computer came out. The idea of fast food altered our entire perception of life. I can remember drive-ins—you drove your car into a parking slot at a restaurant and a waitress came out and took your order through your rolled-down window. Then she brought it on a tray that was affixed to your window and you ate in your car. The last one I went to was in 1970, and even then it was unusual. There is one now in my area, but it is a nostalgia, period piece—people dressed up and pretending to be something for memory's sake, rather than actually being that thing. That's why the soda fountain in Julian³⁷⁰ is so wonderful (see my X Bar X Boys web site³⁷¹—there's a picture of me on the counter³⁷²)—it is not a nostalgia thing: it is an actual soda fountain from the

³⁶⁹ It's probably obvious from our stories, but David and I are big fans of the Lord of the Rings trilogy. I've heard that David has even given lectures on the subject.

³⁷⁰ The small, historic gold-mining town barely survived the great fires in California that raged in October 2003.

³⁷¹ <http://home.pacbell.net/dbaumann/>

³⁷² You can find that photo at this page: http://home.pacbell.net/dbaumann/series_books_in_general.htm

1930s or 1920s that simply hasn't been done away with. Julian, if you remember, is the little town in the mountains not far from the mud cave. Marshal South is buried there. I don't remember whether we stopped there two years ago when you were out, Jon.³⁷³

Anyway, on to our options: I'd suggest that we do this—see what happens, if anything, with Penguin and McIntosh and Otis.³⁷⁴ If nothing, then look for a publisher after LROM is out and consider our options when and if we get to the negotiating stage. Then use the 1st books program as Plan B. If worse comes to worst, then we can continue as we are but only put out one book per year, with someone handling the business end of it. If we limit our production to one book a year, no one should get burned out too fast. Leslie is still researching the Marketing aspect of the deal.

Editorial assistance can be a good thing—what we don't want is to lose control over the content. We DO want the content to be presented at a professional level.

Planning much farther ahead than a year is rather undependable. Who knows what will happen? I'm not thinking of suicide bombers, either—just a lot of factors beyond anyone's ability to predict.

LROM 13 next.³⁷⁵

David

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 04, 2002 8:59 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Jon may have had to sift bugs out of his food in China....but I have had to remove a dirty mop string from inside my McDonald's fajita (I thought that chicken was a little too chewy, not to mention the occasional Stateside vermin).

³⁷³ We had! It was a very cool soda fountain – an amazing piece of history.

³⁷⁴ Nothing happened. It is amazing: publishers just do not respond to us – no letters, no rejection slips, nothing. It's not encouraging, to say the least!

³⁷⁵ You've probably seen references like this all throughout the various Archives. This is just a notice that another chapter of the manuscript is on its way or under development. In this letter, David is just saying that chapter 13 of *The Lost Race of Mars* is next on his Starman agenda.

The FF corporations show little to no caring about the health of the humans they sell to....they are not SE prototypes! Heart disease is big in the West and a big part of that is our diet. I propose that we demonstrate a future FF restaurant that sells healthy low fat healthy kelp derived seaburgers or something like that. (Perhaps developed at SE labs). I believe that with a little thought and effort, FF could be made tasty, nutritious and free of bad fats, chemicals, etc.

About our printing options....I agree with David that we ought to continue to look and see what the big house's (Penguin, etc) response is going to be. Another thing we ought to decide is whether we want to go paperback or stay "series". I am personally leaning toward going paperback.....the material has grown greater than the old hardback series....paperbacks are the book "currency" of today.....let's share it with as many folks as we can! We can always find a way to make a few hardbacks for the folks who want.

Mike

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 04, 2002 11:04 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

*> It looks like I am outvoted as far as fast food goes! Oh well; the fates
> must be against me. You can't win them all! I don't eat much fast food at
> all though; it's certainly not a weekly thing.*

Well, this is a topic that would be fun for the three of us to discuss in person. We're probably not too far from an agreement. In fact, it interests me that we seem to be approaching it from very different points of view—I from the "simple" life depicted in old classic series books, Jon from actual farm experience, Mike from organic fast food. We all want basic, healthful reality.

*> > Heart disease is big in the West and a big part
> > of that is our diet.
>
> Is it? I know you can find a study that supports anything, but I have heard
> more than one study that claims that the leading cause of heart disease and
> health problems is not diet but anger and stress and that sort of thing.*

I think it's both. That's what I was addressing when I wrote earlier today that a solid spiritual life is probably more important than diet and exercise in staying healthy.

- > > *I propose that we demonstrate a future FF restaurant*
- > > *that sells healthy low fat healthy kelp derived*
- > > *seaburgers or something like that.*
- >
- > <grins> *If I ever came across something like that I would avoid it just as*
- > *a matter of principle!*

I remember a radio comedy show years ago that featured a place called "Escargot To Go!"

- > *If I am going to eat a hamburger then I*
- > *want it to be a real hamburger and not just something that looks and tastes*
- > *like a hamburger but was actually green sea plants.*

Actually I have eaten vegi burgers and enjoyed them a lot: made of onions and corn. Quite tasty. I'm almost a vegetarian and have gotten to the point where I dislike most meat, though I do make exceptions. I also note that in the beginning God gave all creatures, including humans, only plants to eat. He gave them permission to eat meat only after the Flood. That would make meat-eating a feature of the fallen world. We could discuss this for a long time. It is really a fascinating topic.

- > *All this messing with reality sort of bothers me. I know there's no way*
- > *around it and that the vanilla ice cream I had at my grandmother's birthday*
- > *probably had nothing to do with real vanilla or real milk or real cream, but*
- > *I still wonder. There seems to be a trend to make things appear to be*
- > *something else: chemicals to hamburgers, kelp to hamburgers, etc. What looks*
- > *like a hamburger is not. What looks like ice cream is not – it just looks*
- > *like it. It's not really ice cream; it's just something that is pretending*
- > *to be ice cream. It's a type of virtual reality: it fools your senses but*
- > *it's not the real thing. On TV you might think you see an ad for Sprite on a*
- > *football stadium, but that ad for Sprite was added digitally; it's not*
- > *really there.*

Right. And that's how Earthmen won their first battle against the Xenobots!

- > *Maybe it's just me, but I would rather have something that is real:*

> *something that is actually what it appears to be, faults and all.*

Again, right. It's bothersome that communication itself has become so impersonal. Through electronic communication, it is now possible to talk to people by email, voice mail, etc. and rarely talk to a real person even on a telephone.

...

> *Here is a question to think about: what are we going to do with all the extra unsold books that we still have on our hands after October of this year? ... The reason I bring this up now is this: if we are really going to just box up these books in October and put them in our closets,³⁷⁶ we might want to announce that now so people know ahead of time that these books are just not going to be available after that.*

Well, I wouldn't say anything now, but we should definitely say something as soon as we have something to say. At this point, whatever happens is pure profit. At the very least, we could divide the books up among the three of us and do whatever we wanted, including giving them away to friends, libraries, good causes. We could make AOM an etext and sell the other books to people who read it and want more. Whatever.

Jon, has there been any response at all to the posting you made a few weeks ago, with the first half or so of each book available online? Any interest through your game web site?³⁷⁷

> *On another note, I wanted to mention that we have now grossed more from DIE than we have from JTP! DIE just crept past it. JTP has still sold more copies than DIE (about 50 more) but we're at least up to 147 now. Also, 80 copies of LROM have been reserved, which is good!*

Interesting. We DO have to keep in mind that it took six years to sell all copies of The Magic Talisman. We've still got more than four years left to get to that span of time, and we've only got about 170 copies of AOM left. Maybe they will continue to sell. We

³⁷⁶ Which is what we were thinking of doing: we were seriously considering discontinuing the first five Starman books after October and declaring them unavailable. We did want to reprint them through 1stBooks, though, the idea being that they would handle distribution and things and we would therefore be out of the book business entirely. This never happened, and that is probably a good thing: it would have been expensive to reprint all five Starman books!

³⁷⁷ Nope, there wasn't. There's got to be a way to interest people in the Starman series: we just haven't found it yet.

really have nothing to lose at this point. We've done the work and we've covered our costs. I'm happy.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, APRIL 05, 2002 9:48 PM

There will be a binding party³⁷⁸ a week from tomorrow at my church. We'll put together a bunch of AOMs. I'm all out myself.

There also seems to be significant interest among our college students for an overnight to the mud cave, so we're planning on going out there the weekend of May 4-5. I'm taking that Sunday off (leaving the church in the capable hands of "Richard Prester") and going out with the college kids. We'll have a church service on "Mars" on the morning of the Lord's Day. It should be wonderful! I will take a video of the site and will definitely prepare a Starman documentary video for our exhibit in October.

By the way, the name Marian Petrescu in SETI³⁷⁹ is a real person. That is the Romanian Orthodox priest who conducts services at my church on Sunday afternoons who is the model for Lurton Zimbardo.

I also have a photograph of Rebecca Jewell, whose name also appears in SETI. She can be a good model for a Benefactor, I think. I meant to enclose it when I sent you an envelope a few days ago, Jon. I'll do that now. Maybe you can post it on the web site as the first photo of a "Benefactor"—but only if you two agree that she fits the image. We've talked before about what the Benefactors look like: somewhat Egyptian-like, somewhat tall and angular, rather thin, pleasant, etc. Becca could maybe "pass" for one. I'll send the photo and then, Jon, maybe you could scan it and send it to Mike. It's all completely subjective, of course, but if you two agree, let's post it.

³⁷⁸ A party in which unbound copies of the first Starman book were bound so they could be sold.

³⁷⁹ A Starman series short story

We had discussed posting monthly excerpts from LROM on the message board. Now that DIE has gone out with the scene from LROM, is it time to post some excerpts? We certainly have enough to draw from now.

David

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 06, 2002 10:46 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I watched the video last night. It's just under 13 minutes and turned out better than I had hoped. It's really good! I'll splice in Mike's video of the land-sailer and then add the choreographed fight scenes from the books, and we ought to have a pretty good Starman documentary, 20-25 minutes long, to show at the convention in October.

While I was camping at the mud caves, I read the mud cave portion of AOM to the group. Then later I read selected portions of LROM. Wow—the difference in the quality of the writing was significant. AOM seems rather amateurish to me now.³⁸⁰

Lots of work today, but I hope to get the package for 1stbooks done.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2002 1:07 AM

Dear Jon,

We have indicated that Richard Starlight is 57 years old, but we have never mentioned any children that he and Jan have had. We started a dynasty with Thomas but haven't thought beyond Richard. Shall we create some children?³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ One of the earliest references to our discomfort with *Assault On Mars*. Finally in the fall of 2003 we decided to rewrite that first offering.

³⁸¹ Another huge facet of the series we had completely forgotten about! How on earth we could have forgotten this I don't know. I think part of it may have been the fact that in the beginning, Richard Starlight

- > *This in about the bumper stickers! They seem to be popular, which is good!*
- > *We're all out of them...*

Fantastic idea.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2002 2:08 PM

Dear Jon,

Hey, here's another idea about the Starlight children. How about if Richard and Jan had a daughter. Being the child of a famous couple, when she was a teenager the family thought it would be a good idea if she went to boarding school under an alias. She did beautifully, and then entered Starlight Academy (Richard and Jan knew who she was, of course) and then became a Starman: Kathryn Mullaney! Maybe they could also have had a son, but he was older and he's the one who disappeared in the Asteroid Belt. Kathryn's real mission in TRA could have been to go search for clues. Her alias was taken shortly after her brother disappeared and was for her protection.

Could be a short story: The Search for the Missing Starman. It would add an old-fashioned mystery to the series.³⁸²

- > *I really wish we could go back to the earlier books and make some changes.*
- > *For instance:...*
- > *How hard would it be to go back in the manuscripts and add a line or two*
- > *that does these things? We can't always think of things ahead of time but we*
- > *can go back and make changes. It's just a thought.*³⁸³

was just a background character: he owned Starlight Enterprise but you wouldn't really see him through the series. As the series progressed he became a major character instead and had significant roles, and when that happened minor details like his children suddenly became important.

³⁸² This idea eventually turned itself into the short story *A Matter of Time*.

³⁸³ As time went on and we got ideas for the books, I sometimes wished that we could go back and alter some of the previously-released books to make them mesh better with what we wrote later. We actually did go back and make some changes to them: we have an altered third-edition of *Assault on Mars* ready to go and altered second editions of the other books, ready for the day when these books are reprinted.

No trouble at all. It would make for better blended second editions. Of course, it's too late now for AOM, but I can still make changes in the MS³⁸⁴ in case we ever want to go for the third edition. The POD³⁸⁵ books won't ever sell out, though.

I don't think there's anything wrong with having the plot develop, though, and new factors come in such as those on your list. People expect it, or at least they are not usually bothered by it. I can't see any thinking person whipping onto the message board to ask why we never mentioned the Banjoman in AOM. (He WAS mentioned in TRA, though, wasn't he?)³⁸⁶

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 24, 2002 12:00 AM

Dear Jon,

- > *If we are assuming that they do have children and the children*
- > *aren't dead and they aren't terribly evil people, then they must have*
- > *disappeared under tragic circumstances or something like that and thus no*
- > *one mentions them. I think that would be more credible than suddenly*
- > *introducing a character we should have introduced long before.*
- > *Just some thoughts! We really should say something about Richard's children*
- > *in LROM, before the series goes any further, but I think we have some*
- > *details to work out first...*³⁸⁷

Anyway, you can find the Banjoman reference on page 71 of *The Runaway Asteroid*. When he was writing that book David just threw this name into the dialogue, never anticipating that a time would come when we'd have to do something serious with a rather whimsical appellation, or that the character would become a major player in a later book: *The Lost Race of Mars*.

³⁸⁴ Manuscript

³⁸⁵ Print-on-demand

³⁸⁶ Yup, he was.

³⁸⁷ I just hated to suddenly mention Richard's children as if they had always been there. It just seemed strange to me that the children would suddenly pop up out of nowhere, and I was sure that our readers would ask why they weren't mentioned in the previous books. I wanted to come up with a solution that would explain why they were never mentioned in the books but yet they still existed, and *A Matter of Time* was the solution.

Yes, that all makes sense. That's why you're the plotter and I'm the writer. What a team!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 25, 2002 12:03 PM

- > *As for Richard's missing children – I'll have to think about that a bit*
- > *more. We need something good and I don't have anything good at the moment...*

Fortunately we don't need anything right now—just the idea. The story's a long way off. I wonder if two children will be enough. We could have three, or four, if we wanted.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2002 10:42 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *About this Caucasian /minority matter.....have*
- > *we even described the race or skin tone of any of the principle characters?*
- > *Is possible ,for instance, that Joe is bi-racial? (it may never even be*
- > *necessary that the series mentions WHICH races are blended in Joe, or any*
- > *character.....OR could we just mention off-handedly somewhere that one*
- > *of the three STARMEN has a more brownish skin tone than the others...and*
- > *leave it at that?)*

I just wrote a page on the matter and posted it on the MB, and—thanks to your prompting here Mike—included a statement that we never indicated which race these guys belong to.

The model I am using for the Benefactors, as we've already discussed, is basically black—Egyptian type. The little girl I mentioned in an email yesterday, Jon, was a beautiful black child with long, slightly wavy hair pulled back from her head, braided a little in the front and held in place with a clip of some sort, and with a strong, almost regal,

bearing. There is a twelve-year-old Palestinian girl at my church who could almost pass for that image—I'll think about whether I want to use her as a Benefactor model.³⁸⁸

Blessings!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2002 7:53 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *Very good! Great thoughts. I liked your post a lot, David, and think it was
> right on. It looks like we're on the same page. It's odd that in the first
> five books we haven't really described the Starmen! It reminds me of the
> lack of a first name for Mrs. Brant...*

Their appearance is described pretty well in the books, but especially in AOM. I don't recall just where right now, but I remember going to the Introduction we wrote and following the descriptions pretty carefully. I've done that with all the characters we lined out in the beginning. I think it was you, Jon, who wrote the descriptions. What we DIDN'T do is explain their heritage or genetic background (right, like anybody would!). We haven't really described anyone that way, although we do say sometimes what their country of origin is: Brazil, Mexico, etc. We have made it rather clear by the use of ethnic names what racial background people are from: Madera-Cruz, Hoshino, Rwakatare, High Eagle, Mullaney. We didn't even say where they were born until later in the series when the information became part of the story.

I think at this point I'll go back to the descriptions of the Benefactors and make it even more clear that they have dark skin.

David

³⁸⁸ This is what we did. The Palestinian girl appears on the cover of the fifth Inter*Stellar. Her name is Tanya Muallem. Her name is also used in *Doomsday Horizon* pages 87-89. The black girl David described had moved away and we didn't have her to use for a model.

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 01, 2002 8:32 AM

Dear Jon and David,

Jon , the new JTP cover mock-up is awesome³⁸⁹the dimly lit mountains are very eerie. Nice job! I realize that the spacecraft itself is probably just a "mock-up"I would recommend something that looks a little more " inhabited".....the current spacecraft looks a bit too much like a robotic probe.³⁹⁰

The news about the national Christian radio interview is great!³⁹¹ And I am all for David being the one interviewed...although I would not mind at all if it were to fall on me.

Mike

DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 04, 2002 5:26 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *What do you think of this draft I made for new Bryce³⁹² cover art for the third Starman book? This is just a proposal – an outline of sorts – but I think it looks pretty cool!*

It is completely fantastic!!

> *Jon , the new JTP cover mock-up is awesome.....the dimly lit mountains are very eerie. Nice job! I realize*

³⁸⁹ When we were thinking about reprinting the Starman books we thought it might be cool to reprint the books with new cover art. With this in mind, I drew up a new cover for *Journey to the Tenth Planet* and sent it to David and Mike. They liked it and had some suggestions, and with a little tweaking it turned out pretty well. Now it is just awaiting the day that the book is reprinted...

³⁹⁰ Since this was just a mockup, I simply dropped in a standard spaceship model. I later went back and revised the model to closely match the shuttlecraft Mike had drawn for the book's frontispiece.

³⁹¹ Another thing that fell through! A radio program called *Point of View* wanted to interview us, and asked that we mail them copies of the Starman books. We did so, and we tried hard to follow up, but they would never get back with us or respond to our efforts to contact them: once they had the books they totally ignored us – which, unfortunately, was not unusual.

³⁹² I did my 3d modeling in a program called Bryce 3D.

- > *that the spacecraft itself is probably just a "mock-up"I would*
- > *recommend something that looks a little more "inhabited".....the current*
- > *spacecraft looks a bit too much like a robotic probe.*

Yes indeed. I agree with Mike that the ship needs to look more like a shuttlecraft, but the scenery is awesome!! Terrific for a second edition.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 07, 2002 12:22 AM

Dear Jon,

Remember this exchange? If you like, I can whip these changes into the texts of the first four books and then send them to you again for preparation for PDF files, rather than the ones I sent a few days ago. It won't take me long and I can probably get to it on Monday at the latest. Let me know.

[Jon]

*I really wish we could go back to the earlier books and make some changes.
For instance.³⁹³*

- *Robert Nolan should have been mentioned in AOM – he would have been on the council that decided what to do about the pirates.*
- *The SE base on Mars should have been mentioned in AOM, at least briefly, and should have been a target for the pirates*
- *Flilox as a drug should have been mentioned in the previous books at least once or twice*
- *It would have been great to mention Martian dirigibles in previous books*
- *The unsuccessful previous Europan missions probably should have been mentioned*
- *The existence of the Banjoman should have at least been hinted at in AOM*

How hard would it be to go back in the manuscripts and add a line or two

³⁹³ Here you go, ladies and gentlemen: a list of the changes we made in the second editions of the Starman books! None of these changes have seen print yet, but they're there.

that does these things? We can't always think of things ahead of time but we can go back and make changes. It's just a thought.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2002 10:24 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

This was really a Starman week for me! I think I've got the names of Richard and Jan's children. How's this?

John, for the apostle and evangelist who wrote our operative verse, John 1:5;

Veronica ("true image") after the legendary woman who wiped Jesus' face with a cloth as he was carrying his cross, and received the image of his face on it;

Caedmon, after the first poet who wrote in English (7th century) and a devout Christian; and

Michaela, female form of the name of the angel who is the head of the heavenly army.

A boy and a girl and a boy and a girl.

Thought: remember the Phantom Dig Allen title, *The Children of Neptune*?³⁹⁴ Is there a way we can have a Starman book with that title but have the subject be the mystery of Richard's children? Are they, in fact, on a special mission in the vicinity of Neptune?

David

³⁹⁴ This title still haunts me. I've met people who have seen this phantom title listed on the back of some book, somewhere, and I've seen a letter printed in the *Mystery & Adventure Review* that mentions it, but I have never seen it for myself and I have never been able to discover what book featured the title listing that included this book. I would *love* to see this title listing myself, but finding it seems as difficult as catching the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow!

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 2002 1:28 PM

By the way, no response at all from Point of View. Also nothing from Penguin books and nothing from MacIntosh and Otis. Not even an acknowledgement from any of them in spite of at least one follow-up in each case. It is easy to see why people will self-publish. That leaves only Analog as a means of widespread publicity—although I suppose that something could still happen in one of the other areas.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 05, 2002 6:38 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Mark McSherry just sent me an interesting letter by post. Have either of*
- > *you seen this?*
- >
- > *<http://owmyhead.com/silverberg/novels/nlostraceofmars.html>*
- >
- > *It looks like we're not the only people to write a book with that*
- > *particular title or that particular plot! Very interesting. The odd thing is*
- > *that my parents have a copy of that book; we got it (and I read it) a few*
- > *years ago (well after LROM's title and plot was decided). I didn't realize*
- > *the connection until Mark pointed it out.*

Hmmm—no, I wasn't at all familiar with this book. Amazing that the plot is similar. I hope that our readers will truly be surprised that the Benefactors are Martians. We've written the book so that that revelation will be a shocker. The title of our fifth book might indicate that but doesn't have to.

This little item may make a good footnote for the fourth I*S.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2002 5:35 PM

Dear Jon,

I inserted the following paragraphs into existing stories:³⁹⁵

INTO "CITY OF DUST":

The United States produced its own nuclear terrorist: the villainous Reuben Ridger who founded an extremist cult group in 2038. Using tiny atomic weapons, he was responsible for more than two dozen attacks on national monuments and centers of leadership until his cell was located in 2061 and his reign of terror ended.

INTO AOM:

The villainous Reuben Ridger had been America's foremost purveyor of terror and mass death. He had founded an extremist cult group in 2038. Using tiny atomic weapons, he was responsible for more than two dozen attacks on national monuments and centers of leadership until his cell was located in 2061 and his reign of terror ended.

What do you think? Is that enough? The paragraph in AOM comes during the moonbus jaunt just a few paragraphs after it is explained that no one knows what Thomas Starlight's original last name was!

I suggest that we put the revised texts on the web site in the place where one-third of each book is provided, and indicate that these are revised slightly from what has been distributed in print.³⁹⁶

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 29, 2002 3:43 PM

³⁹⁵ Another treat: here are some actual passages that have been inserted into the future editions of the Starman stories to make the earlier stories mesh better with the previous ones! Up to this point I don't think that anyone has ever seen these passages, and they are revealed here for the first time.

³⁹⁶ I think that neither of these things were done...

- > *Here is the new draft of the new JTP cover! I haven't put the lettering or*
- > *anything else on it yet because I first wanted to make sure that it was the*
- > *way you wanted it. What do you think?*

Very nice! I like how the shuttlecraft looks, but it just now occurred to me that the craft has already been pictured on the frontispiece of JTP. Might be a good idea to do something recognizably similar. I DO like your design, though!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2002 8:02 AM

Dear Jon and David,

The new cover certainly looks eerie....but the spaceship looks like a FIRE-WASP.....an upside down one at that!

I received an advance copy of LROM...a little tiny book.....

It reads so well.....you guys did a great job.

Mike

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2002 10:21 AM

Dear Mike,

- > *The new cover certainly looks eerie....but*
- > *the spaceship looks like a FIREWASP.....an upside down one at that!*

It suddenly occurred to me that you'd already drawn an image of the shuttlecraft and that it appeared on the frontispiece to JTP! I pointed it out to Jon so the two images can be consistent.

- > *I received an advance copy of LROM...a little tiny book.....*

> *It reads so well.....you guys did a great job.*

Our little joke. It would have been an enormous job to print it out on my computer at home so Jon had the idea of going to a local copy shop and paying to have it run off. They had a machine that could do it but to get it on the right size page the copy turned out small!! Not being a guy who thinks outside the box very often, I'd have sighed and gone back home and done all the work to print it up, but Jon said, "Let's just make the authors' copies into Better Little Books!" So we did. When Friesens finishes the job, they'll all come out the right size like all our other books. Oh, and Kevin Anetsberger's done with the 3D endpapers and will send them to Friesens today.

Next: two short stories and the fourth Inter*Stellar.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 01, 2002 5:26 PM

Dear Jon,

I finished making the Starman video. It's not too bad. It'll surely give viewers the idea of what we're trying to do. Next step is to make three copies so we each can have one and still have one to bring to the convention. Making the copies will take a little time so don't look for a package in tomorrow's mail. The video is about a half hour long. I'll prepare a written poster or something we can place next to the television at the convention so people will know what they're seeing without our having to explain it to every passerby.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 03, 2002 9:21 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *Here is a revision of the JTP cover, complete with Mike's shuttlecraft and*

> a new, edgier mountains. What do you think?

Terrific! I like how you did the shading, and the shuttlecraft comes across very well! I say go for it.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 07, 2002 5:41 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

My computer, for some reason, was unable to get online and access email for nearly 24 hours. I'm not sure that the problem has been sufficiently solved, but tech help did make it possible to get online and access my email.

The new cover for JTP looks great.

...

I got a start today on "A Matter of Time," and have plans to make the DIE picture covers next Thursday.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 09, 2002 10:03 AM

Dear Jon and David,

I am not sure why we are abandoning the "big ship"(STARVENTURE) for the Shuttlecraft. The mountains sure look eerie and well done.....I just believe that a book titled JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET would be best represented by the craft that actually carried the people there.

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 09, 2002 12:30 PM

Dear Jon,

Good answer to Mike on why the new dust jacket artwork for JTP.³⁹⁷

...

Copies of the Starman video are being made right now. I should be able to mail them out to you and Mike early next week.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2002 9:55 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

The Starman video is completed and I have the copies in hand. I've also prepared a list of the scenes and how long they are. The video is 23:11 long. Your copies will be in the mail tomorrow, and I'll bring a copy to the convention with a laminated list of the scenes to intrigue passersby.

Tomorrow I'm taking as a quiet day and should be able to get "A Matter of Time" written without any difficulty.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2002 10:52 PM

³⁹⁷ I don't remember precisely what I said, but I think I gave two reasons. First, it's not too uncommon for reprints of books to have new covers, and we were planning on new covers for some of the other titles in the series. Second, both TRA and JTP have black spines with dotted stars; when they were reissued we wanted to make sure that the spines of the book were noticeably different, so that when the books were placed side-by-side it wouldn't look like two copies of the same book were on the shelf.

Dear Jon,

Well, this has been a Starman day! I got the new JTP dj printed and made 10 copies with a revised text for the endflaps.³⁹⁸ I noticed that the writing for the spine is a little off center, but that's okay if it's just for us. It looks really good!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2002 6:41 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Did you guys get copies of Analog in the mail? I got two copies today without a cover letter or other indicator than a return address in NY from Dell magazine.

The review is on pages 133-134. We get about a column and a third. It's generally a commendation. Once or twice the reviewer [in Analog] urges people to check the website and even lists the price of the books as a great thing—and then doesn't provide the URL [for the Starman website].

Absolutely amazing, isn't it, that every time we've gotten some publicity from somewhere, they make a mistake of some kind in how people can contact us. Well, maybe people can find it through a search engine.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2002 6:53 PM

³⁹⁸ We actually made ten copies of the second-edition dustjacket for *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. I have one of these and have placed it on a first-edition copy of that book and David has five. They look pretty neat! I don't know what happened to all the other four copies, though. I guess they're out there somewhere! Maybe one day they'll turn up on eBay.

> *–and then doesn't provide the URL.*

I take it back. The URL is provided in the beginning of the article. Good. Now we wait for a massive influx of orders.³⁹⁹

David

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2002 8:00 PM

The reviewer apparently only received the first three volumes, and I note in his article that he does follow-ups. I suggest we send him copies of DIE and LROM. What do you think?⁴⁰⁰

David

DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2002 1:35 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

...

One of the couples that came [to a discussion group at David's church on the Starman series] was Jac and LeAnn Redford. Jac, you may recall, is the Hollywood composer. His wife LeAnn wants to work with somebody they know and encourage him to buy an option on our series for making a movie. Now, I know that there's a HUGE obstacle course from that point to actually getting a movie made, but one can still buy an option and make some money even if the movie isn't made. LeAnn wants to give the books to this person and get him interested in the possibility. If he likes it, then he'll offer us an

³⁹⁹ That would have been nice! As far as I could tell, though, the Analog review didn't result in any orders...

⁴⁰⁰ We did, and he enjoyed them, and he even mentioned them in another issue of Analog.

option, which means he buys the rights to make a movie for a set period of time and we can't talk to anyone else about making a movie until the option expires.⁴⁰¹

David

DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2002 4:55 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Now that we have finished the first segment of the Starman Saga, what would you think about putting together a booklet the size of an Inter*Stellar that contains only the five short stories and the smallest amount of commentary so that people will know where they fit into the saga? It would be easy to do and could generate a little money at the same time. It would be a little more than 23,000 words and about 100 pages long. That would mean professional photocopying and stapling. We could charge \$8 or \$10 for it and I could probably have a bunch for the convention.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2002 7:17 PM

- > *That thought has occurred to me as well, but what bothers me about it is I*
- > *can't figure out who would want to buy it. Not only have we made the shorts*
- > *available in an I*S, but we have also reprinted the first three in the back*

⁴⁰¹ A year later I asked David what had happened to all this. Here's what he said:

I spoke to the Redfords this afternoon after church, and LeAnn said that the person she had in mind was their son John, who is an actor and also involved in movie production. He has read our series and is also a Trekkie. Apparently nothing came of her suggestion. Jac said that what Hollywood wants now is stories with "buzz," i.e. adrenaline surges, etc. He said that the Starman series would make a terrific movie or television series, but it wasn't what Hollywood wants now. He said that for Hollywood to produce something, even the story doesn't have to be good as long as it has "buzz." In other words, no surprise: we're too good for Hollywood. I had so little expectations for this possibility that I had even forgotten about it completely. Nice to have quality Hollywood people commend our stuff, though.

- > of Starman books. The people to whom this would be marketed would already
- > have three of the five short stories (i.e. in the back of DIE and LROM) –
- > why would they want yet another copy, and one that isn't as nice and
- > permanent as what they have in the back of their Starman books? Is it really
- > worth it to have them all together in one place? I'm not trying to shoot
- > down the idea; these are just some issues that crossed my mind...

Hmmm. I guess you're right. And it would be an amount of work even if we had it professionally printed and stapled. I've already set it up, but it only took a half hour or less. I'll keep the file handy for fun if nothing else.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2002 9:21 PM

- > There is one thing we could do with it that occurred to me. What if, in the
- > print-on-demand reprints of the books, we took out the short stories? Then
- > when we had ten or so (enough to fill up a 200 page book), we could issue as
- > a print-on-demand paperback/hardback volume the set of Starman stories.

Smart idea—not least because it means we don't have to do anything right now.

The Inter*Stellars are all ready now except for issue #3. I'll make ten of those later. The machine heated up and Leslie had to go.

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2002 12:42 AM

- > [Mike] Yes, David ,the maps [of Mars] were great⁴⁰²a
- > very nice way to be accurate/realistic in our locations!

⁴⁰² David had found a website that showed detailed maps of the surface of Mars. He located the site we had previously taken as the setting for the adventures in AOM and LROM and sent it to Mike and me. It later appeared in I*S #5 on page 26.

Thanks! It was pretty exciting to find that site and locate the very area [on Mars] we'd been writing about for two years and finding that the terrain matched pretty well—even to a large field and a deep ravine and a lot of folded land in the right places, not to mention an obviously deep crater! The only problem is that the distance is only a little more than half of what the books say. If we ever really want to use the map, that would mean going back through the books and changing all the mileage to match the actual terrain. It could be done but is probably not worth the effort.⁴⁰³ I did look at it more carefully, though, and charted it out in pretty good detail.

Well, LROM should be in transit. In a few days we ought to be ogling our work!

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2002 6:51 PM

*> It's a good thing to know! I would actually make a motion to go back and
> make the changes to get everything exactly right. I know it will take time,
> but we can have the changes ready for AOM edition #3 and TRA/JTP/DIE/LROM
> edition #2. Keep in mind that one day there might actually BE somebody in
> Crater 91 reading Assault on Mars, and having everything actually be correct
> would be a very nice touch: that was one of the things about Rick Brant that
> still impresses Rick Brant fans. What was that that Fred said? "Quality is
> severe drudgery" or something to that effect...*

Well, you're right, and I'd like to have everything right on target, too. I can take care of that right after I*S#5 goes out.

David

⁴⁰³ More than a year later David went through the texts of all the books and made the changes. It was easier than he thought, and took less than an hour.

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2002 7:53 PM

- > *I just wanted to let you know that today in the mail I received an*
- > *extraordinary package: the first segment of the Starman series, bound*
- > *together in one beautiful book.*⁴⁰⁴

That was fast! I only sent it last Friday. Valerie Kramer already received her copies of LROM, too! I'm glad you like the big book. As always, I have noticed a number of errors in it already—you can imagine my chagrin when I noticed that page 28 had been skipped. The photocopier took two pages at once. Well, at least I noticed it in time to insert the page before packing it up. The blue stripe on the cover makes me wince too, and I'm not sure what happened. I made a color photocopy of the rest of the cover to piece together for the last little strip, but it came out blue instead of black. Maybe my color ink cartridge was running out.

David

DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2002 9:17 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I have been a Doc Savage fan for a while now and have always thought that The STARMEN should have a code like Docs'.

What do you guys think? Yes, I know some might call it "hokey" or deride it in some way....but I think that there is scant little code promoted for the youth of today.⁴⁰⁵

Mike

⁴⁰⁴ This was just amazing. What David had done was take all five Starman books and all five short stories and then combine them all into one volume, with the stories sorted chronologically and each story properly footnoted with items from the Writer's Notes. It was amazing, and a real shock to receive in the mail! The title of the book is *The Starman Saga*, and as far as I know only three copies of it exist, and members of the Starman team hold all three copies.

⁴⁰⁵ I like this idea and would still like to see this done! I could see the Starmen using a code of conduct.

DATE: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 03, 2002 2:18 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Since it's rather impractical right now to produce copies of the fantastic*
- > *annotated Starman Saga for everyone, I got to thinking and an idea occurred*
- > *to me! What would you guys think about producing little Starman Companion*
- > *books – one for each of the books we released.*

Not a bad idea! I'd like to be sure there's a market for it before doing too much with it, but putting it into Inter*Stellar format would be easy. It's still some work, but not too much. Very little financial outlay, and it's basically print-on-demand.⁴⁰⁶

What do you think about offering the 600-page book on CD? That could be done extremely easily and we could make it very affordable. I'd need to have you scan in the illustrations, though, Jon. I had to print the text and then scotch tape all the illustrations in place before photocopying. Or you could teach me how to scan and place illustrations.

I'm off to a three-day conference in an hour or so, and so won't be online until late Saturday or Sunday.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 05, 2002 4:43 PM

- > *I really wish that we could print this Starman Saga book as-is; it is just*
- > *beautiful, and it is a Starman fan's dream. Wouldn't you love to have*
- > *annotated Rick Brant books with all the cool extras that are in the Starman*
- > *saga book? I know we could print it through 1stBooks for \$598 and have it*
- > *available indefinitely. We may want to consider doing that someday; if we*
- > *ever do get a lot of Starman fans I think they will be interested.*

⁴⁰⁶ This is another intriguing idea that we never did: we ended up producing the Starman Archives instead.

At some point I need the leisure to read through the Saga. I never have read the stories myself, and already, as I scan them, I can see other places where footnotes would be appropriate, as well as where a few corrections are needed. At some point a second version of the Saga can be done, either on CD just for us, or for 1stBooks.

...

- > > *What do you think about offering the 600-page book on CD? That*
- > > *could be done extremely easily and we could make it very affordable...*
- >
- > *That is very true, but that would be tantamount to giving away all our*
- > *books for free. CDs can be copied very easily ... Distributing the book on*
- > *a CD is not very safe.*

Good point. Let's not do it that way, then.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2002 9:44 AM

- > *The file is much too large to put on the website, but I can offer it for a*
- > *fee – say \$5.*
- > *Please note in the I*S that the file is a MPG file, and they need equipment*
- > *to play MPG files (like Windows Media Player) in order to play it...*

Okay, the info will go into the I*S.

- > *If you'd like, I could*
- > *announce this to our customers and put it on the website and so forth; just*
- > *let me know.*

Good idea. Not too many people saw it at the convention, I think, so this would be a way to get it distributed to people who want it.

- > *I've been wanting to put a copy of our talk on the CD but I*
- > *haven't been able to do that yet and I don't know when I will be able to, so*
- > *going ahead and offering the CD to the public would probably be a fine idea.*

- > *Maybe we could put some other things on it as well, or we could just let it*
- > *go as-is.*

Whatever you want. If you decided to add some stuff to the CD, let me know in a day or two so I can put the news into the I*S.

David

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2002 11:13 PM

Dear Jon,

Valerie Kramer has uploaded the CD you sent her of the Starman video to a website. Maybe with her permission we can add a link to it from our own site. It's a huge file, as you well know. She said that downloading it is not for the faint of heart.

David

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2002 4:49 PM

- > *I like Zip a great deal and think that he is a very good character.*
- > *I wasn't sure at first, but I like the*
- > *emotional scenes and think that they are some of the highlights of the*
- > *book.*⁴⁰⁷

I agree. It is odd, but I have developed a real affection for these characters. I think that has a lot to do with my readiness to get back to writing about them. It will make it much more pleasant to write without a deadline hanging over me; then I can enjoy the story

⁴⁰⁷ One of the big debates we had on the Starman messageboard was whether the Starmen were too emotional. In series books, heroes rarely showed emotion: they might get angry or upset or pleased about something, but it normally didn't go farther than that. In the Starman books, the characters could be highly emotional: they cried, they had nervous breakdowns, they lost it, etc. It was definitely different, and not everyone thought it was a good thing. Over time the characters matured and quit having nervous breakdowns and this ceased to be an issue, but these emotional scenes are still there in the early books.

myself. My own push to finish the book will be quite enough to keep me from dawdling along the way. I have heard that many authors get involved with their characters, and was rather curious to learn that Leslie McFarlane didn't have any attachment whatever to the Hardys I think that [the Epsteins] and Hal Goodwin were both surprised to find out how influential and popular their books had been (at the LaCrosse conference in 1984—I have their remarks on tape).⁴⁰⁸

> *we're making a new sort of hero...*

Amen. I truly think that the Starman series is a terrific achievement in many ways, and I wouldn't change much of anything about it.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2002 8:42 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

When we three had dinner at Ruby Tuesday's in Charlottesville,⁴⁰⁹ one of the things we discussed was making our next five Starman books the Xenobot segment of our series, spreading them out more over years than the first five, and making the last book *The Last Command* and maybe finishing the series off with that book. AOM to LROM cover about 2 1/2 years, counting the short stories. The next segment could cover 7 years or so.

When we met the previous year in Richmond we also devised a storyline in which Zip could be rescued from death at the end of TLC, so we can go either way with that story. (I even thought we could put BOTH endings in TLC so readers can take whichever one they prefer!)⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ I later took this tape and put it on a CD and distributed the CD to anyone who wanted a copy. Not that this has anything to do with the Starman series, except that in a way it does: I highly doubt I would have heard about that tape and got a copy if there had been no Starman series and I hadn't met David.

⁴⁰⁹ That's right, folks! That is where the decision was made – in person, by the three of us, one rainy evening. It was the day before the conference opened, which I think makes the exact date October 11, 2002. It was a Friday.

⁴¹⁰ At this point we still had no idea how we were going to end the series. What was going to happen to the characters? Should anyone die in the end or would that be a horrible travesty? We didn't know, and as

Then after we finish the second segment in 3-4 years real time, we can fill in gaps in the story with further stories for as long as we want.⁴¹¹

The more I think about it, the more I like the idea. It does at least three things:

- 1) it keeps interest in both writers and readers in the ongoing story we've laid out in the first segment
- 2) it gives us a workable schedule and plan for finishing off the series without killing ourselves with overwork or dedicating the next 15 years to the project
- 3) after the publication of book 10, it gives us plenty of opportunity to keep the series going as long as we want with the option of ending it at any time or in any way we want—i.e. an anthology of short stories, novels, whatever.

In this way we can keep our implied commitment to our readership as well as ourselves, and "finish the story" in a reasonable amount of time, but we can also keep the series going if we want after that is done.

I think it is rather clear that we are going to be lifelong friends, and that we won't want our work to end. I also want to make sure that we don't leave a "loose" end or uncompleted vital story somewhere in case one of us gets hits by a meteor prematurely or something, so I want to hasten and get the consummation of the series in print.

I'm ready to commit and make that our definite plan. If you guys agree, then I'd feel comfortable letting our readers know. That'll satisfy their curiosity about our plans for the future, give them confidence that we're not going to get tired and abandon them, and still leave enough excitement about future books after segment 2 is done.

What do you think?

David

you can see we even considered writing two endings, putting them both in the book, and letting our readers take their pick! We at last had a new idea and agreed that it was the most fitting way for the series to end, and we went with it. The last chapter and the epilogue to the Starman series has already been written, and I really like it. You'll just have to wait until book ten comes out to read it yourself!

⁴¹¹ This is exactly what we decided to do!

DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2002 3:54 PM

Dear Mark, Jon, and Mike,

Well, apparently Robert Silverberg is not interested in obtaining a free copy of LROM.⁴¹² It's been two or three weeks since my contact through a Silverberg web site told me that he would forward our offer to RS, but I've heard nothing since. Good suggestion, though, Mark, and thanks!

I did note in the new Juvenile Books Message Board that Silverberg wrote a book called *Starman's Quest*. I did a search for it on Addall and found several copies in good condition for not too much money. I didn't get a copy, but learned that it was published in 1959. This book, plus the French books about the "Starchildren" that our French Starman fan has located expand our inventory of other media containing the name "Starman."

David

DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2002 11:41 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Jon's [3d] modeling of a Xenobot fighter is very interesting! Great work. It has taken on an interesting style of it's own! I think we may need to use both designs...Jon's and one truer to the original. The original has shorter slightly thicker booms connecting the outboard pods. The top leading edge of the "intakes" are not quite as long as Jon's model. You asked for more detail of the front...I will get that to you when I find or draw...for now here is a somewhat scrappy looking original side view. There is an "R2D2" type can imbedded in the center front.⁴¹³

Mike

⁴¹² Mark McSherry had suggested that we send a gift copy of LROM to Robert Silverberg, who had written a children's story called *Lost Race of Mars* in 1960. We tracked Silverberg down through a website and found a way to send him the book, but did not get a response. His book is mentioned in I*S#5 on pages 16-19. Copies of his book are readily available.

⁴¹³ With this note, the Archives concerning the first five Starman books draw to a close. Thanks a lot for reading all this, folks! I'll see you again after Starman #10, *The Last Command*, is released. Until then, take care!

—Jonathan K. Cooper

Bonus Section #1: The Starman Adventures That Might Have Been

The Plots

After I put this volume together, I e-mailed it to David and Mike to get their opinion. David suggested adding another section in which we discussed the Starman tales we plotted but never actually wrote – ideas that never managed to leave the drawing board. I thought it sounded like a good idea, so I've added this bonus section! I hope you enjoy this look at the Starman tales that might have been.

Most of these ideas are just fragments; they're concepts, partially developed, or perhaps a section of text that never found its way into a book. Some of these ideas are good ones that we just never had a chance to write. Other plots sprang from ideas that we later (thankfully) discarded or exchanged for something else. It's an interesting mixture. These adventures are presented in no certain order.

None of these ideas are ever likely to see the light of day, which is why they are here. We do have *other* ideas we haven't yet used that aren't included here because they just might one day find their way into a book near you! You never know what might happen.

Secret of The Dark Planet

Mike Dodd: About the Starventure's speed out to Nyx and Nyx's speed toward the Sun⁴¹⁴.....My vision here was to have the Starventure speed straight out ,then reverse direction and speed back toward the sun.....matching Nyx's velocity at some point...then going into an orbit or landing on Nyx.....this is really the only way to achieve this sort of thing. Nyx's orbit is very similar to a comet like Halley's...only even more elongated These kinds of orbits are not circular...they are almost linear. Jon was very much correct when he pointed out that 500 years is way too short for the Nyx orbit.....50K or 500K is more like it.

Jon Cooper: Here's an idea for you: what if Nyx was the "victim" of early Martian experiments? Perhaps before they built Tharsos, they wanted to experiment with the "planetary drive" and, since Nyx had all that fuel and the Martians wanted it, they put a "planetary drive" in the core of Nyx and activated it for a long time (having it run off the Helium 3) and steered it toward the Sun. The idea was that, when Nyx finally reached the Sun, they could steer it into orbit around the Sun and make it another of the Sun's satellites. Perhaps deep in the core of Nyx is a vast planetary drive, ancient and decaying, waiting for some Starmen to descend into Nyx and discover it! The riddle of

⁴¹⁴ At the time we came up with this idea, we were working over the plot for *Journey to the Tenth Planet*.

why Nyx travels -so- fast could be a big mystery that the Starmen would have to solve in another Lost Starman adventure, SECRET OF THE DARK PLANET.

Intended format: full-length book

Source of the idea: At first we planned on making the orbit of Nyx in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* only take 500 years. This would mean that Nyx would have to travel outrageously fast. Why would it be traveling this fast? That is what this story would answer.

Reason for being canned: We decided it was more realistic to change the orbit and make it take a very long time, and if it was taking a very long time the reason behind the story was gone.

The Key to Tharsos

Plot written: 8/8/2000

Basic Concept:

After the war with the Xenobots, the Martians decommissioned Tharsos and hid it inside the Asteroid Belt. They took precautions to hide it well.

Their precautions went beyond simply hiding it. They were afraid that some other hostile power might gain hold of Tharsos and use it as a warship – for as a fighting machine, Tharsos had no parallel. Tharsos had some of the mightiest engines, strongest power plants and fiercest weapons that the galaxy had ever seen.

When the Martians designed Tharsos, they tied everything together in a central core unit. This core was something like a storage medium in that it gave Tharsos' central computers the data necessary to run the asteroid and the huge power plants, but there was more to it: this central unit was also a machine. The central computers would send a request to the central unit, asking that the warp engines be engaged, and the central unit would carry it out.

The Martians called this device the Key⁴¹⁵ to Tharsos. Without the Key, Tharsos was simply another asteroid base.

When Tharsos was decommissioned, the Martians took care to make it look like simply another asteroid base. They hid and encoded the deeper levels of the asteroid that held the weaponry, warp drives, gravity control, and its huge power plant. On the

⁴¹⁵ It should be noted that by the time this plot was written, I'd been working on a computer game called *The Key* for almost two years. Keys must appeal to me or something.

upper levels they put simpler machines: a simpler power plant, a sublight drive, a sheathing system. (It was this smaller power system that was fried in TRA.) Those who saw it might be impressed, but what they were seeing was a fraction of what Tharsos was truly capable of.

The Martians removed the Key from Tharsos and hid it. They hid it well: they didn't want anyone to come across it. Even if someone did find it, it wasn't likely they would recognize it, or know what it could be used for. To use the Key one had to have knowledge of Tharsos, and to use Tharsos fully one had to have the Key: the two went hand in hand.

The Key though was unique: it was designed specifically for Tharsos in the heyday of Martian civilization. The capability and machines that made the Key were no longer available: if the Key was lost, then the advanced capabilities of Tharsos were lost forever.

After the Key was hid, centuries passed. Eventually the Starmen parachuted onto Mars and liberated it. Tharsos was rescued, and the men from Earth restored it and saved it from destruction. The men from Earth, however, had no idea of its true capabilities, for without the Key the extra levels to Tharsos were inaccessible.

Soon [right after #11: *THE CAVES OF MERCURY*]⁴¹⁶ Mars decided it was time to reveal the secret. The secret had been held for long enough: Tharsos could now be resorted and used against the renewed Xenobot menace. So, at the proper time Mars went to retrieve the Key and turn on Tharsos – but the Key was gone.

Gone! The Martians hunted for it, but they couldn't find it. They were at a complete loss. Where could it be?

Rather than tell the Earthmen and risk having the Xenos find out that Tharsos was useless (for the Xenobots still feared Tharsos), they kept it a secret.

Then one day...

Summary:

Book starts out in Chapter 1, with the above scene taking place. Some Martians get together in a Martian city, shortly after getting back from Mercury in book #11. They have a conference, in which Tharsos' true capabilities and the Key is explained for the younger Martians that weren't around back then. They decide to give the Key to the Earthmen (who have possession of the asteroid) and help them bring it back to life so they could battle the Xenobots.

The Martians go to retrieve the Key, and find it gone. Gone! They can't believe it. They search high and low for it and find it nowhere. At the end of chapter 1 it states

⁴¹⁶ In our original plot outline, a book entitled *The Caves of Mercury* was slated to be book eleven. Things later changed, but not until we started work on *Descent Into Europa*.

that the Martians continued to search for the Key as the years rolled by, but they found nothing. They grew discouraged. Then one day...

Chapter 2 starts right after #19 (STAR STATION 1) ends. The Starmen have returned home after a harrowing mission, and they're visiting Mr. Vly's home. They have a discussion just like old times. Mr. Vly shows them some more of his rock collection (some really gorgeous and amazing crystals he's had for years, which he gathered from all corners of the solar system – the Moon, Mars, the Asteroid Belt, etc.) and they talk about old times.

Mr. Vly tells them that he's had some trouble: outsiders are interfering with him. He's had some break-ins recently, and wasn't sure why: they came in but didn't steal anything. The Starmen decide to help him out.

They soon find themselves in deep waters. Powerful forces are behind the attacks on Mr. Vly: they seem to think he has something very valuable that he's hiding from them. Mr. Vly can't imagine what it is.

After some harrowing experiences, the Starmen start to piece together some clues: they learn about the Key to Tharsos, that some men from Earth know about it and are hunting for it, and that everyone thinks Mr. Vly has it.

Finally after many red herrings and adventures, the Starmen conquer their foes, but they still don't understand. The enemies were so positive that Mr. Vly had the Key – but if so where is it?

The Starmen ask Mr. Vly if he's sure he doesn't have any other artifacts from Mars. Vly off-handedly said that he's sure; the only other artifact were the six dirty rock pillars he had mined off of Mars long ago. They were large things, 10 feet wide and 30 feet tall: he used them as supports in his main room. He said they weren't particularly pretty (just a dirty gray color) but they were the hardest things he had ever seen: not even a high-powered laser could chip off a piece so he could analyze it.

All the Starmen had seen them countless times. They wondered: surely the Key to Tharsos was a small piece of machinery. It couldn't be – surely...

It was. The ancient Martian engineers came in and recognized it at once. They carefully took the pillars out, carefully joined them end on end, and took the protective coating off: and there it was. It really was a complicated electronic machine, but they had disguised it to look like an ordinary rock.⁴¹⁷

The Martians hid it as pillars inside one of their old cities, thinking no one would bother them. Mr. Vly saw them, recognized them as odd and took them home.

In the last chapter, the Martians had begun to reinstall the Key. It was a complex task: it would take a long time before Tharsos was ready to run again. But now it was

⁴¹⁷ As I look back on this now I realize how crazy that idea was. There's no way the Ahmanyans would leave something like that unguarded! They'd store it at a secret base somewhere, or something...

only a matter of time before Tharsos was ready, and the war on the Xenobots could begin!

Advertising Blurp:

Thousands of years ago, the Martians used the incredible power of Tharsos to defeat the power of the Xenobots. After the war was over, the Martians decommissioned Tharsos and cloaked it. As a protection against misuse, the Martians removed the irreplaceable Key to Tharsos and hid it, leaving Tharsos toothless.

Centuries passed, and eventually the 22nd century arrived. Mars decided it was time to reactivate Tharsos, so they went to retrieve the Key – but it was gone! A furious search ensued, but no trace of the Key was found. The Martians tried to keep its disappearance a secret, but eventually the enemies of Earth learned of its disappearance, and sought to find it.

Soon a desperate race against time ensued to see who could find the Key first. The Key alone had the power to unlock the power of Tharsos – and whoever controlled Tharsos controlled the mightiest warship the galaxy had ever known!

Intended format: full-length book

Source of the idea: Tharsos was an incredible weapon, and when it was put in cold storage after the first Ahmanyen-Xenobot war we imagined they would take some steps to ensure that hostile forces couldn't take it over and use it. We thought that they would take the most important part – a key of some kind – and hide it, and would only bring it out again if all had been rebuilt and Tharsos was needed. This would help ensure that Tharsos couldn't be used as a weapon against the Ahmanyens. When Zimbardo took Tharsos over, he couldn't use its titanic weaponry because that key was gone.

At some point, that key would have to be retrieved and used, and that could be the source of a good story. So, I drafted a story about it – definitely not a particularly good one, but a story, with the idea that we could tweak it and make it better.

Reason for being canned: Everything changed when we decided to write *Doomsday Horizon* instead of *Operation Luna*. At first we had planned a solar system that slowly rebuilt until it was strong, and then attacked the Xenobots. In *Doomsday Horizon* all that was thrown out the window: now the Xenobots are the ones on the warpath and Earth has no time to rebuild. *Doomsday Horizon* led directly to *The Starlight Maneuver* and the events that happen in that story make a story like *The Key to Tharsos* impossible. You'll see what I mean when you read that book.

Attack of the Giant Killer Wasps

Mike Dodd: Interestingly, I have been looking at a story idea that might not fit into any of the present 23 books. Here goes:

A remote area of Mars has come back to life.....and has been basically quarantined ...both for ecological preservation reasons AND because the scientist teams that go in all get viciously attacked by really nasty insect-like Martian Wasps. (They look roughly like a large Earth Wasp but with the added threat of a long tail boom that carries a pod that is filled with a highly explosive acid mixture; this part being based on the real life Bombardier beetle.) The Wasps can drop these bombs with great accuracy! These teams barely get out with their lives. What is going on is that there are several colonies or hives of these semi-intelligent critters and they are extremely territorial...even to the point of making war on each other. Someone at SE invents a miniature version of telepresence robots (*mini-Robots of Saturn*). These guys are only about 3 inches tall or so....allowing some Starmen to go in and investigate the region (the small size "hopefully" will not elicit the rage of the War Wasps). Of course the microbots can fly in their specially designed Dragonflyer ornithopter craft...only about 3 feet long. Good radio links make all this possible and instantaneous. There is lot that we can expound upon here...but I wanted to provide just the basics.

Jon had mentioned perhaps using one of the "pocket world" scenarios⁴¹⁸I am all for this as well.....hmmmm..... perhaps we could even change the War Wasp setting to a hollowed out asteroid/ ancient ecosystem.

Intended format: mini-novel, roughly half the length of a normal story

Source of the idea: We thought that if we released a Starman story for free and it was widely distributed, people would become interested in the series and sales would increase. Mike Dodd came up with this really fantastic idea for the story, and I still think it's great.

Reason for being canned: We never had the time to write a mini-adventure, and ended up releasing *The Runaway Asteroid* for free instead, thus removing the purpose of this story. Time will tell if this will increase interest in the series or not.

⁴¹⁸ "pocket worlds" were another of Mike's ideas. These are spherical "bubbles" inside of asteroids in which an entire microworld may exist. They may be empty or they may contain a closed ecosystem of some kind. We tapped this idea in the short story, "Return to Europa."

The Wreck of the Silver Star

Summary:

In 2126, one of the greatest and boldest interplanetary liners of all time disappeared in the Asteroid Belt while on its way back to Earth after a record-breaking run to Saturn. With it disappeared some of the best minds of the Solar System, as well as the greatest collections of jewels ever seen: the fabled Lunar Stars. This fabulous collection of lunar gems had been brought to Titan as part of an expedition of the best of Earth's science and wealth. When the ship disappeared in the Belt, many speculated that thieves had hijacked the ship: but back then deep space was unsettled and lawless, and an investigation turned up nothing.

Then, decades later, Starlight Enterprise found a message set adrift from the Silver Star's captain moments before its demise. The message sent the Starmen on a quest into the deepest corner of the Asteroid Belt to discover the fate of the Silver Star. The quest led the Starmen through a vast, forgotten world, filled with danger and remnants of the past – and across the path of men who would do anything to obtain the most valuable gems the world had ever seen!

Plot Outline:

Chapter 1: replay of the SS's last moments. Book starts out with the captain piloting it through the Belt. Then something happens (poss. with the nuclear fission engines) and the ship is in trouble. They see an asteroid ahead, and send out a desperate call that they're about to land on it, and their condition is critical. After that, nothing more is heard from the SS until decades later...

Rest of the book: The Starmen go on a hunt to find the SS – and trailing them, of course, is a group of bad guys. The asteroid that the ship landed on was one of the Martian's old habitats: they were kind of like zoos. Each floor on the asteroid had a different terrain: African, tropical, prehistoric, arctic, etc. Some were hostile, others fertile and pleasant. The asteroid was controlled and maintained by a giant system of automatic machines / computers, and with them was a huge bank of DNA for the creatures in the zoo.

What had happened was that when the ship crashed, they found the layers and settled in the fertile and pleasant layers. The scientists studied the machines (recording their findings) and began maintaining them. They couldn't understand why they still worked: they figured that someone must have been maintaining them until recently. They discuss the alien culture (they found the symbol) but never arrive at any conclusions.

When the Starmen come, they happen to enter a layer that is incredibly hostile and vicious, filled with carnivores, the deadly sharp-edged swamp grass, and so on. To compound all this are the trigger-happy thieves who just want the jewels.

Eventually the Starmen get the thieves under control, and they make their way to the fertile layer, where they find the rest of the SS living a rather content life. The captain of the SS gives them the mail (he felt rather bad about not delivering it), and when they ask for the lunar stars he gives them to them, saying that he thinks the ecosystem he's living in is a far greater treasure than any chest of cold, hard stones.

They're happy to regain contact with the outside world and to see loved ones again (although it's been 25-30 years). Some elect to go back to Earth; others are happy with their life here (after so long) and elect to stay. Quite likely, they say, the asteroid will become an important place: it will attract settlers, scientists, biologists... They will try to keep it a quiet, restful place – a haven for those who just want a little green farm (much like Con Krag⁴¹⁹ wanted!).

At the end of the book, after the Starmen leave, the captain goes back into a little hidden control room. The captain looks around at all the complex controls, then he looks on the wall at a huge, embossed emblem: an emblem of a lush planet with three moons forming a triangle in the corner. The room monitors and controls the asteroid environment; he knew that this wasn't some odd pocket world but a deliberately engineered ecosystem. He looked at the logo a long time, wondering who had built this place and why... he was hard-pressed to explain why he had kept it a secret, but something inside him seemed to tell him that he shouldn't reveal the true nature of this asteroid – not yet, anyway.

Intended format: mini-novel, roughly half the length of a normal story

Source of the idea: At the time we were passing around ideas for short stories; Inter*Stellar #1 had not yet been written and *Flight of the Olympia* hadn't been written either. This was just an idea I had as we were looking for short stories to write.

Reason for being canned: David pointed out that this story wasn't very plausible and didn't make a whole lot of sense, and I agreed. We ended up using *Flight of the Olympia* instead – a much better story, also about the wreck of a large spaceship. This story wasn't good enough to get off the drawing board.

⁴¹⁹ of Dig Allen *Captives in Space* fame!

The Blurb Without a Home

A few years ago I obtained copies of two unpublished Tom Swift manuscripts: *Chaos on Earth* and *The Micro World*.⁴²⁰ These were intended to be books 12 and 13 in the Tom Swift III series, but thankfully they were never published. These books were *awful: really awful*. The writing was terrible and the plot was worse. At one point in *Chaos on Earth* Tom Swift and his friends are inside a spaceship that is *eaten by a giant asteroid!* This book would have rivaled the original text of the Hardy Boy book *The Disappearing Floor* for the most ludicrous series book of all time had it been published.

Anyway, after reading it I was inspired to write this little scene:

"As the ship Lucient spread on through the dark void, Starman Joe sat at the helm of the ship, keeping a sharp watch. The cold blackness of space was depressing to Joe: it made him long for the bright green pastures of Earth. Joe shuddered: no wonder the crew was putting stock into the haunting legends of the Nemesis. One could believe anything out here...

As Joe gazed out the window, he watched the ship fly by a huge asteroid in space. Joe wondered idly what an asteroid was doing so far from the Belt. Suddenly, he gave a squawk: that asteroid was -alive-! With bulging eyes, Joe watched the asteroid come alive; it raced over to the Lucient with its mouth wide open, hungrily snapping at the Lucient's tail!

Quickly Joe stepped up speed, but it was too late! Joe screamed as the killer asteroid opened its mouth wide and grabbed the Lucient in its mouth. Joe heard the horrible screech of metal as the asteroid's teeth grated against the hull of the Lucient. As the red alert sounded, Joe screamed – and then began to scream hysterically when he felt something grab his shoulder...

"Joe, Joe, wake up! What's wrong, man?" As Joe opened his eyes, he saw Mark and Zip staring down at him. Joe was lying in bed in his cabin. "Man, what kind of dream were you having? You sounded hysterical!"

Joe rubbed his eyes. "You'd never believe me, Zip," Joe mumbled. "We were flying through space, see, and then this asteroid with hungry eyes and big teeth came along and..."

Mark looked surprised. "Come on, Joe – even you know better than that! How on earth – " Mark then began to laugh. "Ah, now I understand!" He picked up a copy of a slim paperback book entitled '#12 - Planet of Monsters' that was sitting by Joe's beside. "No wonder you were having nightmares! You've got to stop reading these far-fetched science-fiction books before you go to bed..."

⁴²⁰ No, I cannot give you a copy of these. Don't even ask.

It was to be a singularly obscure in-joke, understood by practically nobody. We never used it, of course, but that didn't stop me from writing it!

#7 - The Fog of Doom

Plot Summary:

Several years ago, a Xenobot commander arose who wanted to overthrow the Xeno leader and seize control over the Xeno empire. He cared nothing for the Benefactors or Earth, but decided to conquer the solar system and use its resources to build up his personal army; once it was built he intended to invade the Xeno homeland. So, he secretly built a base on Uranus, unknown to the other Xenos. He is weak but growing. He watches events and decides that the 3 Starmen are his biggest threat: not only did they reconquer Nyx, capture Tharsos from the pirates and escape from the clutches of the Banjoman and utterly destroy him, but they also seemed to have connections with some powerful aliens. So, deep in his fortress on Uranus, he conceives a plan to trap the Starmen. The Xeno sends what appears to be a top-priority message to their ship while they're flying to Mars urging them to go to the Belt. When they enter the Belt they are ambushed and crash-land on an asteroid – one subject to the fog and underground rivers Mike speculated about.⁴²¹ At the peak of the book the Starmen must fight through the dense fog (in which they are blind but the Xenos are not!) to escape. Here they learn of the existence of the renegade commander, the fact that the Xenos are asteroid miners, and that the commander is looking for something. Data they captured reveal that he is interested in many mysterious stone carvings located in the Belt, which brings the Starmen to #8, *The Riddle of the Stone Men*.

*[Mike Dodd] > Yes, the flying snake videos are awesome.....and I
> think we might need to have some of these critters imported
> to a low grav area (such as a pocket world) and then they
> can truly fly as opposed to poorly glide.....they could
> take off and attack folks!!!!!!*

That is a great idea!! The terrific thing is that the next book segment takes place entirely in the Asteroid belt, where we can finally put to use all of Mike's ideas concerning asteroids and low-grav environments. Perhaps THE FOG OF DOOM (or whatever we rename that book to) can take place on a pocket world infested with these nasty flying snakes...!]

⁴²¹ Mike Dodd speculated that some asteroids might have a core of enriched uranium, making them warm enough to melt ice in their cores – meaning they might have underground rivers of liquid water!

Intended format: full-length novel

Source of the idea: I wanted to come up with a series of adventures in the Asteroid Belt. This was to take place after *Doomsday Horizon*.

Reason for being canned: Once I actually plotted *Doomsday Horizon* I realized that there was no place for a book like this; it could not be number seven in the series.

#8 – *The Riddle of the Stone Men*

Plot Summary:

The Starmen and Xenos chase each other on a hair-raising trip through the Belt, searching for these stone statues. Some were made (as Mike said) by bored astronauts. Others are clue to a lost mine that the commander of the renegade Xeno wants – a lost mine with advanced and powerful machinery which is better than anything the Xenos currently have. The Xenos built the mine long ago, hid it, and lost it after the Martian-Xeno war. In this book we can show off the Belt culture, complete with Earth mining operations and the somewhat wild and rough reputation it has. By the time the book draws to a close they find the clue they need to return to a long lost mine. That story is told in the tale *The Lost Mine of the Lucians*.

Intended format: full-length novel

Source of the idea: I wanted to come up with a series of adventures in the Asteroid Belt. This was to take place after *The Fog of Doom*.

Reason for being canned: Once I actually plotted *Doomsday Horizon* I realized that there was no place for a book like this; it could not be number eight in the series.

#9 – *The Lost Mine of the Lucians*

Plot Summary:

The mine was built long ago, by the Lucians shortly before they fell and became the Xenobots. In this book the Starmen learn where the Xenos came from and realize that the beautiful stone men and the lost mine were built by them, who were once a powerful and good civilization. This mine was built by the Lucians, lost during the first

war, repossessed by fallen Xenos, lost during the Martian-Xeno war. It is a huge magnificent place but it is dark, ruined, empty. The Xenos want to repossess it and the Starmen want to stop them. The book takes place almost entirely in this mine, with the Starmen battling to keep the Xenos out until help can arrive. After a rather harrowing four or five days, the Earth forces come and take possession of it and its valuable elements – elements needed to build a fleet of FTL vehicles! This book shows how far the Lucians fell, and is the first adventure in which a MARTIAN team accompanies the Starmen all the way. There are also some hints given here that a Lucian (unfallen) may still be around.

Intended format: full-length novel

Source of the idea: I wanted to come up with a series of adventures in the Asteroid Belt. This was to take place after *The Riddle of the Stone Men*.

Reason for being canned: Once I actually plotted *Doomsday Horizon* I realized that there was no place for a book like this; it could not be number nine in the series.

#10 – *The Secret of the Asteroids*

Plot Summary:

All along, the renegade Xeno commander has believed that somewhere in the Belt was powerful mining equipment left over from the time the earlier Xenos mined the Belt. Armed with clues from the lost mine, the Starmen try to beat him to it. In a fantastic scene at the end of the book (which Mike first envisioned some time ago as Pearl Harbor in space), the fleet the Xeno commander had secretly built up invaded the Belt and attacked the lone Star Ranger – the commander wanted his revenge before seizing the mining equipment Zip seems to have found and then blasting Earth with it. At the same time, a fleet of Xenos flies into Tharsos, and minutes later it leaves Earth orbit at a high speed and vanishes into hyperspace. The Starmen are barely able to escape the Star Ranger before the fleet blows it into atoms. They land (shipless) on an asteroid and go inside it and the Xenos follow closely – until the asteroid begins shooting at them! The asteroid was Tharsos: the Martians on board crushed the Xenos that boarded her, flew to the Belt through hyperspace, and rescued Zip and repulsed the invading Xeno fleet. (The Martians decided that there was no use continuing to hide since the Xenos were invading left and right.) At the end it turns out that the Xeno fleet invasion to seize where Zip thought the remaining ancient Xeno mining equipment was in vain because there was nothing there - no equipment remained. However, in the com-

puters of the lost mine were the plans to build such ships, equipment, so all was not lost (although it would take some time to understand the plans).

Intended format: full-length novel

Source of the idea: I wanted to come up with a series of adventures in the Asteroid Belt. This was to take place after *The Lost Mine of the Lucians*.

Reason for being canned: Once I actually plotted *Doomsday Horizon* I realized that there was no place for a book like this; it could not be number ten in the series.

#16 – *The Rings of Saturn*

Plot Summary:

Water is in great demand in the Solar System. Human beings cannot survive without it, and yet few planets have a good supply. Earth has an enormous supply of water, but Earth's high gravity makes exporting large quantities of it impractical. Starlight Enterprise wants to expand its operations and begin terraforming other planets, but before it can do that it needs a large supply of water that is easy to get to and easy to ship.

It turns out that such a supply exists: the rings of Saturn are very, very rich in water. Setting up a base in the rings to get the ice and shoot it off to the rest of the Solar System should be an easy task, especially with an indigenous race already living at Saturn. There shouldn't be any trouble—but when the Xenobots find out about the operation, they start making trouble of their own...

More Detailed Plot Summary:

The book starts out with the Starmen being sent to the SE space station that is orbiting Venus – they were asked to report there for information regarding their next mission. The Starmen land and enter a large conference room that has several other people present.

The Starmen are showed a picture on the screen of a beautiful planet with large oceans, green forests, and cloud cover – it's a breathtaking sight. The continent patterns reveal that it isn't Earth; it's not a planet that the Starmen can place. The picture zooms in closer, zooming through the tropical forests. The Starmen are astonished at the wild-life: it's composed of towering dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures – right alongside more modern animals.

The Starmen ask what it means: what is the picture of? They are astonished at its beauty, but it's not familiar. Is this prehistoric Earth? A planet that the Martians visited long ago?

The Starmen are told that the answer is none of the above; what they saw was what the planet Venus would look like after they completed their terraformation project.

The presentation begins: they explain that for a long time SE has had long-range goals to terraform the inner planets in the solar system: Mercury, Venus, and Mars. The Martian terraformation project is working its way along: currently they were collaborating with the Martians so they could rebuild the planet to where the Martians could re-inhabit it.

For a long time SE believed that terraforming Mercury and Venus was impossible: it would be centuries before they could even begin to touch either planet. But then the Starmen discovered the large Xenobot mining machine and the picture changed dramatically. SE had carefully taken apart the Xenobot miner, and found it an amazing vehicle: it could run off of an atomic process that could disintegrate matter. Anything would do for fuel – dirt, rocks, ice, anything could be converted. The mining machine was huge: it was nearly a mile long.

The machine had a lot of other features: it could transport matter interplanetary distances for virtually nothing. It could dissect and refine entire asteroids. SE figured out how they could be used to remove the Venusian atmosphere and terraform it – but they would need more than one to do it.

So, then, SE built several of these monstrous ships: they now had a fleet of 4 of these monsters. With these monsters (along with a lot of other equipment), SE planned to strip Venus of its atmosphere and give it a new atmosphere – one habitable to mankind.

The cost would not be cheap: it would amount to more than 7 trillion solars. It would take hundreds of thousands of people, working all over the solar system: people to engineer the plants, scientists to find a way to change the atmosphere, people to design the microbots and nanobots, people to transport and mine the materials, and so on.

But SE decided that it would be worth the cost, so they began the project. Special farms were set up in the Asteroid Belt, on Earth, Mars and the Moon that would begin growing the plants necessary to change the Venusian atmosphere and give it a new one. Ecosystems were set up. Tests and simulations were developed as SE tried to figure out a way to remove the Venusian atmosphere and give it a new one.

At last, after several years of concentrated effort and thousands of years of supercomputer time, SE hit on a way. It would involve the use of all 4 monster machines (to 'mine' the Venusian atmosphere and change it), of a network string of weather-control satellites in Venusian orbit, of several space stations in Venusian orbit, and of an

uncountable number of nanobots and bacteria to break up the Venusian dirt and turn it into luscious Earth-type soil.

The oceans of Venus would need water – a huge, fantastic amount of water. They have decided to get this water from the rings of Saturn and import it to Venus.

The Starmen were impressed. They had a few questions: where would the money come from, how long would it take (they guessed maybe 100 to 250 years), and what was their role?

The money was coming from several sources (see information above); it would be pushing the very limits of SE resources, but if they succeeded it would pay for itself many times over – they would recoup their costs by selling land on Venus.

As to the time frame: with their new equipment, techniques and resources, SE planned to have a breathable atmosphere (with oceans) set up and accepting colonists within two years, and an appreciable machine-based Earth-like ecosystem (with trees and animals and such) within 5 years. The ecosystem would take some time to stabilize to the point where no machines would be needed to support it, but they think that within 25 to 30 years Venus would be stable.

The Starmen were in a state of shock. They looked out the glass window at the seething furnace of Venus. They could not believe it – stepping out onto the Venusian surface in short-sleeves and taking a deep breath of air in just two years! It seemed fantastic.

The men said it was fantastic: it's not something they could have considered possible before A.D. 2500. It would be very impossible if it hadn't been for the Xenobot machine (which obviously had centuries of technology built into it) and for Martian cooperation. Between those two civilizations they had nearly a millennia of spaceflight technology in their hands: with that technology they could achieve the future's greatest achievements today.

The Starmen's assignment was simple: they were to lead the effort to mine the rings of Saturn. At their disposal would be the four Xenobot machines, tens of thousands of workers, many smaller machines, etc. A series of bases and space stations had already been built; they were to start mining the rings and electromagnetically shooting the water toward Venus.

And so it begins!

Long-Lost Top Secret Memo Found in the Files:

TOP SECRET
HIGHLY CLASSIFIED

Internal memo of:
Starlight Enterprise Research Labs

CODENAME: New Eden

PROJECT GOAL: To terraform the planet Venus into a habitable world resembling prehistoric Earth. This planet will have an environment superior to Earth's; its upper atmosphere will filter out all of the sun's deadly rays, theoretically enabling a 'repaired' human who inhabits the world to live for as long as a thousand years. The world will be stocked with ancient life forms: namely, dinosaurs and other plant life of the period.

ESTIMATED COST: 7.4 trillion solars. About a quarter of this sum will come from the personal fortune of the Starlight family. Another quarter will come from land that is presold to Starlight supporters. The final half will come from the bank of Starlight Enterprise itself.

EQUIPMENT: A vast array of machines will be necessary to successfully complete Project Eden. The biggest machinery will be based on a gigantic old Xenobot mining machine. A small fleet of these machines will be responsible for the heavy mining and transportation. Aside from these, a vast array of microbots and smaller machines will be used to alter the Venusian atmosphere.

RESOURCES: Most of the resources used will come from Venus itself. Some equipment will come from the Asteroid Belt (transported, for virtually nothing, by the Xenobot mining machines). The water that will be used for the Venusian oceans will be mined out of the rings of Saturn.

More Sketchy Ideas:

Have the Cereians start Venus rotating (Venus rotates backwards very slowly, and so they need to reverse it and get it spinning at an Earth interval.) This is already done when the book opens.

Perhaps in the prelude, the Custodian of the League of the First Races talks with Richard Starlight about the Stones of Juno.⁴²² He explains that the stones have given him hope: they are the only stones left in this galaxy, and he thinks he can use them to contact the First Races. If he could contact them, he could bring them back home and maybe repopulate the planets he has been so carefully keeping.

⁴²² This is a reference to another Starman adventure we had planned. This one was in three parts, and we actually planned it in great detail. We could end up writing it, though, so I won't divulge its secrets here!

He is extremely grateful, and asks what he can do for Richard. Richard explains that they are interested in a terraformation project, but there is one part that they can't do. [No details are given in the prelude.] The Custodian nods as he hears what Richard wants, and he says that he will get the Cereians to do it.

Then in the first paragraph of the first chapter, Richard is standing in a space station high above a planet, and sees that they have done it: they can begin.

It turns out that the Cereians have a lot of knowledge: they know how to start a planet rotating. They descended en masse into the planet Venus, and did something – SE couldn't quite see what, but they build some huge machines and did some other things. Ever so slowly, Venus slowed down, then started rotating in the other direction – and was soon spinning. The Cereians then dismantled all their equipment and went home.

After all, SE can hardly rotate a planet! It's possible, certainly: it's just a matter of technique – and the Cereians have got it.

Intended format: full-length novel

Source of the idea: This was one of the original 23 books we plotted when we first began; you'll find it in the title listings of the first edition of *Assault on Mars*. This book was intended to be part of a three-book story involving the terraformation of Venus; it was to be followed by *The Venus Project* and *The Starlight Maneuver* (which used to have a very different plot).

Reason for being canned: To say that this story has staggering technical difficulties is being polite. We eventually realized that the whole idea of terraforming Venus was a lost cause, and we dropped those stories from the saga.

#17 – *The Venus Project*

Plot Summary:

Buoyed by its successes on Mars, Mercury, and Uranus, Starlight Enterprise is attempting its boldest effort yet: the terraformation of Venus. Millennia ago, Venus had a habitable atmosphere, but the Xenobots destroyed it in the great interstellar war. Now Starlight wants to go back and, with the help of the ancient Martians, rebuild its shattered atmosphere.

Terraforming Venus is not easy. The best minds in the Solar System have worked out a plan, but it requires ingenuity, hard work, luck, and some ancient, top-secret Martian technology. Starlight also knows that Venus is not the only enemy they

have to fight: the Xenobots have a strong interest in seeing Venus remain uninhabitable, certain criminal elements would like to get hold of the field technology of the Martians, and still others on Earth would like to see the ancient Martians destroyed. The three Starmen, accompanied by a host of experts and an army of engineers, attempt to do the impossible and surmount the odds—and this time it looks as though Venus will win!

Other pieces of information found in the files:

- For Project Eden / The Venus Project: Venus is very hot – much too hot to cool down. It would take eons for Venus to cool to a reasonable temperature. However, SE has found a way to take a group of atoms and 'freeze' them – that is, they take moving atoms and stop them in their tracks via a series of electric fields. (Something akin to the Zero Maker of Danny Dunn fame.) What SE does is have the Janitor from the League of the First Races come with a similar device and "freeze" all of Venus – thus dropping its temperature to a suitable range. It is the same technology but on a vastly larger scale. (Today techniques like that are used to supercool items: by spearing atoms with a laser they can freeze them in place and further reduce motion, thus reducing temperature.)

Intended format: full-length novel

Source of the idea: This was one of the original 23 books we plotted when we first began; you'll find it in the title listings of the first edition of *Assault on Mars*. This book was intended to be part of a three-book story involving the terraformation of Venus; it was to be followed by *The Starlight Maneuver* (which used to have a *very* different plot).

Reason for being canned: To say that this story has staggering technical difficulties is being polite. We eventually realized that the whole idea of terraforming Venus was a lost cause, and we dropped those stories from the saga.

Bonus Section #2: The Artwork of the Starman Series

Introduction

In 2003 five Starman Appendices were written and posted online. These massive volumes remained online for years, freely available for anyone who was interested in their contents. At the time I thought it would be nice to have printed copies of them but I didn't see how we could possibly do such a thing.

Printing those massive books looked completely impossible until mid-2005, when we found a way to make books available with no up-front cost and no minimal order. When we realized we could do that we knew that the time had come.

As those who are familiar with the online versions of these books know, the printed volumes are not quite like their online counterparts. Volumes 1 and 2 are the same, but volume 3 is actually a compilation of volumes 3, 4, and 5.

Volume 3 was a tricky one to get ready because it was mainly composed of a great many color images. Since we couldn't print color we had to cut out a lot of it, but we decided to print what we could. What follows is what we were able to preserve.

It's easy to take for granted something like cover art or internal illustrations, but those things are definitely not accidents: it takes a lot of time, a lot of effort, and a lot of e-mails to figure out what we want, who can do it, and what it ought to look like. It wasn't always easy to make everything work together, but it was always worthwhile: artwork adds *tremendously* to a book, and the series would not be the same without it. (Imagine for a moment the Starman books without any dustjackets or artwork: do you really think they would have caught your eye?)

We were blessed with some terrific (and very patient) artists, without whom we would have had no artwork at all. When we started we didn't know if we would be able to get artists at all, but things have worked out well: Kevin Anetsberger, Bill Baumann, David Baumann, Nick Baumann, and Mike Dodd have done a terrific job bringing the Starman books to live through their artwork. This volume is intended to give you a tiny peek behind-the-scenes at how that artwork came to be.

Artwork for #1, *Assault on Mars*

Letters and Images

DATE: AROUND AUGUST 11, 1999

As far as the logo or emblem for the series.....I like the idea David had about the spaceship in a starfield.....but may I suggest that one of the stars be brighter and stylized with four diminishing rays coming off of it.....with just a hint of extra length in the bottom ray.....I'm sure you see the subtle effect. Its there for anyone who wants to see it....but it is not overt....a metaphor for the series.⁴²³

Mike

DATE: 9/2/99 1:16 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Today I sent you each an envelope with some of my father's⁴²⁴ art work in it: a black and white sketch for the cover, some sketches of the Star Ranger, and two drafts of the logo. Just after I sealed the envelopes and the copier I use ran out of toner, I received another envelope from him with an updated sketch of the Star Ranger. It's almost the same as what I sent you, except it has two wheels in the back; I put red circles on the first draft to indicate two wheels in front and back—but it's back only. Also, the new heading is: THE "STAR RANGER" a Starlight Enterprise ship for reconnaissance and exploration.

Let him and me know what you think. By the way, he did a painting to commemorate the moon landing, now on display at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library, which is about 3 miles from my house. My father just informed me that the Library has asked him if they can keep the painting on permanent loan, because it is so popular. That's the kind of artwork we're getting for our series.

⁴²³ Another brilliant idea from Mike! We loved the idea and used it, and this logo can now be found on the spine of the Starman books. It really captures the spirit of the series, and at the same time hints at the symbolism placed in the books.

⁴²⁴ Bill Baumann, who did the cover artwork for the first and fifth Starman books. As you can see, Bill is the person who designed the *Star Ranger*, and he did a very good job on it! He worked for years as an aeronautical engineer, and I think it shows in the ship's design.

David

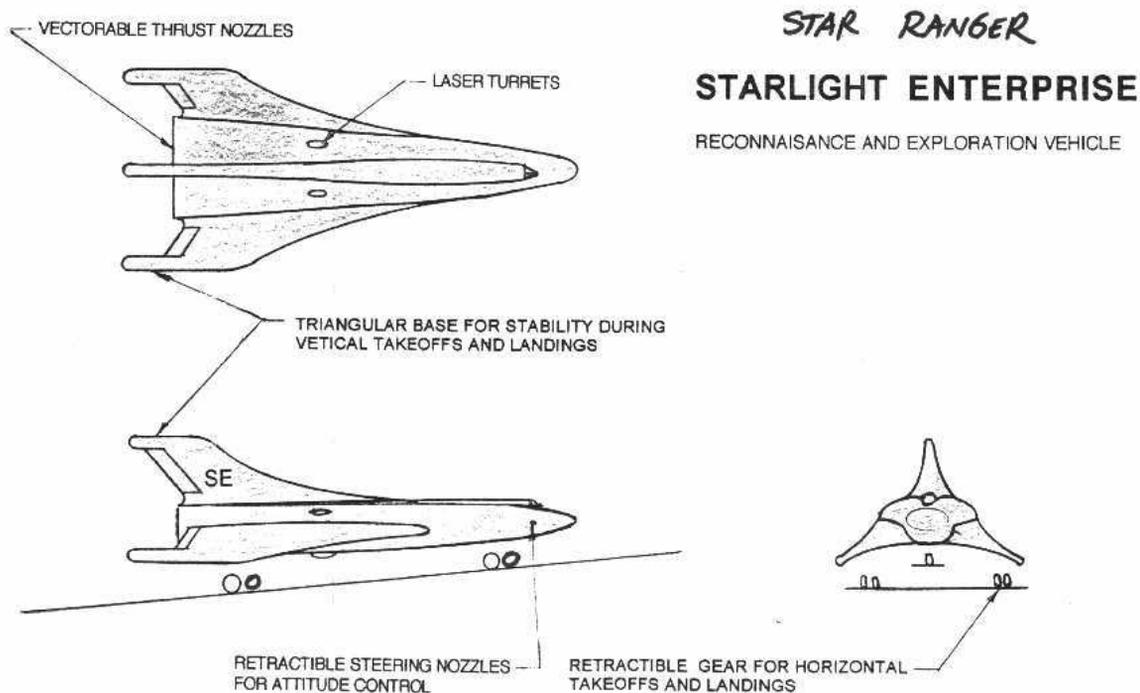


Figure 2: The image Bill Baumann drew of the *Star Ranger*

DATE: 9/4/99 5:17 PM

- > One idea: what would you think about having the ship's engine lights on
- > and perhaps have the ship in motion? Right now the ship is floating in space: I
- > suggest that we have it flying somewhere at top speed.

How would one indicate that? Would a ship in motion have exhaust? I assumed it WAS in motion, but without any overt sign of it. Maybe we do need some indication that it is

moving, but I don't know how to show it. Maybe my father knows, or maybe Mike has an idea (except he's probably incommunicado for a couple of weeks on vacation).⁴²⁵

- > ** If I remember correctly, the Starmen scramble up over the cliff at night,*
- > *so it'll be dark – meaning the stars will be out!*

My father can answer better than I, but I'm sure that in the final painting the stars will be out. This was just a very rough sketch.⁴²⁶

- > ** David had just launched a raid, so part of the city will be on fire.*
- >
- > ** Off somewhere in the field there probably needs to be a spaceport and a*
- > *whole fleet of [pirate] ships. These don't need to be very distinct, and as*
- > *they're a couple miles away they'd be pretty hard to see, but they'll be*
- > *there.*
- >
- > ** As David said, there will probably be some plants or scraggly bushes and*
- > *things like that growing around. Nothing terribly healthy-looking, though.*

Good.

- > *THE SPINE: I thought the design for the spine looked great. One question:*
- > *was there a specific reason why the logo on the spine was at the bottom of*
- > *the spine instead of in the middle?*

I gave my father a rough draft of what I had in mind for the spine, and put the logo near the bottom so as to give it a balanced look on a shelf. The middle is fine with me if you prefer.⁴²⁷

- > *Also, are we going to have the image wrap around*
- > *the whole book and be on the back cover as well? I think that it's a great*
- > *idea – I always liked books that had covers like that*

⁴²⁵ We later added a faint blue vapor trail extending out the back of the ship. This vapor trail is most easily seen on the spines of the first-edition dustjackets of the first five Starman books.

⁴²⁶ We were commenting on the cover art for the first Starman book, *Assault on Mars*.

⁴²⁷ Just think: if we had kept it that way, all the Starman books would have the Starman logo at the bottom of the spine instead of at the center! I don't remember why we changed our minds and put it in the middle of the spine, but I'm glad we did: it's good to have the logo in the same place as it appears on all other series books.

I've suggested to my father that the back cover be done in light, Martian red tones, so that there can be print on it.⁴²⁸ He's designed it so that we can make color photocopies of the artwork, and then photocopy the print (title, author, spine, information on the back) right on the color photocopiers. This may be cheaper and certainly easier than trying to paint letters on or use some other process. However, my father is going to check with his photocopy guy and see what other options there may be.

> – *and if Fred the*

> *publisher can do it we might want to consider taking a shot at it.*

Fred [Woodworth] will probably not be able to print the cover, because he will need to separate the colors in the printer's primary colors to do a good job. That is a difficult process. I envisioned just photocopying the cover as I mentioned above, and Fred won't have to deal with it at all. Fred can just bind the books and send them back to me for me to add the dust jackets here.

> *Has anyone thought very much about what we want to have on the back cover?*

Yeah, a little bit—a brief introduction to the series and a listing of a few of the books with one or two-sentence summaries. But that's just an idea. We could even leave the back cover without print so as to keep the artwork undisturbed. Actually, I like that idea a lot. If that's the case, then it wouldn't have to be done with pale Martian red, but in full color.

David

DATE: 9/5/99 10:52 PM

I think Jon's comments about the cover art are right on target. Nothing to add.

Let's put the logo toward the bottom of the spine. I think it's a little more aesthetically pleasing to the eye.

David

⁴²⁸ At first we were going to have a title listing or something like that on the back of the book, just as is the case on most other series books. It wasn't until later that we decided to put nothing on the back of the book and instead just show off the fantastic cover art.

DATE: 9/5/99 11:04 PM

- > *What would you think about simply changing the*
- > *engine to, say, a bright red or blue color to signify that the engine is*
- > *on?*

Good. I like it.

- > *I think that putting [the logo] at the bottom is a good idea.*

Good. I like it too.

- > *If everyone else agrees, I think that I like leaving [the back cover]*
- > *untouched*
- > *the best. The artwork is really beautiful: it's probably nicer than*
- > *anything else we could put back there. Then, too, if we wanted to have a*
- > *listing of some other titles, why, we could always put that inside*
- > *somewhere (as they did in the Tom Swift books, for example).*

Superb idea. Let's leave the back for the quality artwork! For sure! It's all yours, Dad!

- > *if possible, I think that the air tanks should be changed. The [Starmen]*
- > *aren't wearing air tanks: they're wearing NPACS⁴²⁹ that suck air in, ...*

I agree. This was Mike's input, too, if I remember correctly. They should definitely NOT be confusable with scuba gear.

- > *it might be a good idea to show some sort of*
- > *faint green or yellow fields of plants, some distance away from the city.*
- > *Then again, that might distract from the main image and just clutter things*
- > *up: I don't know. It's just a thought that occurred to me.*

Good idea. Could be just hinted at, but Crater 91 is home to a large group. Farms or fields should be there, faintly suggested, but without making the picture too busy.

- > *SHOULD THERE BE ANY PONDS OR LAKES OR STREAMS OF WATER?*
- >

⁴²⁹ Nuclear-powered air compressors

> *You know, that might be a good idea!*

Indeed it is. But again, not making the picture too busy.

David

DATE: 9/6/99 6:19 PM

Hi Starmen:

(Is that a good salutation?)

Following is my interpretation of the changes to be made to the LOGO and Cover art as a result of the recent critiques. If you Starmen are all in agreement, I will proceed with the changes.

LOGO

1. Make the cross fainter, so that it is barely visible.
2. Show a faint blue exhaust on the Star Ranger

COVER ART

3. Revise the air tank to a flatter design so as not to resemble a scuba diver.
4. Show a not very prominent large field of farm produce.

(The small green patch in the foreground of the bottom of the crater was meant to be a farm field, but it's probably not large enough and not recognizable as such).

5. Show a water tank in the distance at the bottom of the crater as a water storage area.
6. Show a faint pipeline across the barren distant plain that is transporting water from the polar cap to the storage pond in the crater.
7. Increase the size of the fire in the city to make it more visible.

8. The LOGO will be at the bottom of the spine.

If you tell me what lettering you want on the cover, I will try to set up a transparent overlay and run sample prints for your approval.

I suggest the cover be printed with about 2 or 3 inch white strips at each end which would wrap around the edges of the book covers, and other printed matter, such as the full series of books and synopsis of the story and credits to the authors, be printed on these white strips on the insides of the book covers. If the final print size could be fitted to a sheet 7.625 by 17 inches, then a small number of copies could be printed on a standard color copy machine.

Bill Baumann

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2000 11:12 AM

- > I think you might have hit on*
- > something: do you think that the reason a lot of illustrations don't match*
- > the books is because the illustrations were written about the same time as*
- > the book? I'd never thought of it but it makes sense.*

The notion occurred to me as we were going through this process for AOM. Sam Epstein said that when he sent in the MS for Black Thumb, the artist did the cover with the two boys in the boat. Then he revised the MS and took that scene out. The editor pointed out that the cover had already been painted, so Sam put the scene back in.

David

Editor's note: here are some illustrations for Assault on Mars that Bill Baumann drew which (for various reasons) never made it into the book! Enjoy.

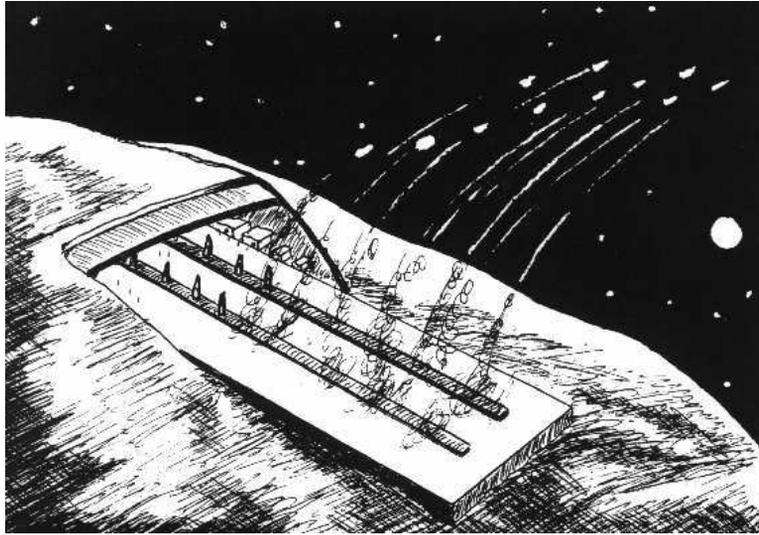


Figure 3: Ships leaving Tharsos. This was not used because the base was located deep inside the asteroid, not on its surface.

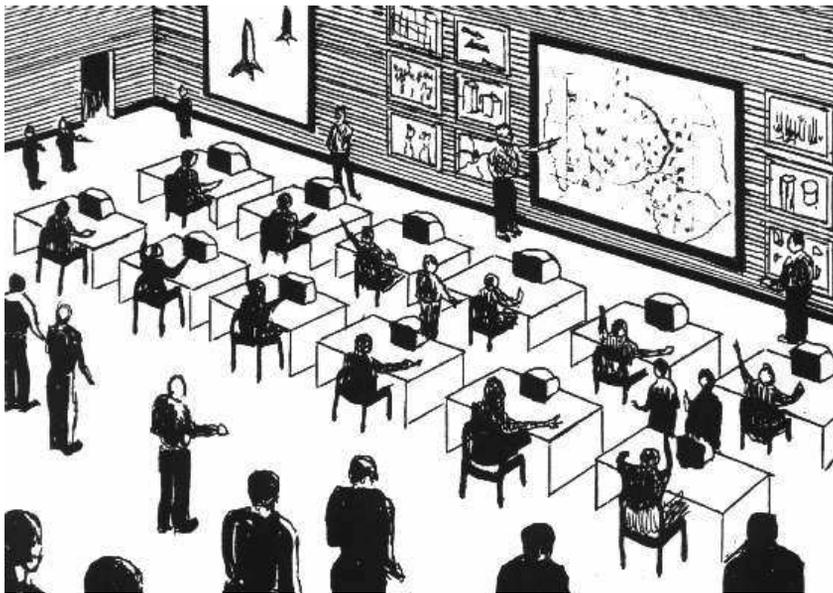


Figure 4: The Starmen being briefed. This was not used because the briefing room turned out to be very different from what is depicted in this illustration.

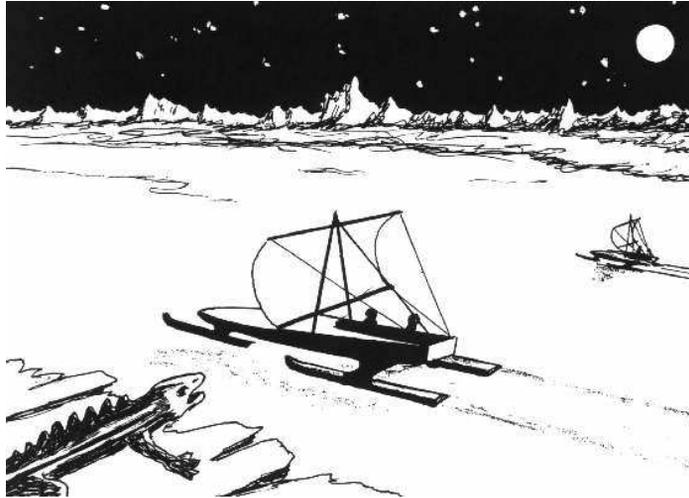


Figure 5: Original land sailer drawing. We had to have Bill redraw this and remove the lizard because on Mars at the time this scene takes place there was not enough air to support living creatures!

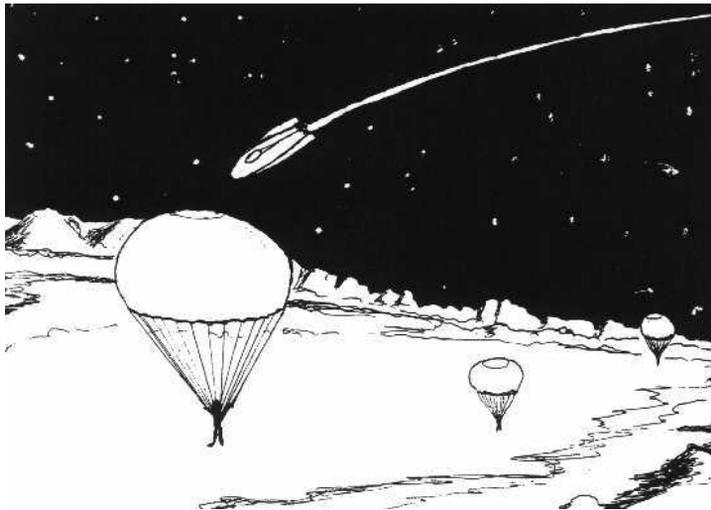


Figure 6: Original parachute drawing. We later realized that there wasn't enough air on Mars to use round parachutes, so we changed the design in the final illustration.

**Artwork for #2, *The Runaway*
*Asteroid***

Letters and Images

DATE: FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2000 4:59 PM

My son Nicholas has agreed to do the artwork for TRA.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2000 6:07 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Lovely pictures, Jon! Very, very nice! Can you make a picture of a banana-shaped asteroid, which could be Montezuma's Castle?⁴³⁰

By the way, my father said that he enjoyed doing the artwork very much, and would like to do future artwork for the series.⁴³¹

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2000 6:51 PM

- > *David: what is the status on the*
- > *artwork for TRA? Is your son still doing it, or is your father, etc.*

⁴³⁰ From time to time I drew up pictures in Bryce 3D, a computer modeling program I had, and sent them to David and Mike. David and Mike liked them, and David asked me to make a mock-up of the cover art for *The Runaway Asteroid* for his son to use as a reference. I complied, and the painting Nick came up with is sort of similar to the 3d model I built. One funny little item: when I was building the 3d model I noticed that the asteroid looked kind of bare, so just for fun I dropped three satellite-dish models on the asteroid to make the model look more interesting. I had no idea that Nick would copy them on the actual cover!

⁴³¹ We were glad to hear this, and Bill later did the cover art for the fifth Starman book, *The Lost Race of Mars*.

My son says he is interested and I have told him that now is the time to get started. I'll follow up with him today and get a solid commitment. ... I'm thinking that a scene of the starship approaching Montezuma's Castle would grab the eyes. What do you think?

I hope you have a good weekend, Jon!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 07, 2000 5:02 PM

Dear Jon,

Cool! Fan art! Wow.

Which reminds me— Can you do up a rough Bryce art item for my son to use as a model for a painting for the cover of TRA? I think that would be easier for him to understand our concepts than any description or sketch I might attempt. I'm thinking a full-wrap painting (dimensions are 1:1.52) like before, with Montezuma's bananoid Castle featured centrally on the front half, an asteroid or two off to the side, and the Vigilant Warrior approaching—stars in the background. And the colors we picked out for this cover are brown and gold. Should be striking!

David

DATE: SUN, 08 OCT 2000 17:13:38 -0700

Dear Jon and Mike,

A few days ago one of you asked about progress on the TRA artwork. My son has completed a good sketch of the cover and I have provided him with canvass. It's a full-wrap dj like AOM. He'll get busy real soon. It's a takeoff of the computer-generated artwork Jon did of Montezuma's Castle. We haven't talked about internal artwork yet, but that shouldn't take him too long to do. I'm hoping he'll have everything done within a month.

I will need white lettering of the cover wording similar to that we have for Assault On Mars—white on a transparency. I've tried and can't do it on my printer. Can either of you produce it on yours? If not, I have an alternative that won't be as good but will be suitable. Needed lettering includes the spine lettering.⁴³²

Chapter 15 coming up tomorrow.

David

DATE: FRI, 13 OCT 2000 12:34:52 -0700

Dear Jon and Mike,

My son Nick asked if I have a picture of a spaceship he can use for the cover. He has penciled in the cover painting and it looks quite nice—it's the scene where the Starmen come up on Montezuma's Castle in the Vigilant Warrior. But he needs a spaceship to use as a model. Can you create something on Bryce, Jon? The view we need is of a ship moving away from the viewer, heading to the upper left—kind of as if we are looking over someone's left shoulder as he is walking away from us to the left. Thanks!⁴³³

David

DATE: FRI, 13 OCT 2000 20:24:42 EDT

I might be able to find a nice picture of a spaceship for David's son to use as a model...will scan and send for consideration (is this to be a classic sci-fi type spaceship or a modern type?), I think our series would be very novel if we ended up with "classic

⁴³² This brings to mind another crazy story. I didn't know a whole lot about printing at the time, and I saw no reason why you couldn't put a transparency in a printer and print white lettering on it. So, when I went to visit David I showed him how to turn text to white in Microsoft Word and told him to just get a transparency or something and print out the document. It wasn't until later that I found out that printers do not have white ink: you *can't* print out white lettering. (This, by the way, is why the lettering on the first-edition dustjacket for *Assault on Mars* is black: while white lettering is what we really wanted, we could easily print black letters, so that's what we used.)

⁴³³ I'm sure I gave David what he wanted, but I don't seem to have that model or that image anymore...

type" spacecraft right along modern types/ hardware types...AND made it credible for them to appear together in the same story....i.e., "these sleek types are planetary atmosphere entry capable, and these draggy tinker-toy types are for deep space only."

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2000 4:59 PM

- > Mike, the little Martian scrub ships look really neat! The design is*
- > really cool. Thanks for sending them along! I can see right now that there*
- > are scrub ships in the Starmen's future...*

Right! Nice design and terrific name. But I think the word is "scarab."

David

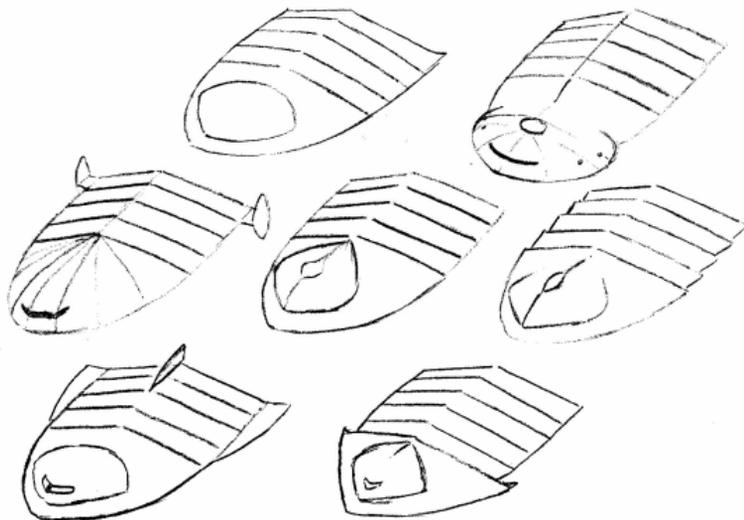


Figure 7: The picture Mike sent of the "scrabs"

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2000 9:51 PM

Dear Jon and David,

The file was indeed named *scrab.jpg*...It was a quick file name based on the word "scarab", I shortened it to make sure I did not go over the character limit for my file names. The instant I saw it in print, I liked the sound of it. I immediately saw at least three ways to rationalize it:

- 1) A spaceman's contraction of scarab = sc'rab
- 2) A contraction of space crab = S-crab
- 3) An actual Ancient Martian term for their small long range scouts

I do like the word.

About David's preference to use the word FIREWASP to describe a spacecraft or spacecraft type....I agree wholeheartedly! Good thought. I only used this term because I could not remember what we called those Martian bomber bug dragonfly things that the Starmen were eventually going to come up against in a later story.

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2000 10:14 PM

> I've vaguely heard of the word scarab, but I sure can't tell you what it is!

A scarab is an Egyptian beetle, held sacred by the ancients. They made jewelry and charms in its shape, usually cut from gems, flat on one side, and engraved with symbols. The shape of the rockets Mike sent is that of a scarab—it's a great symbol!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2000 12:05 AM

Dear Jon and David,

I always thought Montoya meant "mountain"...guess that demonstrates the danger in assuming!

About the scrabs.....David gave an excellent definition of scarab.....the infamous "dung beetle" is a scarab and there is a theory that the Ancient Egyptians were inspired to mummify their people because of some quirks in the dung beetles' life cycle (apparently the female lays eggs in the ground , then crawls inside herself and dies, when the egg hatches and a new scarab crawls out, the Egyptians thought she had come back to life!)

Anyway, this brings me to the hopefully elegant idea of maintaining a mildly Egyptian theme with the Ancient Martians. (Sandy world, mummies, scarabs, etc.)

Mike

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2000 4:39 AM

> *about the scrabs.....this brings me to the hopefully elegant idea of*
> *maintaining a*
> *mildly Egyptian theme with the Ancient Martians. (Sandy world, mummies,*
> *scarabs, etc.)*

Oh yes, terrific imagery. I kind of had that in mind too, without really bringing it into sharp focus in my mind. I saw them as kind of like Tolkien's elves a little bit, but also very Egyptian, without the pagan side. And a bit like the best of noble American Indians, too.⁴³⁴

David

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2000 5:53 PM

Dear Jon,

⁴³⁴ This e-mail was sent at a very early stage in the development of the Ahmanyans and their culture. We retained everything that was in this preliminary note – and we also added a few other cool things along the way!

Got the following response from Tom Narwid.⁴³⁵ He's glad to provide something for our endpapers! ... He needs more computer-wise than I can provide, but I'm sure you can deal with him directly and make an arrangement. I emailed him that you'd be contacting him soon.

David

Tom Narwid wrote:

> *David,*
>
> *Thanks for the note.*
>
> *Hope all is well with you and the book series is successful.*
> *I would be delighted to donate several of my images for your books.*
> *Can you accept a digital file on a CD Rom?*
> *You will need to ask your publisher.*
> *If so I will need the following information:*
>
> * *What size image and at what resolution (i.e. the "dpi" or dots per inch)?*
> * *What file format would they like?*
> * *Do they use a PC or a Mac computer?*
>
> *I have several very nice images of galaxies and nebulae.*
>
> *I do not have any hard copy photographic prints at this time. I could*
> *make some good ink jet prints but a digital file would probably work*
> *best for me (and probably the publisher).*
> *Let me know.*
>
> *Regards,*
>
> *Tom Narwid*

⁴³⁵ An amateur astronomer in Cottonwood, Arizona who downloads really cool images from his telescope.

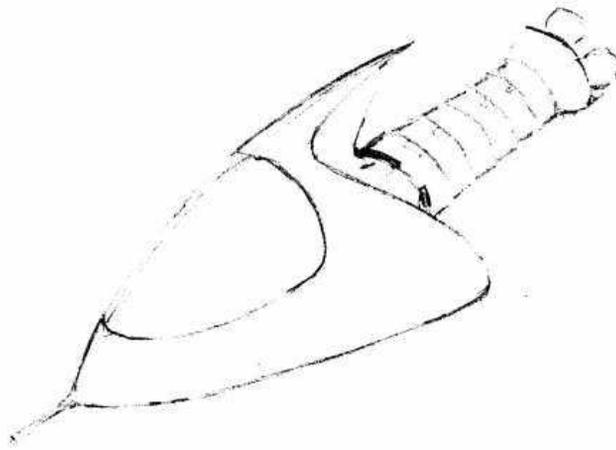


Figure 8: Mike's Firewasp sketch

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 02, 2000 8:22 AM

Dear Jon and David,

Jon's reworking of the Firewasp on Bryce is awesome! I really like what you have done to it. Recently, I had been considering a little reworking of my own, along the lines of a proportionally wider "segmented" section (still tapered, though)....but I really like Jon's results.

About Jon's hope to eventually animate it.....I had no idea that animation could be done on anything but prohibitively expensive Software/hardware....so I am very pleased that Bryce (3-D?) can do it. I have always liked those computer animation movies such as THE MINDS EYE, BEYOND THE MINDS EYE, and PLANETARY TRAVELLER.

I tried to print out one of the designs, but I was informed that either my QUICKTIME software could not work with the picture or that I had insufficient disk space.

Perhaps we could raise a little project money/promotion by selling medium sized posters of the Jon's Firewasps....perhaps with a little Starman logo on the poster. I have no idea about the practicality of printing such a thing. But I do know that it is a very exciting and fresh look at Classic Spacecraft design.

Mike

PS On the larger spacecraft, parasitic fighters like the FIREWASPs could be kept in a hold known in spacer jargon as the "waspnest"!

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 02, 2000 11:06 PM

Dear Jon,

Sorry about sending you two copies of those five files. After I had attached them once, my connection broke off and I had to dialup again. When I checked the unsent message, it didn't show any attachments so I reloaded them. After I sent it, I saw that the first loading hadn't been lost after all.

Anyway, here is another file that needs to be updated. I just spent the last half hour updating and backing up all the Starman files I've got. When you have this one, you'll have everything I've got that's important in its most up-to-date form.

Feels kind of good to have the story⁴³⁶ finished, at least in its first draft stage. Artwork, etc. still to come, of course. My son Nick traded rooms with my office—he is now upstairs where my office used to be and I'm downstairs where his room used to be. In the move, his paints got mislaid. I lent him my oil paints but his set was more complete than mine and we'll probably have to buy some more tubes of color. Expensive, but anything so as not to get hold back the Starman production! He's already got the cover sketched out in some detail and painting is next.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 03, 2000 10:06 AM

Dear Jon and David,

I would love to see Jon's Bryce version of the scrabs! I'd also like to see an airship or blimp done that way (the "Mom and Pop" blimp business I help out has a web-

⁴³⁶ *The Runaway Asteroid*, of course!

site that is in need of a little sprucing up...and I think a nice BRYCE airship would do it just right!)

Yes, I will take a crack at designing some larger ships...I have been playing around with a few ideas...trying to get a "classic" feel. Streamlined hulls and swept fins catch a lot of flak for being useless in space.....but perhaps in the future "aerobraking" will be a common method of deceleration (saves fuel that way)....even for ships that just want to go into orbit about a planet, not necessarily to land on the planet.

Now, my REAL desire is to see Jon eventually render a Bryce version of the Xenobot fighter. Remember that the design goes back to 1969 for me! A couple of times I almost sat down and built one out of wood.⁴³⁷

Mike

PS...Jon says that the Bryce pictures can be rendered quickly...in a matter of minutes...this IS a surprise to me. My computer is 8 years old and probably won't do a good BRYCE program, but if it could.....

DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 03, 2000 9:14 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

The design looks great to me. I think the brown version looks rather like rust, so I prefer the blue versions.

Are we going with scrab or scarab?

David

DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 03, 2000 11:20 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I like the Scrab drafts...it is going to be a very impressive, and refreshing spacecraft design. I looked again at the FIREWASPS that Jon did.....those are definitely nice renderings.

⁴³⁷ Mike's Xenobot fighter design can be found on the cover of *Doomsday Horizon*.

About the name...SC'RAB vs SCARAB...I think I prefer the single syllable word...but I am happy either way. If we go with SCARAB, then our commitment to the EGYPTIAN theme is obvious, and I think it is best to leave that connection to the readers. SCRAB can mean "space crab" or can be an ANCIENT MARTIAN word. (For their spacecraft)

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 04, 2000 7:09 PM

I like the Scrab/Scarab design a lot, Jon. Personally I prefer the term scarab, but scrab is okay. Sounds a bit like scab to me, though.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 05, 2000 1:14 AM

Dear Jon and David,

Here is a side view of the Xenobot fighter....I have another view that I will try to send later.

Jon, I really liked the draft of the scarab sent recently as a jpeg...unlike the zip-files, I was able to print it, but it came out rather dark...any advice here?

I have been thinking about the SCRAB/SCARAB choice and I am now quite OK with the name being scarab...it is certainly exotic enough without any need for contraction.

Mike

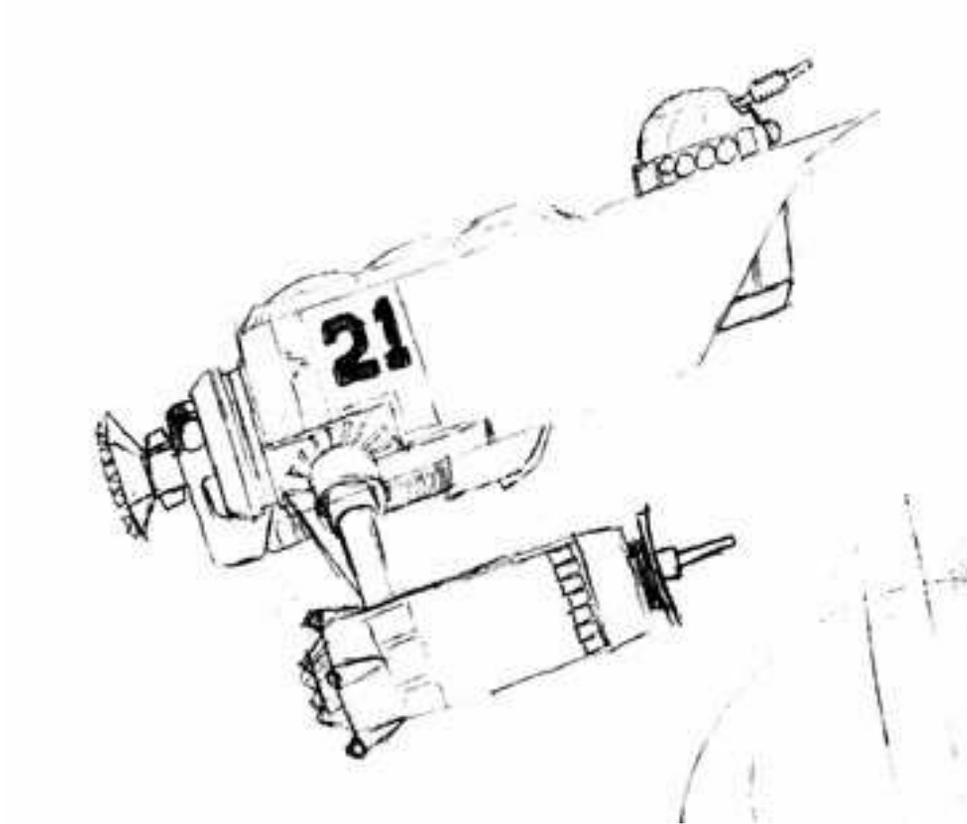


Figure 9: The side-view Mike sent of the Xenobot fighter

DATE: SUN, 5 NOV 2000 20:49:15 EST

Dear Jon and David,

The original sketches of the "xenofighters" were part of a series of variants, we had quite a lot of craft based on the original design...the attachment is close to the original type. I hope it will be useful in your Bryce work, Jon. It really is just a flattened box with one side beveled.

There is an even plainer version , and if I ever find it or redraw it, I will send.

The longer craft above the xenofighter is just a little study in big deep space transport design...might be useful somewhere in the STARMAN SERIES.

Mike

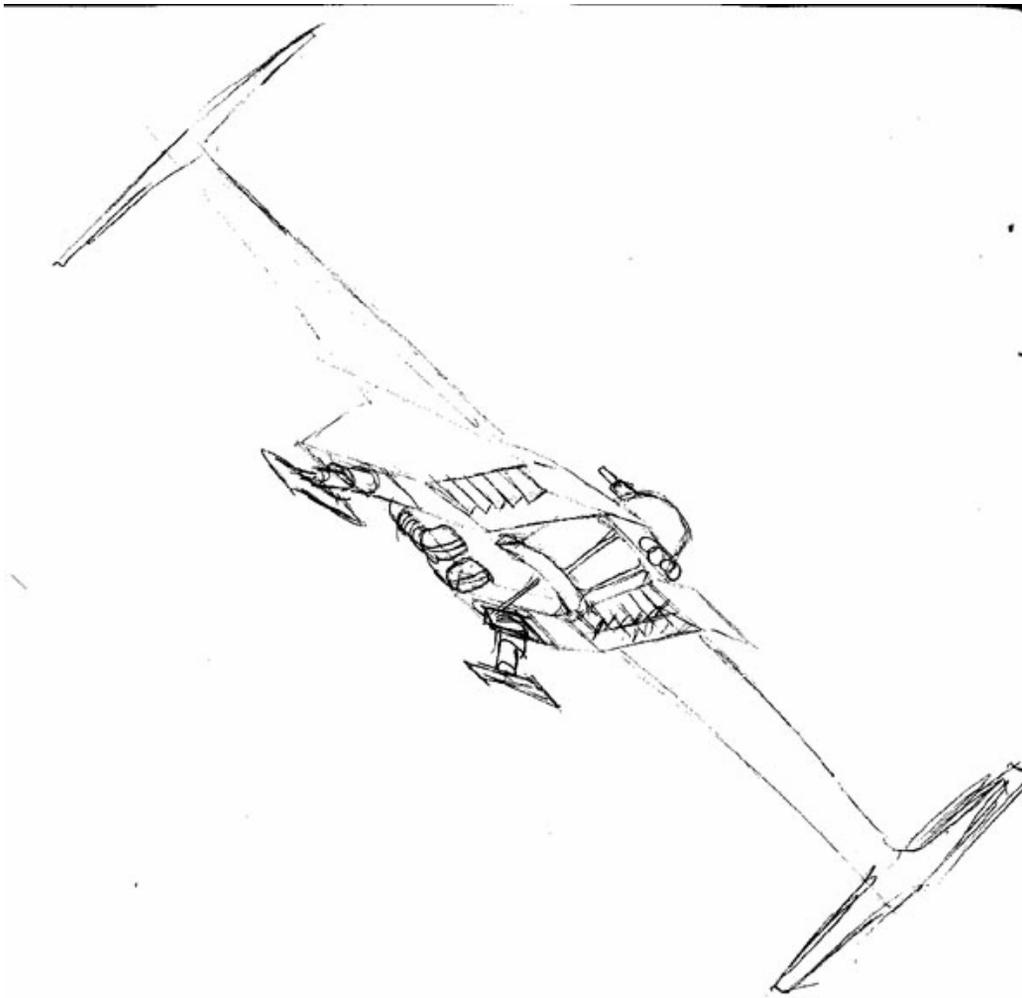


Figure 10: Mike's "plainer" Xenobot fighter sketch

DATE: SUN, 5 NOV 2000 21:57:06 EST

Dear Jon and David,

Look out!! Xenobot at 12 o'clock!!

Mike

PS What look like F-15 jet intake ducts are in reality "Trans-spatial drive plates."

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 06, 2000 6:12 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

> *Here is a side view of the Xenobot fighter....*

Mike, all the sketches look fantastic! REALLY outstanding! And I'm sure that Jon can do a fine job of rendering them in Bryce. I'm eager to see what you'll do for the artwork on the next Starman book!

> *[Mike] I have been thinking about the SCRAB/SCARAB choice and I
> am now quite OK with the name being scarab...it is certainly exotic enough
> without any need for contraction.... [Jon] It really doesn't matter to me:
> David, if you've got reservations with scrab, and if Mike can go either way,
> then I think scarab is the way we ought to go. I don't have any strong
> feelings on this... I'll leave it up to you two to decide. =)*

Great! I think scarab is a good mysterious, ancient/modern sounding word, and scrab, with its connotations of crab and scab grated on me a little.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2000 5:48 PM

Regarding the endpapers, the design looks great. I suggest that Jon get back to Tom Narwid and ask him to send the scene in black and white in both positive and negative formats. He showed me his program when I was with him in June, and he ought to be able to do that pretty easily. I'd prefer the white stars on a black background, but the printer may balk at that since it is difficult and expensive to do.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁸ Full-color endpapers are very expensive, so we had to find a way to convert the beautiful photo Tom provided to a two-color image. I tried to do this and failed pretty miserably, but Kevin Anetsberger found

Normally the same scene is used both in back in front, so we only need one scene—unless we do want to use two different endpapers. Actually, AOM is the only case I know of in which they were different—since we added the quote from Richard Starlight to the front.

I would suggest that we have no internal artwork in TRA as that will (1) take longer to prepare and (2) add more pages to a book already pretty long. We will have a frontispiece, however. Do you two agree?

David

DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2000 8:45 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *If all you want*
- > *is black and white, why, that's easy to do: the attached black and white*
- > *image of the endpapers took me all of, oh, 15 seconds to create. But look at*
- > *that image: is that *really* what you want to use for endpapers? The trick*
- > *isn't making it black and white: the trick is making the black and white*
- > *look acceptable.*⁴³⁹

Hmmm, I see. Usable, but if we ever do use it, I prefer the left hand side. ... Let's see what Sheridan has to say. It's out of my league now.

My son Nick is now beginning work on the frontispiece.

David

a way to do it. We eventually decided to use a blue background with white stars, and that worked out pretty well. (The author's copies of these books, however, do have white stars on a black background, and they do look pretty sharp!)

⁴³⁹ As you can see, I was having a lot of trouble trying to convert the artwork down to two colors!

DATE: FRI, 17 NOV 2000 09:16:49 -0800

My son has nearly finished the cover painting, but I've asked him to do the frontispiece right away so that we can be ready to mail off the MS to Sheridan as soon as we are ready with the text portion. If we're doing the dj by photocopy as we did for AOM, then we've got a couple of months to get that down.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2000 8:45 AM

Dear David and Jon,

I designed the scarabs with the Martian ships in mind, the text describes swept wing spaceships and does not yet call them by any particular name. IF we choose to use the scarabs as the Ancient Martian spacecraft type, then we may want to establish a name and description at this point. ("Hey, they look like swept wing scarabs!") How do you guys feel about this? We can always use the design elsewhere in the series.

Also, about spaceships in general, it is beginning to look as if we will populate the series with all sorts of spacecraft types...some unsleek tinker-toy types and some super-sleek elegant "studies in post 1950s Detroit-chrome-hood ornament excessive-ness". The question will eventually arise, "how can we justify streamlining vacuum ships?". I would like to suggest that in our future world there is a "grace-in-space" fashion movement amongst the ship designers/manufacturers. Space is often bleak and lonely, utilitarian.....a great psychological antidote would be to have the lonely outpost folk get all excited about the artistic statement made by the next freighter coming in. A vacuum ship can have almost any shape you want.

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2000 10:25 AM

> *The question will*

> *eventually arise, "how can we justify streamlining vacuum ships?". I would*

- > *like to suggest that in our future world there is a "grace-in-space" fashion*
- > *movement amongst the ship designers/manufacturers. Space is often bleak and*
- > *lonely, utilitarian.....a great psychological antidote would be to have the*
- > *lonely outpost folk get all excited about the artistic statement made by the*
- > *next freighter coming in.*

Fantastic idea! "Grace in space"—beauty as a part of utilitarianism. A wonderful concept quite in line with our "post-Collapse" philosophy. We've already written in our Introduction that the arts, etc., surged into prominence after the Collapse. Of course, these are ancient Martian ships rather than post-Collapse human ships, but we've already explained the AM⁴⁴⁰ design as being for planets with an atmosphere as well as for flight through the vacuum. But for future ships' design—such as the great ship in JTP—beauty should be a factor!!

Nick has to redo the frontispiece, but assures me it'll be ready Thursday afternoon. The draft pencil sketch looks very nice, but he got the orientation wrong—he had the long side as the bottom, so the illustration was wide rather than tall. He'll resketch it, get my approval, then ink it. At this point, I think we'll still get the package in the mail Thursday afternoon.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2000 9:55 PM

About the Grace-in-Space movement.....you guys are perceptive....I did have in mind a kind of mid-23rd century renaissance.....the 15th-16th century Renaissance was certainly a time of attention to the beauty that can be incorporated into the functional.

Mike

⁴⁴⁰ Ancient Martian. The term "Ahmanyans" wasn't coined until later.

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2000 6:22 PM

Nick (that's my son's name) promises that he'll have the cover painting finished today—it only needs a few details. I hope so, since it will need to dry before I can copy it, and I want to give it to my father with the transparency lettering when he is over here for Christmas. Then I can pick up the dust jackets when I visit him on January 18.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2000 10:46 AM

Nick DID finish the TRA painting last night. It will take a couple of days to dry (oil paint), then I will get a photocopy on Saturday afternoon from which I can make the dj's for the authors' three copies, get the lettering on a transparency on Sunday afternoon (Christmas Eve—luckily other than FOUR SERVICES AT CHURCH I don't have anything else to do!) and hand the original to my father on Christmas so he can get the 200 copies made. Then next week I can prepare the three authors' copies. Should be a slow week after Christmas. So you two can expect your authors' copies toward the end of next week—at last!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2000 11:37 PM

Nick finished the painting, but it needs a little more work—he forgot to add stars, for example! So it just means that I'll have to make an extra trip out to my father's to deliver the painting for the cover before the photocopying can take place.

David

DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2000 9:10 PM

The cover painting for TRA is now finished and looks quite nice. There is a small error in it, which is my mistake, but I can fix it. I forgot to tell Nick to leave margins of at least an inch at each end, where the dj will wrap around the boards, so the space ship is right on the edge. However, I can take a section out of the middle and take it onto the edge and that should make it work right. I'll do that when I make our three dj's, and my father will do it when he has the master copy made for our TRA dj's. He will have a professional photographer take a photo of the painting (with transparency overlay with lettering and spine logo) and make a glossy print actual size of the dj—that will cost about \$35, I think. From that the photocopies of the dj will be made. As soon, Jon, as you have the actual dimension of the book, I'll give my father the go-ahead on the photocopying. I'm hoping it'll be 7 1/2 inches.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2000 8:04 PM

> *You raised some good*
> *points about the retroburn, but as you said, they could simply have already*
> *completed the burn and were entering orbit. It is something worth thinking*
> *about, but I think your way of explaining it away is a good one. <grin>*
> *Besides, we're doing these books in the high tradition of series books,*
> *right? Well, series books were famous for their inconsistencies in their*
> *artwork! Maybe we ought to throw in an inconsistency here or there just for*
> *good measure!*

I'm sure you're joking, Jon! But I've learned how the artists of series book dj can get on the bad side of the authors by producing paintings that were not consistent with the text. Both my father and son produced paintings that had small inconsistencies with the text, mostly because they were not as familiar with the text and the story as we were. I provided a text for them to work from, but they had to add a lot of details from their own creativity. For example, Nick has the Vigilant Warrior approaching Montezuma's Castle from the side opposite that of Adamant. The layout of the painting just about requires it. However, in the text, the Starman come around Adamant and then see the Castle. Probably most artists for dj's are first interested in their art and probably not too much is

the story as story, so I guess they can't be blamed too much for inconsistencies—especially if they're minor.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2001 7:34 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

The dust jacket looks good, considering. There are flaws, but they can't be helped at this late date. My father made two photographic enlargements and pasted parts together to create one master with everything placed correctly. Some of the joins show, in spite of our best efforts, but I think it won't be too bad. One join, which is dark on the original but shows with a faint white line on the copies, is on the back fold of the spine and shouldn't cause anyone to complain. The movement of the rocket ship was difficult and we worked hard to cover the signs that it had been pasted, but couldn't do so completely. But overall it's not bad—actually it is a rather striking dust jacket. The asteroids came out beautifully and clearly and colorfully. The brush marks on the canvass show here and there and really add to the appearance. Our customers should be very satisfied—even impressed. Considering that we're providing these dust jackets on a shoe-string budget, we're doing a top quality job. Now, at last, I know how to design the dust jackets so that the artwork will show to best advantage. I might even want to do one myself someday.⁴⁴¹

Making 200 copies is time consuming, and I can't pick them up until tomorrow morning. Then each one will have to be trimmed with TWO cuts of a razor knife—that will also be time consuming. Fortunately we've got the time. Books aren't due for nine days, so I've got a week to do all the trimming.⁴⁴²

David

⁴⁴¹ David actually did: two years later David painted the cover art for *Doomsday Horizon*.

⁴⁴² That's right, folks! At first all the dustjackets were trimmed to size *by hand*. It was a glorious day when we discovered that the local copy shop could trim them for us!

**Artwork for #3, *Journey to the
Tenth Planet***

Letters and Images

DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2000 1:31 PM

- > *The attached scan is of a drawing I did a while back....after a*
- > *painting I saw in a sci-fi art book. Makes for*
- > *an inspirational asteroid scene.*

Very nice! You should be doing a cover for us, Mike, and some internals!! I'm for having you do all the artwork for JTP. What do you think?⁴⁴³

David

DATE: THU, 19 OCT 2000 10:56:02 -0700

Dear Jon and Mike,

I really like Kevin Anetsberger's work and I think we ought to ask him to do the artwork for one of our books—cover and internals.⁴⁴⁴ And I think Mike should do one too.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000 7:40 PM

And I really like Kevin A's artwork. Very atmospheric. I'd like to suggest that we ask him to do the artwork for DIE, and I hope that our own Mike Dodd will do the artwork for JTP.

David

⁴⁴³ We liked the idea, and so he did – and he did a great job! Mike Dodd did the cover art for the first edition of the third Starman book, as well as the internals. Mike also did some of the internals for the fourth Starman book.

⁴⁴⁴ We did ask him, and he agreed, and so Kevin Anetsberger did the cover artwork and most of the internals for the fourth Starman book.

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000 8:57 PM

Of course I will be very pleased to do a cover for JTP or any other number in the series...I am mentally picturing the most exciting scene now....either a ship with a very weak and distant sun in the background, weird, dimly lit planet in the foreground OR an "after landing" scene with all sorts of weird foreboding.

I am in favor of using different artists.....I do suggest that we maintain some degree of continuity in the covers and the internals. I really hate it when the same spaceship looks different from book to book, or when we have "ungloved hands" in outer-space, or when adult size spacesuits look form fitted on children (LCU).⁴⁴⁵

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000 9:21 PM

> *Of course I will be very pleased to do a cover for JTP or
> any other number in the series.*

Fantastic! I'm sure that you can find just the right mood to convey, Mike. I am impressed with your ability to put your finger right on the scenes that express that "1950's Saturday morning atmosphere of adventure and wonder."

> *I am in favor of using different artists...*

Absolutely. Our commitment to quality shouldn't falter at the artwork or anywhere. We need to make it clear to our contributors that the Starman team reserves the right to edit anything. We need continuity and scientific plausibility.

David

⁴⁴⁵ The sixth Dig Allen book, *Lost City of Uranus*. The cover art for the book had some rather terrible mistakes, like leaving the hands ungloved of the various people in spacesuits!

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2000 8:04 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

- > *Mike, I'm really glad to hear that you can do the artwork for*
- > *JTP! I can't wait to see it. The cover scene you have in mind sounds really*
- > *cool: I think that scene could work out really well.*

I agree! The dj for TRA, however, as you will see, has a similar scene. I don't think that this will be a problem, however. Mike, you'll be able to put together a fine painting and, with TRA in front of you, can avoid making it too similar. Jon, I'm hoping that the cover painting for DIE will be very much like that fantastic blue underwater cityscape you did. You really had the idea for the cover for TRA, too—Nick just painted from your initial artwork. If Kevin does his artwork on a computer,⁴⁴⁶ that will probably be a first: a computer-generated cover for a series book!

David

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2000 8:04 PM

Anyway, I think that a painting for JTP which has the Starventure seeing Nyx from an orbital position would be great! The retroburn doesn't have to be in the picture—literally or figuratively. I DO like the idea of a tiny sun in the background though! But even here, we'll have to use artistic license, won't we? Sol would look about the same as any other star at that distance, right?

- > *The spooky deep woods scene looked really cool! I'm sure we can find a*
- > *scene like that somewhere in the main run: I'm not sure where yet, but it*
- > *will come. Perhaps on the planet orbiting Polaris?*

Or maybe a scene in the Chamber of the pirates' asteroid? I really hate to have to wait a long to write that scene! It is SO cool!! The Starmen in LROM could find the Chamber, experience the spooky woods in it, and then when they get to Mars actually find the real place (or a similar one). Just an idea.

David

⁴⁴⁶ And he did! It turned out very well.

DATE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2001 6:24 PM

About the cover for JTP, ...Nyx is described as very dark, like obsidian...that will make it had to do achieve color contrast in the cover painting.....not impossible, but I thought I would bounce this off you guys.....I could use a deep blue for space, thus giving some color contrast to the planet....but that might be too inaccurate!⁴⁴⁷

Also.....Nyx could be partially identified by the LACK of stars.....a big dark circle(with some very slight texture for realism)...but that would involve a high density starfield.

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2001 1:11 PM

> *About the cover for JTP...*

I prefer a high density starfield—the photos I have from National Geographic, etc. that show deep space show massive amounts of stars. It would make a fantastic dj!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2001 9:15 PM

About the painting for the cover of JTP.....should not be a problem getting that done on schedule with the text.

Mike

⁴⁴⁷ The problem with painting a picture of a black planet in black space is that, well, it's hard to make anything show up! Mike handled the problem beautifully, however, and it turned out well.

DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2001 9:13 AM

I have a question for you guys.....the final version of the JTP painting is coming along, but I need a subject to put on the left hand side of the painting (the back of the dust jacket). As currently laid out, the spaceship is on the front (zooming toward the viewer), part of Nyx is covering the entire upper field. What might go on the left hand side, under Nyx...to balance the painting? Will there be anything else in orbit? Perhaps a nice distant galaxy should go there.

From the text, Nyx is described as non-spherical.....I will try to retain accuracy here.

Mike

DATE: SUN, 8 APR 2001 09:07:55 EDT

Dear Jon and David,

I will respond to recent e-mails soon. I will be at work ALL day today. I ended up not liking the canvas board that I first started the cover for JTP on...so I went and got a nice big stretched canvas.⁴⁴⁸

Mike

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2001 11:06 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Yes Jon, your sister [April] is a great supporter.....and she is right to suggest that the spine for JTP be easily distinguishable from TRA.⁴⁴⁹ And I think this will work

⁴⁴⁸ I have this canvas hanging on my living room wall! It makes a beautiful painting.

⁴⁴⁹ The second and third Starman books both depicted space scenes, and we were concerned that the spines of both books would look identical on the shelf – that is, they would both be black with white stars. We wanted the spines to be more distinctive, if we could work it out.

out....as it is, the painting has Nyx covering the top quarter to one third of the spine area. The rest is of course the black of space. My question is: What color do we want Nyx to be?

The painting is almost finished...just coloring in and detailing Nyx and then the galaxy for the left hand side (back of dj). I may buy another bottle of black paint to make sure that space is really black. I will pepper the field with stars.

The video technique that David mentioned sounds interesting, but will it yield the resolution that we want? Can the videographer give you a demo?

Mike

DATE: THU, 12 APR 2001 22:45:14 -0700

Dear Mike and Jon,

No time right now to answer the emails in detail, but they look as if we're getting down to where we need to be.

- > *the painting has Nyx covering the top quarter to one third of the spine area.*
- > *The rest is of course the black of space. My question is: What color do we want*
- > *Nyx to be?*

How about a deep, dark, evil-looking red?⁴⁵⁰

More later.

David

DATE: FRI, 13 APR 2001 21:01:02 -0700

- > *The video technique that David mentioned sounds interesting, but will*
- > *it yield the resolution that we want? Can the videographer give you a demo?*

⁴⁵⁰ That was a terrific suggestion, and that's what we did!

Good question. I'll have to ask him when we get to that point, but I think the quality of work is very good. The video they did for my son's birthday is high quality, and the fellow who does the kind of artwork we're talking about has 20 years experience.

David

DATE: MON, 23 APR 2001 07:35:58 -0700

- > I also liked the new ending for the chapter: the*
- > description of the ancient Martian base is really cool*
- > and exciting. Wow! It's fantastic. That would make for*
- > a very cool illustration!*

I think so too! What do you think, Mike? You're the illustrator! I think your drawing style could make this a marvelous scene!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 02, 2001 11:23 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I just printed Chapters 11 and 12. I will read tonight. Also, I received the photocopy of the nice chasm type scene that David sent....I agree that it would make a great basis for a JTP internal drawing.

The painting for the DJ has been finished for a while now.....I am going to have my friend Chris photograph it before I do anything like mail it. (The painting is rather large...about 28 x 42 inches.) Chris has had to reschedule a couple of times...but this Friday looks good. I don't know anyone with a digital camera. Chris will then use the scanner at his church to send the scan to me and I will immediately forward to you guys.

Mike

DATE: DATE: SAT, 05 MAY 2001 06:23:01 -0700

- > *The attached scan is of a photo of the painting.....after*
- > *a lot of trouble with my scanning software, I was able to get this relatively*
- > *bright but crude (50 dpi) image of it.*
- > *Don't worry, the actual painting is longer than this image*
- > *implies...allowing for good centering on a DJ. Also, I think the painting*
- > *looks better than this image implies.*

Looks great! I'll put more detail into the description of the Starventure to make it match the painting.

If you can get a photograph of it to me in about a month or so, Mike, I will make some rudimentary dust jackets. We'll need them around that time for the authors' copies of JTP. It won't be long now!

David

DATE: TUE, 15 MAY 2001 08:07:26 -0700

Dear Mike and Jon,

Just time for a quick response here—will answer the emails in more detail later. Regarding the back of the dj, I think that just stars rather than a nebula or galaxy will be fine, but probably a lot of them—like the arm of the Milky Way. Using a photograph as a model is how I would do it. In the story, I do have Nyx illuminated by starlight, so it does need some illumination from lots of stars.

David

DATE: THU, 17 MAY 2001 18:14:53 -0700

- > *[Jon] A jet-black book with a*
- > *mostly black dustjacket and just a hint of eerie*

- > planet – that's the sort of thing that will help the
- > reader get in the right mood when the honorable reader
- > reads the book. I think that might work. What do you
- > think, David?

I sent an email a while back that may have gotten lost—I think it's great, and suggested that an arm of the Milky Way might add some interest so that it's not almost all black, but it should definitely have the look of being way far away from anything else—a really lonely place.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 01, 2001 11:02 AM

I DO need you two guys' dedications and Mike's internal illustrations pretty soon, though—I'd say within three weeks, if we want to get the text off to the publishers. Dust jacket can wait a while, but it would be nice to have it soon so I can put it on the authors' copies. The illustrations will add a few pages, too.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 02, 2001 12:19 AM

Yes, I think might be able to come up with some internals for JTP...I have been thinking about which scenes would be best....I think David requested a scene a while back...which one was that? Also I am open to suggestions.....not that I believe that I am confident about drawing any scene.

About the JTP dj art....Yes, I will send a photo to David, so he can get a few samples djs worked on.....I have not gone ahead and put the galaxy or nebula on the left side...I think I am procrastinating out of fear!

Do you still want me to mail the painting to you, David...I can certainly do that if it will give the best result.

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 02, 2001 10:16 PM

- > *[Mike] Yes, I think might be able to come up*
- > *with some internals for JTP...I have been thinking about which scenes would*
- > *be best....I think David requested a scene a while back...which one was that?*

The ornithopter. Also, for the frontispiece, the narrow gorge on Titan, based on the photocopy of the postcard of the gorge in Switzerland that I sent to the two of you. Just suggestions, but I think that the gorge would be a terrific scene. For other scenes, whatever you want Mike. I have the feeling you like spacecraft scenes, so maybe the shuttlecraft coming down to the face of the abandoned base would be good. And maybe a scene in Armstrong forest, using the great forest scene you emailed us a few months ago. Whatever you choose, I will need these in black and white in 2-3 weeks in order to prepare the master copy for Sheridan.

- > *About the JTP dj art....Yes, I will send a photo to David, so he can*
- > *get a few samples djs worked on.....I have not gone ahead and put the*
- > *galaxy or nebula on the left side...I think I am procrastinating out of fear!*
- > *Do you still want me to mail the painting to you, David...I can*
- > *certainly do that if it will give the best result.*

Nah, I don't think I need the original painting, but a good detailed color copy of the painting of it suitable for enlarging for use as a master for the dj would be great. I agree with Jon—a bunch of stars on the back would be fine—an arm of the Milky Way would work too, but just a field of stars would be fine.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 04, 2001 12:26 AM

About the internals.....there are two ornithopter scenes, the first and then the Dragonfly...which one do you want to have drawn? About the Shuttlecraft.....how big, how many seats, do you have a preference on shape, outlay?

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 04, 2001 3:59 AM

- > *About the internals.....there are two ornithopter scenes, the first and*
- > *then the Dragonfly...which one do you want to have drawn?*

They're both good—I'd leave it up to your preference.

- > *About the*
- > *Shuttlecraft.....how big, how many seats, do you have a preference on shape,*
- > *outlay?*

I kind of picture a lozenge shape. It has room for five passengers—I picture two in the front and three in the back, with a storage section in the rear for supplies, tools, samples, etc. Kind of like a fat car. But your own artistic license is fine with me. Just read the passages that describe what it does and let your imagination go with it.

One factor that may determine which scenes to illustrate is how they are placed in the book. They should be relatively evenly spaced, so we don't have 150 pages with no illustrations, and then 4 illustrations in the last 30 pages. But really, whatever your artistic inspiration leads you to do is fine with me.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2001 4:48 PM

(3) Prints: The prints of the dust jacket came today from you, Mike, and look good. I will give them to somebody in my church tomorrow (Marge Avery, the model for Marjie Prester in AOM) and ask her to scan and enlarge on glossy photographic paper as a master for the JTP dj. Then I'll go to the digital people on Thursday to get lettering, logo, etc., put on. Shouldn't be a problem. If all goes well, I'll have a master by Thursday and will deliver the master to my father on Sunday so he can make 200 copies, which he will deliver to me on Saturday the 23rd. With the additional TRA dust jackets, we'll have a bill there of about \$210.

All-in-all, we're in good shape!

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2001 1:04 AM

- > The photos I sent were for the 'practice' DJ...I will get the*
- > painting complete this week. Would a negative of the photo be better for our*
- > purposes?*

No, a photo is better. I will give the photo to Marge Avery to scan and enlarge. It'll be fine for the practice dj, but if we are to get a good rate on the actual dj's, I don't see how you can get another photo to me in time. Once I receive it, I have to have it scanned and enlarged, then take that to the digital people to put the lettering on, then get that to my father for photocopying. And I'm seeing him for the last time in his old house this Sunday. Maybe I can have the digital guy put some Milky Way stuff in it—how would that be?

- > For the purpose of the internals, I am having a hard time*
- > conceptualizing the Xenobot's legs or "organs of locomotion".....as written*
- > they sound like liquid metal pseudopods or something.....help me a bit here!*

Wow, I don't blame you. I have a hard time with it myself. It's not really clear, is it? Liquid metal pseudopods sounds like exactly what I had in mind, but how to picture it, I don't know. What I was thinking of when I wrote was something like the Terminator in Terminator II, whose limbs could be liquid when necessary but solid like a human's most of the time.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2001 4:19 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Progress on the JTP dj. I asked Marge Avery to scan and enlarge one of the photographs you sent me, Mike, and she did. Unfortunately the enlargement lost a lot of the subtleties of color and design. The halo around the exhaust on the rocket, for example, is entirely missing, and the planet doesn't come out well. I've got somebody trying to scan it with a different program but haven't seen the results of that yet. And tomorrow I'm going to the video production people and I'll take the photograph as well as the best scan

and see what can be done to get the best detail at the right size. Best we can hope for, I think, is maybe to make only 100 dj's rather than 200, if it doesn't turn out well, so we will have at least some books we can sell right off. Then try to get a better copy of the artwork and try again. I just don't know when my father will be in the area again to get the huge discount on quantity color photocopying—he moves in 9 days. If it does turn out usably well, maybe I'll just go ahead with the full 200.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2001 6:55 PM

Thirdly, the dust jacket. I met with the technician at the other copy place and told him our story and what our goal is. I showed him some of the artwork and a copy of TRA with its dj. I gave him the best photograph Mike had provided, a copy of the text for the cover, and my original artwork for the logo. Then he said that since everyone else is donating their time, HE WOULD ALSO MAKE THIS HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT!!! He will put more stars on the field, which I know was Mike's intention. He will use a scanner that will give resolution up to 600 dpi and will have a CD and a hard copy for me tomorrow.

So Jon, for your records Baron Mrkva (yes, that's how you spell his name) of Patriot Video Productions now has TRA #29, and I have #223. 29 was formerly mine, but I gave it to him on the spot and replaced it with the last TRA I had for sale.

I am now completely out of TRAs. When I get the AOMs done, I'll give Baron one of those and send the rest to you Jon. How are we doing on dust jackets for AOM? Do we need more of those? Right now, my father will make 100 more TRA dj's and 200 JTP dj's this week. Then I will send those to you, keeping 50 JTP djs for myself. So if we need more AOM dj's, let me know by Saturday and I'll place that order with my father on Sunday.

So we might still get our poster—although I told the poster guy that we were not in a hurry now and didn't need it until the book fair in October. And we ought to get a very nice dj master for only the cost of three books. And it looks as if Sheridan will be our publisher. So we're moving ahead and looking as good as we can. We continue to be blessed!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2001 8:12 PM

Dear Jon and David,

OK! I have been super-busy/neurotic running around getting things ready at work...in prep for my trip out West. Just got home from work.....I have 4 internals ready to send....who gets 'em? I tried to scan and e-send , but scanner software has conflict with el cheapo camera software!

I am happy with internals....

- #1- dragonfly in Zip's hand
- #2 Shuttle landing on Nyx
- #3 Xenobot
- #4 Zip's cute little sister

(These are not in chronological order)

Hopefully, I will get a chance to do a couple more upon my return.

David, what is your phone #? That I might call you on the slight chance I can visit. My friends, John and Carol Piri have planned a whirlwind itinerary for me....Simi Valley to meet with Paul MacCready of Gossamer Condor fame, Burt Rutan of Voyager/Long EZE fame, Tehachapi for R/C glider combat, up into the mountains for hiking and "starParty" (telescopes and astro-thusiasts!), Mono Lake, Yosemite, Death Valley!

I would like to suggest that the description of the Xenobots includes the "squishing" and "slithering" sound coming from inside their cyber-shells. (The motion of the fluid between their natural bodies and the walls of the cyber-shell.) I think this would be adequately disgusting. The internal I drew definitely has a 60s look to it....and when I was finished and looked at....the squishing noise just became very evident to me. I followed David's wonderful description of a featureless face seen in the "viewport" of the Xenobot. Just pores. I might want to do a head detail of the Xenobot, more closely showing the pores.

I definitely feel that I had a little divine help here.....I was initially unsure of my skills at drawing, but I really feel blessed (and inspired).

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 2001 8:30 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

I've got the master for the JTP dj in hand. It looks good! Baron Mrkva did a wonderful job! He took a little snapshot of Mike's large painting and turned it into an excellent dust jacket! I'm very happy with it. The details are quite clear and the stars are not plentiful but bright—looks very lonely and somewhat ominous. He put the lettering and the spine logo perfectly in place on the master without any need for overlays or pasteups.

I've added an acknowledgements page like before, and put Baron at the top. Also mentioned Leslie Owens for helping with all the binding of AOM. Okay?

I'll add the text to the endflaps of the JTP dj and turn it over to my father on Sunday. By next Saturday we should have 200 copies ready to go, and 100 copies of the TRA dj. It might be wise to get 100 AOM djs too, with my summer goal of getting the rest bound. I have only a few left and we'll need more before too long.

That's 400 djs, which will cost us about \$280. Maybe my father will wait to be repaid if we're going to need the money to make the down payment on the printing of JTP.

Things are falling neatly into place!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2001 11:35 AM

Dear Jon and David,

No need to mail back the drawings, but please hold on to them....we might want to sell them as original art to fans someday (as away of building up the Starman account) or as gift to some fan or other who really deserves it.

I even thought of auctioning off the cover painting.

Mike

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2001 10:41 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Of course Alex⁴⁵¹ can have the picture....I am happy she wants it. (However, if a Xenobot come asking for THAT picture, I would suggest some caution....maybe a little salt to pour on the bugger! :o)

I think this book is excellent.....the best so far.

After reading through it this time, I see where I might have made things difficult for David... (i.e. the color of the STARVENTURE, the number of legs on the Xenobot drawing)

About that "experimental" aircraft I flew....it was one of Burt Rutan's LongEZ type canard variants. All these are considered experimental by the FAA. (It was in this type plane that John Denver died.) The cockpit is set up like a small jet fighter...with a side-mounted joystick rather than a steering wheel, I was in there pretty tight. There was a lot of fear, joy, determination and wonder going on. But I WAS a "test pilot" for a day!

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 2001 10:36 AM

> Of course Alex can have the picture....I am happy she wants it.

I'll put it in a nice frame. Maybe in October she'll let me borrow it so I can bring it back for us all to sign.

*> After reading through it this time, I see where I might have made things
> difficult for David...(i.e. the color of the STARVENTURE, the number of legs on
> the Xenobot drawing)*

No problem. I just altered what was in the text to match the artwork!

David

⁴⁵¹ The model for Kathy Foster; she now has the original illustration of Kathy Foster that Mike drew! We thought that would be fitting.

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2001 10:40 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > > *No problem. I just altered what was in the text to match the artwork!*
- >
- > *Wow! That's an interesting idea: I actually would not have thought of*
- > *that. I should have known! I guess that's one way to make sure the text*
- > *matches the artwork. :)*

We've discerned an answer to one of the oft-stated frustrations in the series book world: why the illustrations sometimes varied from what the text said. Well, the artist has artistic license, and need not be restricted exactly to what the text says—or he just may miss a few details in the creation of the artwork. We saw this when my dad did the art for AOM. In this case, Mike's imagination answered that matter of the "liquid movement" of the Xenobots very well—three loose flexible legs. That answered the spirit of that very difficult-to-picture description. Once he put it down on paper, I could describe it much better in the text. Obviously one important step in the creation process is to have the writer compare text to picture and change text where necessary. It is easy to do—that preserves the integrity of the creative processes of both writer and artist. JTP did that just fine!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2001 10:40 PM

By the way, the white circle on the cover of [the author's copies of] JTP is actually Pluto! I took it from a photo in the National Geographic book I have.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 12:37 AM

My intent with the cover painting for JTP was to capture just that....the action style reminiscent of the 50s and 60s. I hope to be able to better capture this in future work. I like what [Neil] had to say about comics.....my personal view here is that our internals should resemble comic book art (and be very effective.) I was certainly inspired by comic book art for the internals I did.

We are at the point where we need to draw the characters. I am personally a bit fearful of this because one you "draw Joe", then you have to be able to draw a recognizable " Joe" again. This is where good models are helpful....not necessarily real people models, but some other series of sketches (different angles). I will do some sketching and see what I come up with.⁴⁵²

The Griffith observatory is wonderful...it is famous in several movies, including REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE and THE ROCKETEER.

Happy Birthday, David!!!

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 9:33 PM

I know what Neil is saying about action-oriented art, but I think that there is a kind of subtle action implied in our covers, especially Mike's cover for JTP. It is the entering into dangerous space—the action is in the imagination of the beholder. I also liked Mike's internal artwork. The idea of using a comic book illustration style really appeals to me. The best part of the Tom Corbett books was the artwork, for that reason, in my opinion. If we can get a good comic book artist type to do the internals, fantastic!

Yesterday my wife and I went to a local art festival. It comes up every year. The display I liked best was a series of pen and ink drawings of scenery, including starry skies, lightly tinged with watercolor. The paintings were wonderful! THAT'S the kind of stuff I'd like to see in our books. I could even do some, as I used to do a lot of pen and ink

⁴⁵² I think that this is the point at which we decided to go around and find physical models for the various characters in the Starman series...

and still have all my equipment. I also have lots of old comic books I could use for inspiration. I'm just not a very good artist.⁴⁵³

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 9:33 PM

- > I also liked the pictures you did, Mike: I thought the quality*
- > was good, and they added a lot to the book. Your picture of David's little*
- > sister is the first facial portrait in the entire series! Everyone who has*
- > seen that picture has thought that she is really cute.*

Oh, yes, she is! And I hope you all get to meet Alex Parfitt someday. She is just as cute and SO proud to be Kathy!

David

Editor's note: here are some images related to Journey to the Tenth Planet that I thought you might enjoy. They don't fit in with the letters section, but as you can see they did play a role in the creation of the artwork for this book!

⁴⁵³ I don't know about that! Check out the internal artwork for *The Lost Race of Mars* and *Doomsday Horizon*, which David drew, and judge his artwork yourself. I think it's pretty good!

**Artwork for #4, *Descent Into
Europa***

Letters and Images

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2000 12:16 AM

Dear Jon and David,

I really like the artwork, Jon.....only needs a sub converging on the scene!⁴⁵⁴

Mike

Figure 11: My original 3D render

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2000 7:40 PM

And I really like Kevin A[netsberger]'s artwork. Very atmospheric. I'd like to suggest that we ask him to do the artwork for DIE, and I hope that our own Mike Dodd will do the artwork for JTP.⁴⁵⁵

David

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2001 9:11 PM

About DJs⁴⁵⁶.....Kevin was asking what else should be in the scene for cover of DIE.....My first impulse was to suggest strange fish and a sub...but then I also respect the eerie but calm suspense of just the simple scene of the city in the blue water. About

⁴⁵⁴ I had been working on a 3d computer game called *The Key*, and part of the game called for a submerged city. One of the images from the game looked like it could be a good start for the cover art for *Descent Into Europa*, so I took the model, modified it a bit, rendered an image from it and sent it to David and Mike. They loved the image, and it later became the base that Kevin Anetsberger used for the cover art for that book.

⁴⁵⁵ We did, and he agreed! Kevin did the artwork for book four and Mike did the artwork for book three.

⁴⁵⁶ Dustjackets

his questions; Yes it would be very dark (light from the city is OK).....and a sub could use light OR sonar (invisible) to navigate...so it is up to the artist whether or not to use a light coming off the sub.

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2001 1:55 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> *I've been looking through my files today, trying to find the information*
> *you sent me on the dimensions that cover artwork should be. Once you sent me*
> *an e-mail talking about what the available working area is, how much space*
> *is available, where significant things should be, etc. I know I've got it*
> *somewhere, but I just can't find it anywhere among the 1,005 Starman e-mails*
> *I have in my folder.⁴⁵⁷ Do you think you could send it again?*

This is the information which Kevin needs, and which you, Mike, will also need for JTP.⁴⁵⁸

The ratio of the cover dimensions is 1:1.53. The actual size is 11.5 inches by 7.5 inches.⁴⁵⁹ A cover can be made at any size comfortable for the artist as long as the ratio is preserved.⁴⁶⁰ Photocopies can be made of the actual artwork and reduced or enlarged to achieve the actual size.

⁴⁵⁷ As of 9/25/2003 I now have 3,814 e-mails in my Starman folder, all of which are from David or Mike. These e-mails only date back to 3/24/2000 – and we began e-mailing each other in the middle of 1998.

⁴⁵⁸ Here you go: the exact specifications for making a series book dustjacket! I thought you might enjoy seeing these.

⁴⁵⁹ This rule got us into trouble when we first tried to make a dustjacket for the first book: the size we gave the artist was not 11.5 x 7.5 but instead was the size of a Dig Allen book – and Dig Allen books are a little larger than normal. When the jackets were trimmed, this resulted in the loss of some of the artwork, and the very first dustjackets we made only had two figures on the cover – the third was scooted off. We fixed this in the next printing, and I imagine there aren't very many of these first-edition dust-jackets lying around.

⁴⁶⁰ Normally the cover paintings for the Starman books were done actual size – that is, the painting was the exact same size as the dustjacket. Sometimes, though, the painting was a lot bigger: the painting for the first-edition jacket of *Journey to the Tenth Planet* is quite large.

The edges all around should not have any significant item of artwork,⁴⁶¹ that is, about one inch at either end (since this is the part that wraps around the boards) or about half an inch at top and bottom, since this may be trimmed to get the actual size of the dj to fit the book. The central portion of the painting should also not contain anything significant, since this is where the spine will be located, with lettering and logo. This is about an inch wide from top to bottom. The action part of the dj, then, should be in the right half of the remaining free space, since this will be the front cover. There should be room there for the title and author's name without interrupting the picture—the artist can use his imagination as to where the words are to be placed. The left side of the remaining free space can conclude the artwork, but may be less exciting since it is the back of the book. I hope I have written this clearly enough.

This material and the other information from you, Mike, should answer Kevin's questions. Kevin obviously has the capability of putting the lettering right on his artwork, which will make things very easy! He should follow the pattern we've set in the two books we've got. I hope he'll use the same or a similar font to the one I used for TRA. Its name is Lucida Casual. I used that also for AOM, but my father changed it when he had to make a new transparency. The spine logo is 13/16 inches in diameter from the farthest measure, i.e. the white ring. He'll be able to see that and about placement of things from his own copy of TRA.

When you, Mike, and Kevin get the artwork done (including any internals), they can send their work to me and I'll get the photocopies made. If you, Mike, can't put any lettering on, that's fine. I'll do that with transparencies, which is what we've done for the first two books.⁴⁶²

David

⁴⁶¹ This rule also got us into trouble. We forgot about it when working on the painting for the first edition of *The Runaway Asteroid*, and when we went to make the jacket we realized that the spaceship approaching the asteroid was actually off the side of the jacket. David actually had to cut it out and move it so that it would be on the cover.

⁴⁶² What we normally did to make the dustjackets is take an image of the cover, a transparency that had on it all the lettering and logo that was to be on the cover, and then put those on top of each other and run them through a color copier. The procedure worked pretty well, and it allowed us to change the text on the cover as needed – such as when we added *Doomsday Horizon* to the list of available titles on the later dustjacket for *The Runaway Asteroid*. (That's right! The first-edition copy of *The Runaway Asteroid* has two dustjacket formats: one that lists to *Doomsday Horizon* and one that does not. The one that does not is, of course, the first format.)

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2001 8:59 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I liked Kevin's sketch.....but a question now arises. The size of the sub is smaller than I was imagining. I had something a bit more substantial (pun intended) in mind. However, the open view cockpit is very effective.....personalizing the scene. And the "wings" on the sub do play very nicely into the Thundebird/Underbird name. (Some methods of underwater propulsion involve a rigid winged vehicle that makes great switches in its buoyancy....alternating from heavy to lighter-than-water...this vertical potential is translated to forward motion by use of angle of attack and wings, just like gliding underwater.) This method would not need engines running at the time of use....so might be a very non-threatening and stealthy way to snoop about near the city. I imagine that it would be straining credulity to have the sub operate this way the entire descent, however, it makes sense for the final approach to the city. Let's discuss our options!

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2001 9:02 PM

> *Here's a sketch Kevin sent me this morning. I sent him Mike's comments,*
> *and Kevin just got them today; he had made the quick sketch a few days*
> *before.*

Looks, nice but I sure prefer the scene you did, Jon, of the city in a dome seen through a ravine. Maybe I'll like his cover better when I see it in color.⁴⁶³

David

⁴⁶³ When I sent David and Mike the image from my game, it was more of a joke than anything else. This was the first time I realized that David and Mike were expecting the cover of the book to match the render I had sent them earlier! It was a bit of a surprise.

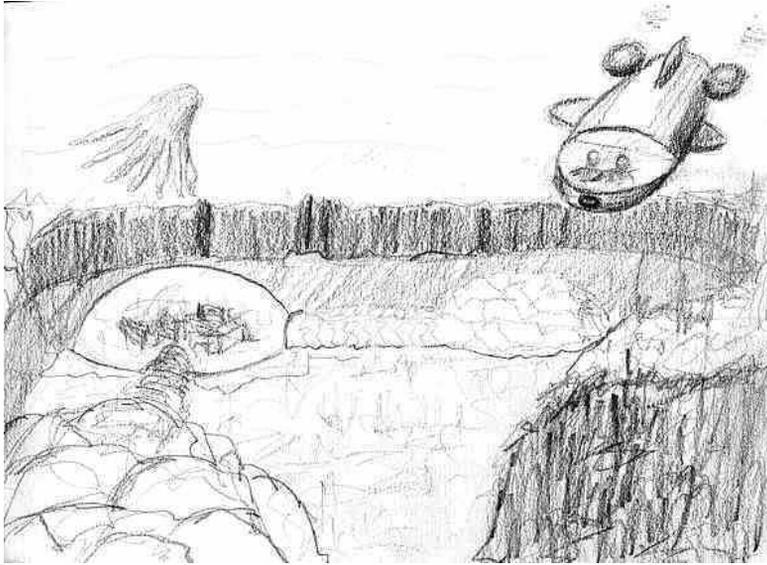


Figure 12: Kevin's initial sketch

DATE: MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2001 11:35 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

- > I liked Kevin's sketch.....but a*
- > question now arises. The size of the sub is smaller than I was imagining. I*
- > had something a bit more substantial (pun intended) in mind. However, the*
- > open view cockpit is very effective.....personalizing the scene. And the*
- > "wings" on the sub do play very nicely into the Thundebird/Underbird*
- > name.*

I agree. Very nice visual and I'm sure he can make it look nice in a final, color representation. I'd sure like to see it somehow, and the octopus, in something like that blue scene Jon put together at first. But whatever Kevin has done before has been impressive—especially his imaginary cover for TRA—that whatever he wants to do I'm sure will be fine.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2001 4:59 PM

> Kevin just e-mailed me and told me that he will indeed be able to do the
> DIE artwork for us. The next question is this: what artwork do we want him
> to do for us? (That is, what specific illustrations do we want?) We should
> probably give him a pretty good notice, since it will take some time to get
> the artwork done and we don't want to tell him too close to October.

Let me give this some thought and send you two a few ideas. If I have the artwork in good time I can alter the text as necessary to match the illustrations, the way I did with Mike's illustrations for JTP.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2001 6:55 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> Kevin just e-mailed me and told me that he will indeed be able to do the
> DIE artwork for us. The next question is this: what artwork do we want him
> to do for us? (That is, what specific illustrations do we want?)

How's this?⁴⁶⁴

- A ship looking like a manta ray (stingaree) flying over either an ocean or ice cap on Earth, or in the sea, i.e. underwater
- The underwater city based on the one Jon made up

⁴⁶⁴ Most of David's suggestions were turned into illustrations, and the ones that weren't are interesting. The "stairway into darkness" image didn't make sense later on because that whole stairway was taken out of the book; the plot changed a bit while we were writing the book and the stairway sequence no longer made sense. An image of the destruction of the mothership also didn't happen partly because the mothership wasn't destroyed as we had originally planned: once we discovered that the ice around Europa was many miles thick, it no longer made sense to have one of the big whales surface and eat the ship. The image of Final Ilien would have been nice, but since there were enough other illustrations as it was (*Descent Into Europa* is by far our most heavily illustrated book) it wasn't really necessary.

- Final Ilien—the ruined city in the northern hemisphere of Mars, now inhabited by Wind People for a century
- The stingaree ship entering the ice on Europa
- The destruction of the mothership
- The stingaree ship entering the undersea caves
- The stairway into darkness

We also do not have any illustrations anywhere of the Starmen. Maybe none of our artists is able to do people very well, and I'd rather have no pictures of people than bad ones, but if Kevin can do a good representation of the Starmen aboard the stingaree ship or the mothership, that would be great!

If you like these or any others, send 'em off to Kevin right away so he can send his work to me while the book is in progress, and I'll just work what he draws into the story. Since the story will be relatively short, there will be plenty of room for illustrations!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 12:37 AM

Dear Jon and David,

I spent this afternoon at the botanical gardens and just loved all the beauty...many inspiring plant designs....especially a tropical tree called a "pony-tail"....must have stuff like that in a STARMAN painting or drawing!

This evening was spent landsailing across the beach (the wind was uncharacteristically perfect for this time of year). We had nothing but awesome ride after awesome ride! Just had to dodge some joggers and people walking their dogs. Speeds in the 35 to 40 mph range.

About the sub....I am Ok with "manta" style because it is in keeping with the chapter title scheme. About the "action" cover....I like David's suggestion of a giant fish chasing it. We must find a way of avoiding any similarities to underwater scenes in "Phantom Menace". (Which also featured "manta" type sub being chased by large fish.)

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 9:33 PM

Regarding artwork and action scenes, I don't remember any artwork connected with Phantom Menace, but if a large fish and a manta ship is part of that scene, we ought to avoid it. For the cover of DIE, how about our manta ship charging into a cave mouth pursued by a huge fish? –I.e. an illustration from the chapter called The Caves of Fear?

...

> > *This is where good models are helpful....not necessarily real*
> > *people models, but some other series of sketches (different*
> > *angles). I will do some sketching and see what I come up with.*

Or we could find some people we know who would be good models for these characters and take photographs of them at different angles.⁴⁶⁵ I do much better writing if I have a real place or person in mind. Maybe artists would prefer some actual models. What do you think? If you like the idea, I can look around and pick some people—got lots at my church to choose from.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 11:30 PM

Let Kevin know that the sub will be a swimming Manta style....please suggest that some of the lines follow the B-2 bomber (not the F-117 Stealth fighter, but the flying wing bomber). Especially the cockpit section and some of the detail lines and perhaps a similar color. No need for intakes! If a B-2 mated with a Manta Ray, what would the result be?

Mike

⁴⁶⁵ Now you know why we decided to find models for the Starman and take photographs of them! We exchanged quite a few e-mails about this, and unfortunately they are not gathered all in one place: I think some are scattered about in almost every Archive volume. Having photographs of all the major characters in the Starman series was a great boon for us, though: it ensured that, when we at last did start drawing illustrations of the Starmen, all the drawings would be based on the same photograph of that character and should therefore depict that character in the same way.

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2001 11:01 PM

- > I don't know if you've*
- > seen the movie or not, but at one portion of the film the two Jedi*
- > (accompanied by that aggravating Jar Jar Binks character) got in a*
- > manta-style submarine and dove down deep into the crust of the planet. When*
- > they were entering a cave they were chomped on by a big fish, which got*
- > eaten by a still larger fish...That would work fine, except it's exactly what*
- > happened in the Phantom Menace! The similarity would be exact.*

Oh yes, I kind of remember that now. Well, we ought to do something entirely our own then.

- > > Or we could find some people we know who would be good*
- > > models for these characters and take photographs of them*
- > > at different angles...*
- >*
- > That sounds like a great idea! Using a real person would be great. I guess*
- > the question then becomes, just who is Zip, Joe, Mark, and so forth? Using a*
- > real person sounds like a good idea to me!*

I have some images in mind, but no one right now who fits them. However, it wouldn't be hard to come up with some possibilities. Either of you know anyone who would be suitable? We could all take pictures of our models, share the photos, and then make our selection. Finding models for Kathy Foster, the Presters, etc. was easy since I built the characters around real people. Developing characters first and then finding people to match them will be more of a challenge.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 30, 2001 5:32 PM

- > I keep coming back to the picture of the city. In many ways it fits what*
- > Neil was talking about: the image of a city with the sub and enemy subs*
- > chasing them would (a) be beautiful, (b) be accurate, (c) be exciting, (d)*
- > give the reader an idea what the book is all about. It really seems to sum*

> *up the whole book nicely.*

Then let's go for that as the cover! Sounds terrific!

> *I don't have a firm idea*

> *what Zip "ought" to look like. I'll give it a shot, though! Short, red hair,*

> *male and grey eyes – man, I don't know anyone like that... I can get you*

> *two or three out of four, but all four will be tough. We'll come up with*

> *something, though.*

Well, keep in mind that the color of the eyes and hair in a model is not important. Internals are black and white and an artist can make hair and eyes any color he wants. What we need is the right facial and body characteristics. When I wrote *City of Dust*, to describe April Teagarden I just kept April Cooper in mind and wrote what I saw in the photo you sent me of her and Michael when the TRAs arrived.

I have given it some thought and I have several people in mind. I think they'd be excellent models! We have lots of college students at my church, as I've mentioned to you many times, and they are enthusiastic about the series. A number of them are helping with the binding of AOM. One is tall and lanky like Joe, and another has the right facial characteristics for Zip—at least as I imagine them. With more thought, I think I could come up with the right people. I'll get back to you on this.

> *This is called a cross-eyed stereogram.*

> *Basically, you look at the image and cross your eyes until you see a*

> *single image in the center. Give your eyes a few seconds to focus and*

> *viola!*

I tried several times, and couldn't make it work on either illustration, but will try again. It took me a while to learn how to do the Magic Eye things, too, but after a while I could. That doesn't seem to work yet on the stereograms. But if it DOES work for most people it would be very cool! How could he make it work on a dj or an internal?⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁶ We weren't able to use this idea in *Descent Into Europa*, but we did use it for the endpapers of the first edition of *The Lost Race of Mars*. The funny thing is that not a single one of our readers have been able to get the stereogram to work! David, Mike and I (as well as Kevin, the artist) can make it work just fine, but we seem to be the only ones who can. The good thing is that the endpapers for that book are still nice, even if you can't make the stereogram to work – that's one of their big advantages over the "Magic Eye"-type 3D images.

More later.

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 30, 2001 11:31 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Thanks for the address, Jon....I guess you know what I was thinking when I asked (Thinking that you would be up there and not in WV!)

I guess Jon is too young to have heard of a stereoscope or a stereo-opticon...but I bet David has heard of them.....at the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th people had these viewers called stereoscopes, into which they would insert a cardlike pair of photo images. The result was a nice 3d effect...it was quite the rage...and people really collected these Victorian stereoisimages.

The use of a pair of lenses makes the focusing much easier (they are like reading glasses, I think). Anyway...how about if we use Kevin's idea on our endpapers!

Mike

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2001 12:18 AM

- > *Once I was able to*
- > *see the book tree, I was able to get the Mars one to come into focus.*
- > *I personally think that this is really cool, but I would never consider it*
- > *for series books: it's way out of the genre....⁴⁶⁷*
- > *This sort of thing would be cool to post on the Starman website on the*
- > *Artwork page though!*

Now THERE'S a great idea!! That would be very, very good!!

More later.

David

⁴⁶⁷ More famous last words!

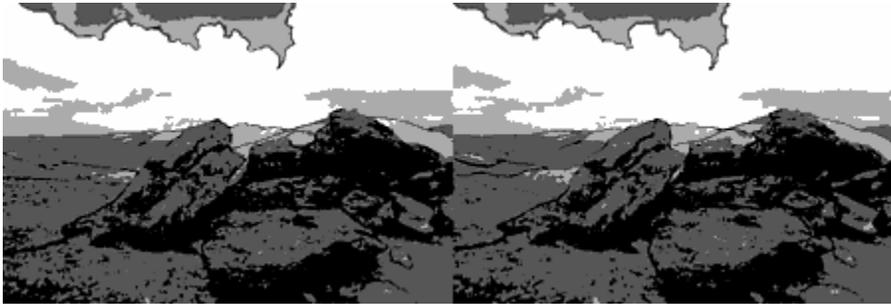


Figure 13: Kevin's "mars" stereograph

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2001 12:18 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

- > *If everyone is in agreement, then, I'll tell Kevin that's what we want. I*
- > *would definitely like to see Mike's sub design first: it sounds like he has*
- > *something cool! Mike, if you can't e-mail it to us, could you copy it on a*
- > *copy machine and mail it directly to us?*

Yes, we sure need the manta sub by Mike. I'm sure it will be terrific! I like your style, Mike!

- > *Do you have a model in mind yet for Richard Starlight? I kind of based him*
- > *on a combination of Rick Brant and Tom Swift, as well as a good bit of*
- > *Richard Routh (the father of a good friend of mine). I'm not at all*
- > *convinced that that is what he should look like physically, but mentally*
- > *that is what I had in mind, and I believe that is what has been conveyed.*

I had only thought of the three Starman, but I'm sure I can find someone for Richard. I actually have a terrific person in mind, but he's in his mid-thirties rather than late fifties. I'll give it some more thought. I'm sure I can find someone.

- > *I can't remember who came up with the idea of Joe being tall. It might have*
- > *been me, but I don't remember. If it was me, I might have made him tall*
- > *because I have a mental picture that all Joes are tall people, and hence*
- > *this Joe was made tall...*

I think it was you, Jon, in the material that eventually became central to Introducing the Starman Series. I refer to that frequently whenever I write the text, just to make sure we're consistent.

I was thinking earlier today as I was driving around how many of our ideas are good, but we don't remember who came up with them. That's a good sign of what our teamwork is like. I remember a number of emails we three exchanged two years ago in which we tried to come up with a term to succeed Space Explorer, but I don't remember who came up with the term "Starman."⁴⁶⁸

- > > *How could he make it work on a dj or an internal?*
- > *I don't know! I've asked him, though, and I'll let you know what he says.*

Well, if we've decided not to use the technique in the book, it's a moot question. I think your reasons against it are sound, Jon.

- > *[Mike] Anyway...how about if we use Kevin's idea on our endpapers!*

Now THAT is an intriguing idea! I like it!

- > *I guess Jon is too young to have hear of a stereoscope*
- > *or a stereo-opticon...but I bet David has heard of them.....at the end of*
- > *the 19th century and into the early 20th people had these viewers called*
- > *stereoscopes, into which they would insert a cardlike pair of photo*
- > *images. The result was a nice 3d effect...it was quite the rage...and people*
- > *really collected these Victorian stereoimages.*
- > *The use of a pair of lenses makes the focusing much easier (they are*
- > *like reading glasses, I think)*

Oh yes, I remember. I've seen them.

More later!

David

⁴⁶⁸ Later research has shown that it was Mike who came up with the term!

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2001 4:48 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Just got this in from Neil! What do you think? If the quality was really*
- > *good, it might be worth it.... A 50 dollar US bill is a*
- > *great incentive.*

Sure, \$50 is not too much for us. I'd suggest we give Neil the go-ahead.⁴⁶⁹

- > *I told [Kevin] what we had discussed: that while we were a bit cautious to*
- > *use the 3d technique on the cover of the book, we thought it would be cool*
- > *to use the technique on new endpapers; once our readers got the books, we*
- > *could see what they thought of it, and from their reaction judge whether or*
- > *not we should use it again.*
- > *The question, of course, arises: what should we put on the new endpapers?*
- > *I suggested an adaptation of the cover art, but that is just one idea. What*
- > *do you think?*

I think putting a 3-D picture on the endpapers would be a great idea. An adaptation of the cover art? Okay, but I prefer a different scene generally. The Magic Talisman⁴⁷⁰ had three representations of the same scene, and that was about all it offered. On the other hand, the 3-D effect as endpapers could be seen as extending the cover art, so that would work fine.

I tried to get the second 3-D submission to work and couldn't. Maybe it is because the picture is horizontal rather than vertical. I can't cross my eyes enough to create that necessary third image in the middle. I could do it for the book tree because it was a vertical picture. Endpapers are about the same proportions, so would probably work fine. It would be quite a novelty and well worth the effort!

- > *I'm not expecting anything for a while*

⁴⁶⁹ At the time we were looking for a good artist to make some internal illustrations for upcoming Starman books. What we *really* wanted were good illustrations of the three Starmen, and we knew that none of the artists we had been using could help us out. We never did manage to hire an artist, but we did work our way around the problem: David was able to make a pretty good illustration of Mark and Joe on the frontispiece of *Doomsday Horizon*, and his father did a great job illustrating all three Starmen on the cover of *The Starlight Maneuver*. Mike Dodd's work illustrating Kathy Foster in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* should also not be forgotten – nor should Kevin's sketch of Zip's face in *Descent Into Europa!*

⁴⁷⁰ The last Rick Brant book

> longer, but I know it will come eventually – and when it does, it will be
> great.

Thanks for the vote of confidence.⁴⁷¹ Even if I'm not actually writing now, the scenes are surging through my head and will get down in a day or two.

David

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2001 9:27 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Hopefully, the Comic Book type artist will be able to draw in a classic style.....A LOT of the young guys drawing comic art now draw in a "modern", edgy style that might not be conducive to our aims. (Examples: WitchBlade, DNAgents)

Also, about the Comic book store owner who wants to stock some Starman books....I say we go for it....at least we can claim that some store somewhere has stocked the product.....a barrier that once broken might help us get into more stores.

I really wish I could get my scanner to work....I want to get these thumbnail sketches to you, then perhaps on to Kevin.

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 01, 2001 9:50 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> {Neil} Any instructions for a cover? Scene, action,
> persons in picture, Title of book, etc. ?

> [Jon] What should we tell him? The next two covers are pretty well taken; that

⁴⁷¹ David had a little trouble when he first tried to write the manuscript for *Descent Into Europa*: he would sit down and get a bad case of writer's block. He eventually overcame the problem and produced a fine book!

> just leaves the *Unnamed Book* and the ones after it...

> [Mike] Hopefully, the *Comic Book* type artist

> will be able to draw in a classic style.....A LOT of the young guys drawing

> comic art now draw in a "modern", edgy style that might not be conducive to

> our aims. (Examples: *WitchBlade*, *DNAgents*)

I'm not familiar with the comics you mention, Mike, but I've seen some modern comic book drawing and I agree completely. Maybe we should send to Neil an example of the style we're looking for (a sample from a Tom Corbett book, maybe), and have anyone who is interested submit one sample drawing for our consideration—any space scene would do. We should ask the artist to submit something with a person in it so we see how he does people. It would be a great leap forward if we have someone who can do people well. Then if we find an artist we like, we can ask him (or her) to start with the internals for LROM.⁴⁷² My dad hasn't volunteered to do those—just the cover painting, which he's done. There's no hurry on finding someone for these drawings, but once we find someone he can get started right away. We can come up with a list of internals for that book without too much trouble and it would be very helpful to have them in front of me as I write. And if we don't find anyone, then maybe I could do the internals myself.

What do you think?

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 01, 2001 10:06 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

> > *I prefer a different scene generally [for the frontispiece]...*

> *What scene did you have in mind? Having another scene inside would work*

> *fine; I'm just not sure what scene to offer. Do you have any suggestions?*

⁴⁷² The person who ended up doing the internals for *The Lost Race of Mars* was, of course, David Baumann – the very person who wrote this e-mail.

In my opinion, the frontispiece should be different from the dust jacket, action oriented (or inspirational), and not give away any key elements of the story. Therefore, a good scene for the frontispiece would be the Underbird breaking through the bottom of the ice barrier with its lights beaming down into the pitch black ocean (my preference—a great scene and directly connected to the title, Descent Into Europa!). Other scenes could be the Starmen's approach to Final Ilien, the mothership approaching Europa from space, or the Starmen exploring the lost city.

- > *I didn't have any trouble with any of the 3d*
- > *images, but from what I can tell not everyone can see these (that is, you're*
- > *certainly not the only one). It would be quite a novelty, and would be*
- > *something new! Our customers might have fun with it.*

Definitely worth a try! An historic first for series books and by no means dependent on new technology. This kind of thing could have been done 100 years ago. Any of my suggestions for the frontispiece illustration would work here too.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 01, 2001 11:16 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I think Neil knows exactly what we're looking for: he has a good-sized*
- > *collection of series books himself (he even used to own the Galaxy Ghosts)*
- > *and he said that he was going to show artists those books to give them an*
- > *idea of the style we wanted.*

Okay, but not all series book art is what I think we have in mind. The Tom Corbett artwork is really on target, but some of the other artwork, like the later Tom Swift Jr., isn't too inspiring.

- > > *we can ask him (or her) to start with the internals for LROM...*
- > *Now that sounds like a great idea! That would be very helpful. Do you think*
- > *we could come up with a scene or two that we could give to Neil?*

It's fine with me if you pick the scene, Jon, but I'd suggest it be one with people in it so we can see how the artist renders people. There are a lot of possibilities, and you are much more familiar with the storyline at this point than I am.

- > > *In my opinion, the frontispiece should be different*
- > > *from the dust jacket...*
- > *Well, yes! I agree. That generally is the case, except in Tom Swift Sr.*
- > *books where the frontispieces are all pretty much identical to the dust*
- > *jackets.*

Some of the old Mercer Boys did the same thing.

I really like the Underbird breaking through the ice as the frontispiece,⁴⁷³ but as for a good 3D scene for the endpapers, how about the mothership's approach to Europa? That'll be a star field like our other endpaper scenes and could work well in 3D without being too difficult.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 01, 2001 1:31 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *I'll write and see if he has any Tom Corbett books to show off.*
- > *If not, I'll try to hunt up some scans to send to him! I sure don't have*
- > *any, but I bet Cadet Ed does.*

I have the entire set, but no scanner!

- > *Incidentally, I found out that Cadet Ed is*
- > *going to be at the West Virginia Book Festival this October, so I'm looking*
- > *forward to meeting him! It will be fun to meet a "real" Starman fan in*
- > *person.*

⁴⁷³ This is a scene we all three really liked, and it was Mike's idea, but for some reason we can't remember now it was never drawn.

He told me he was going to be there. Should be a great meeting when the two of you get together!

- > *How about a picture based off of this scene? ...The illustration would be this: the*
- > *three Starmen are inside a cafe-type*
- > *restaurant, standing around an old man (a weather-beaten prospector) who is*
- > *drawing a diagram on a napkin on the table. In the background are other*
- > *tables with people, with perhaps a bar farther back and someone wiping it.*
- > *That would be a cool illustration, very reminiscent of Dig Allen, and*
- > *would definitely answer the question of how well this person draws people!*
- > *What do you think?*

Sounds good, but there should not be too many people in the scene. The Starmen, the old-timer, and maybe the barkeep in the back would be best. Otherwise the scene gets too crowded.

- > > *I really like the Underbird breaking through the ice as*
- > > *the frontispiece, but as for a good 3D scene for the endpapers,*
- > > *how about the mothership's approach to Europa? That'll be a star*
- > > *field like our other endpaper scenes and could work well in 3D*
- > > *without being too difficult.*
- > *That sounds like a great idea! I like it. Shall we tell Kevin our new*
- > *choices?*

Sure!

More later.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 02, 2001 4:40 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *Here is the word in from the bookstore! It looks like we're in, folks!!*
- > *This is encouraging.*

Yes indeed!

- > *Do you think it would be*
- > *possible to have two sets of endpapers – perhaps one image in the front,*
- > *and another in the back? That way we could have the best of both worlds: a*
- > *space scene in the front, and an underwater scene in the back.*

Our endpapers so far have been space scenes, so I wouldn't mind not having a space scene for DIE, i.e. it's okay with me to put the underwater scene in both front and back. On the other hand, if Kevin wants to do both, more power to him.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 02, 2001 10:06 PM

Dear Jon and David,

After much coaxing I was able to get my computer to scan this crude image suggestion for the sub. I like the elegant shape, but the realistic engineer side of my brain says the "wingspan" is a bit too much. Actually the design has deviated from a true Manta or Ray into some idealized compromise that includes a bird.

One very strong selling point on such a design is that although faster subs might be built, none could be as silent (stealthy) as this. Perhaps we could write into the story that SE knew that it would have to use a sub that had a very low acoustic signature. Also this design would tend to be very energy efficient and agile.

If you guys approve then it is on to Kevin to see what magic he can work with it!

Mike

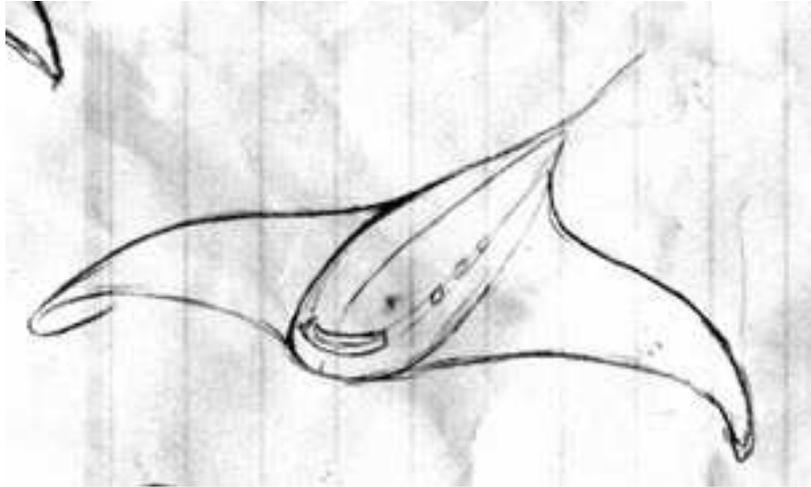


Figure 14: Mike's "crude image"

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 04, 2001 7:48 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

My orders from the Starman store arrived yesterday! Fast, fast service and good quality products! You did great by setting this program up, Jon! I met my father yesterday for lunch in his new home, and he was wearing his Starman T-shirt. Looked great!

- > > *On the other hand, if Kevin wants to do both [endpapers], more power to him.*
- > *I was thinking more of the cost: how much would it cost two have two*
- > *different endpapers? Would that significantly increase the price? I have a*
- > *feeling that it might.*

Oh, right.

- > *We should probably just stick to one scene, although*
- > *if it's a space scene or an underwater scene I'm not sure yet. Either would*
- > *be fine with me! Do you have a preference?*

I'd prefer the underwater scene, just for a change from the space scenes and because "underwater" is the basic theme of DIE.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 04, 2001 9:41 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

- > *This just in from Kevin!... Quick painting putting the 'bird in an*
- > *underwater setting. Not meant to be anything other than a conversation*
- > *starter.*

Looks fine, except the colors are too garish for my taste. I pictured something black or dark green or indigo, or maybe even crimson. Nice design overall! Thanks, Mike!! All your ideas REALLY add pizzazz to our stories!!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 04, 2001 10:47 PM

Dear Jon and David,

I certainly enjoyed Kevin's artwork with the sub...I do however agree with David that the colors are garish.....my choices would be green, black, grey. Also please know that the twin triangle viewports need not be the last word there....perhaps Kevin could give it a more B-2 type cockpit window. I have mailed a package to both of you that contains several things, including some other sketch suggestions for the sub. I may end up being able to scan these and send...that way Kevin could get them and have them to consider. I like his "underwater" look he has achieved. Perhaps there ought to be a big "SE" lettered on the craft.

The package also contains a video which has a documentary on it...in this documentary is a section on Europa, including sending a "bathysphere" into Europa.....I also have included a photocopied article on LIFE UNDER THE ICE....about Europa. Both these could serve as good additional info on "the ocean that orbits Jupiter".

I am rather late to realize that a person could probably SCUBA inside Europa without too much difficulty. I am not sure why I had assumed it impossible.....after all the water can't be much colder than 28 degrees F. A good suit would take care of that. One would be protected from Jupiter's radiation belts by the layer of ice. That leaves only corrosive effects and possible biological infection. (Not likely, as any microbes would not be used to Earth type proteins.) I can't remember if we already discussed this

area, but I feel confident that if we desired, a SCUBA scene could be realistically written into the story.

And about this ocean in general.....since Europa's gravity is probably only about 1/6 or less that of Earth, the pressure gradient is going to be less severe, meaning that an equivalent sub can have 6 times the crush depth on Europa as on Earth. A diver can also dive 6 times as deep.

These facts may come in handy during the writing.

I have invented another weird life form if we want to use it for descriptive effect. Imagine a crablike or spider-like creature that has a gas bladder giving him a high buoyancy. This buoyancy would send him right up to the bottom of the ice and keep him there on the "ceiling"...now the guy can walk around upside down for a major part of his life, or all of it. I don't know what to call this thing, but perhaps it would be best just to have the Starman discover them and mention amongst themselves that someone would have to eventually name this bizzare life form. "Wow,...look at all those odd crabbies walking on the ceiling!" "They must be gas buoyant...sure do look weird!"⁴⁷⁴

Well that's all for now.

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, AUGUST 06, 2001 9:50 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Got your package in the mail today, Mike! Thanks for all the cool stuff in it! The sketches of the Underbird look terrific! I really like them—especially the one in which the wings are flexed! I watched the video right away—great stuff on Europa as well as the rest of the film.

David

⁴⁷⁴ These creatures didn't make it into *Descent Into Europa* but they did appear in the Starman short story *Return to Europa!*

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2001 7:10 PM

- > *What we need to do now is take some pictures and get scans of them*
- > *off to Kevin, so he can work them into DIE artwork!*

I'll do my best to take the photos soon, but I am on vacation and away for the next three Sundays, and the three men might be moving around too. However, all three are in the area for the summer, and this Sunday afternoon is the AOM gluing party. At least one or two of them will be there. I actually might change my mind about a candidate for Zip. There is another who would be very good, but not with red hair. I'll have to think about it. I think I've got a good candidate for Steve Cliff, too—my older son's boss.

- > *This just in from Kevin....Mid*
- > *September is a little tight for me. I could probably have it done by*
- > *the end of September.*

That would be okay. I just want to make sure that the text matches the artwork. I'll probably have to alter a few things once I see the artwork. Internals are more important than the cover for this purpose.

The Underbird looks fine!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2001 7:09 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Yes, I agree with David....I had also envisioned more substantial "wings" for the UB.....Kevin should just draw a real Manta Ray and mod the central portion into a B-2 like fuselage. His sketch of Zip is nice, but the nose could be a bit thinner, making for a more handsome fellow.

Mike

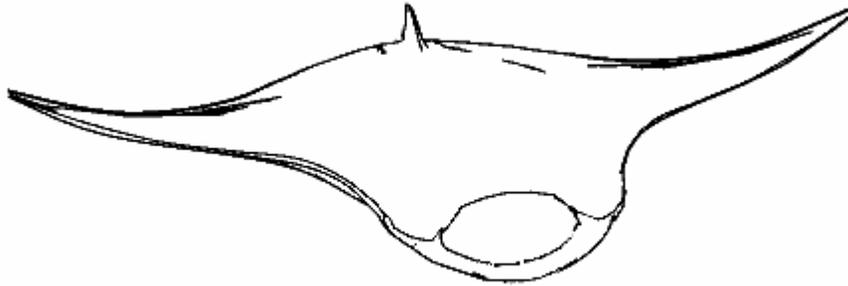


Figure 15: Kevin's sketch of the Underbird



Figure 16: Kevin's "big nose" sketch of Zip

DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2001 8:36 AM

Dear Jon and David,

I really like the feel of this latest cover idea. I would, however like to see a shorter hull and symmetrical "wing" position (not "S" shaped , one up , one down.....such a sub would NOT use an asymmetrical wing pulse unless it was rolling) David had said that he like my sketch of the UB with the wings curled downward, perhaps Kevin could use that as a model.

The "underwater blur" effect is excellent...the dark eerie color is perfection (it would be great if the dj printing can capture this)....the whole effect really does echo the title very nicely. I think Kevin is almost there!

Mike

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 08, 2001 7:19 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

I've read your email messages on the DIE cover, and realize that, since Kevin has already put a lot of work into it, we have to have the approach to Aquapolis as the cover scene. That's fine with me. My only comment, then, is that the cover is not anywhere near the right proportions, and that's vital. Unless Kevin is shaping the painting in another way I haven't seen yet, the artwork as he sent it to us rolls right around past the spine and onto the back of the book. The powerful part of the picture has got to be on the right hand side, with a very "non-busy" and "non-essential" part of the painting in the middle where the spine goes, and then something "extra" on the left hand side for the back.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2001 1:22 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Hey, much better! I like the human sketch—very appealing. Of course, he'll need to make the hand part "gloves" of some kind, and the seat should be maybe on a pedestal that could resemble something like one of the Xenobots' legs rather than a cone. See Mike's drawing in JTP, page 131. The pilot must not only be able to move around, but the seat should also be adaptable to people of different sizes. Remember that each pilot, when he checks in, says his name so the system can recognize his voice—then it adjusts to his body.

But I like it a lot!

David



Figure 17: Kevin's "human sketch"

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2001 5:46 PM

The second version looks great! I don't have any suggestions for improvement except that the Starmen should be wearing red! Very nice! A little abstract, but the pilot is very realistic. It has a nice feel. The abstractedness gives one the impression that the Underbird is going somewhere.

David

DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 08, 2001 8:29 PM

> This just in from Kevin! Comments?

Oh wow! Of course, he's confused Aquapolis with Europa! If he removes the fish, it'll be fine!

David

DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 08, 2001 8:48 PM

Dear Jon and David,

The cover for DIE looks really eerie. I am guessing that this is just the "thumb-nail sketch" at this point as I saw no UB in the picture. Great work, Kevin!

Mike

DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 08, 2001 9:04 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Wow, 7 emails in less than an hour!

Re: Kevin's cover artwork. If the scene is intended to be the approach to Aquapolis—as I think it is and should be, since I used the artwork on the mousepad as inspiration for the scene—then Kevin needs to remove the giant fish and replace it with the Molly. Maybe he can use the giant fish as an internal. It's a great scene! Then the cover would have Aquapolis on the front and the Molly on the back—a little yellow five-seater submarine. Unwrapped, the dj will be a great scene! All along until now, we've assumed that it would be the Underbird that would be pictured, but in the scene it's actually the Molly! – unless we're illustrating the scene when the UB returns from its trial cruise. But I prefer the Molly if we can get some good illustrations of the UB in the internals—maybe even the frontispiece.

Subject: RE: Chapter release

- > *It's good! It looks very good. It matches the cover and it's a good*
- > *taste of the book. I say let's go with it! Shall I post it online along with*
- > *the cover art?*

Sure ONCE THE COVER ART IS FIXED TO MATCH THE SCENE as described above.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 09, 2001 7:15 PM

Dear Jon,

> *Here's what Kevin said! In another note he sent me, he wanted to know when
> the cover scene changes from being Europa to Florida. It seems that no one
> ever told him... it's straightened out now but it is going to delay things.*

Okay, good. I'm sure we noted a few months ago that the scene was actually Florida, but apparently no one told Kevin. Our lapse. I'm glad he's a good sport about it. I do hope that he can keep the image of the giant fish for an internal!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2001 7:38 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

WOW!!! That is really cool!! I like it!!

Only two teeny suggestions. The spine logo has to be placed in the right place—just above the center of the spine rather than too close to the top; and the lettering for the cover should be all upper case. It should match the lettering on the three previous volumes. Kevin can easily fix those things by comparing what he's making with previous dj's.

The artwork itself is absolutely fantastic!!! I am totally pleased!!!

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2001 7:43 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

In fact, to fix the spine all he has to do is move the logo to the place BELOW the author's name rather than ABOVE it.

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2001 8:12 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Also, Jon, the lettering for the cover needs to be moved over to the left about 3/4 of an inch, and the letting at the bottom needs to be lifted up a little.

To summarize, then:

- The spine logo needs to be moved down below the author's name.
- The spine lettering "The Starman Series" and the number "4" need to be moved up about half an inch.
- The title "Descent Into Europa" needs to be put into capital letters (and perhaps italicized to match books 2 and 3).
- And the words on the cover—all three lines—need to be moved to the left 3/4" inch.

The artwork is eminently suitable!! Beautiful!! The overall dimensions are extremely precise!

Once Kevin fixes these things, I'd say go ahead and post the artwork and the sample writing!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2001 2:58 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

The revisions look very good. However, I printed it up at home, then enlarged it (210%) to get an actual size dj and printed it up black and white. The spacing of the words on the title is still off—they go off the page. Rather than keep giving different dimensions as I look at it, and have Kevin go through a series of micro-revisions, I'd suggest that he himself space the lettering in such a way that when the image is at 7.625 inches (7 5/8) high, the lettering is spaced correctly. The spine logo and lettering needs a teeny bit more adjustment as well to make it conform to the other books. He ought to be able to get this easily by just comparing it with the books on his shelf.

How is he planning on getting a master copy to me for photocopying? Printing up an actual size copy and mailing it to me? Sending an email with an attachment? (If so, I'd have to take it to Copy Plus—the people who did our poster—and have them print it actual size. I don't have that capability.) Or what?

> *I do like the mixed case, but we do need to be consistent.*

I like consistency myself, but some series did change their format. Compare Rocket Jumper with its predecessors, for example.

The posting on the Starman web site looks terrific! I'll bet we get a number of comments soon.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2001 10:14 PM

>> *I'm playing with the idea of a single dome window in the front of the*

>> *Underbird. What do you think?*

> *The drawing looks neat, but I much prefer the UB that is more*

> *traditionally "Manta-Ray" like in it's profile.*

I like the look of it too, but also prefer to stay with Mike on this—it should look like a manta ray. We're really working on having the UB based upon the real fish.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2001 8:30 AM

Dear Jon and David,

Thanks for the info on the submersible on the left side of Kevin's cover. Here's my next question: Why does the really beautiful cover not feature the European sea with the UB? I would love to see the "submersible" removed and the UB inserted (on the front). Can this work? Can the scene represent the actual descent into Europa? (or discovery of the city). The canyon and city and blue water are all so eerily beautiful.....

I am off to Richmond until Sat night.....the Nutcracker show is upon me! Will be glad when all this driving is over for a while.

Mike

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2001 10:13 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Kevin and I are now corresponding directly on the artwork and that has made things easier for both of us. He is very easy to work with. I've told him how important it is to Mike that the UB be on the cover instead of the submersible. If it is easy for him to make the change, I'm sure he'll do it. If it's not easy or possible with the time constraints we've got, then I've asked him to put in a beautiful rendering of the UB as the frontispiece or other significant internal. He says he's well along in the process and should be able to finish all illustrations by year's end and that any revisions will be easy to make.

If he IS able to put the UB on the cover, then the illustration can be the UB's return from its maiden voyage, so it will still be accurate to the book.

I just sent him the message now so he hasn't had a chance to reply, but I'll let you know right away what he says.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2001 10:36 AM

Dear Mike,

Sorry to say that Kevin doesn't think he can make the changes at this stage of the game. He said that doing the artwork with a computer is very similar to using a paintbrush—you can't just click and eliminate and then click and put in something else.

He would like to do a frontispiece with the UB and will do it to your precise specifications. You can reach him at ... Just tell him what you want and he'll do it for you.

I'm sorry, Mike.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2001 1:39 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Mike, the problem with the cover is this. I'm learning now how difficult it can be to coordinate text and artwork. Months ago, Jon made the original picture with the beautiful, eerie, blue city under a dome. We all assumed that it would be the city on Europa and that's what we told Kevin. As the story developed, it became evident that this really described Aquapolis, and that the European city would be quite different. I wrote the "approach to Aquapolis" scene based completely on Jon's original artwork, using my mouse pad as a model. However, we forgot to tell Kevin so when he did the first draft, he had the UB heading toward the domed city. Then, for reasons I've forgotten, he put in a huge fish, thinking we were still on Europa. This was just a few days ago when time was getting short. I told him that the fish was out of place, the domed city was Aq-

uapolis, and instead of the fish he needed to put in the Molly. So he took out the fish and put in the yellow submersible and submitted what he thought was his final artwork. Now it's too late to change it; I think he doesn't want to do the painting over again. It would be his FOURTH revision. I also regret that we can't get the UB on the cover. It'd be much better than a yellow submarine.

On the positive side, Kevin did say he could do three-dimensional endpapers for us. Maybe we can put the UB in there!!

> *Why does the really beautiful cover not feature the European sea with*
> *the UB? I would love to see the "submersible" removed and the UB inserted(on*
> *the front). Can this work? Can the scene represent the actual descent into*
> *Europa?(or discovery of the city). The canyon and city and blue water are*
> *all so eerily beautiful.....*

Indeed it's a beautiful scene, but the city on Europa is inside of a hollow sphere. The scene on the cover doesn't match the European scene. Somewhere in there we had talked about having the cover scene be the descent of the UB from the ice ceiling into the European sea. THAT would have been a terrific scene! Maybe it's still possible for the endpapers.

David

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2001 11:37 PM

Dear Jon,

The image that Kevin sent me of the final version of the dj artwork for DIE is too large for me to see all at once, and I can only print the left part. Could you either send me a version that I can see all at once and which I can print up, or tell me how to print it in sections? Thanks! I just want to make absolutely sure that the dimensions are correct. It looks like it, but I want to make sure.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2001 12:26 AM

Dear Mike and Jon,

Here's a rough sketch of what Kevin has in mind for the frontispiece. It's about what I had in mind, as long as it's only a rough sketch and will be fleshed out more.

What do you think?

David

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2001 8:35 AM

Dear Jon and David,

The sketch is interesting.....will there eventually be a UB or people in the sketch? The "feel" of it so far is not unlike a technical drawing...sort of like the "blue-print" endboards of the Tom Swift Jr books I've seen.

Mike

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2001 9:00 AM

Dear Jon and David,

About the Kevin sketch of the crane and Mantaship.....I have not received it yet.
About Jon's idea of Starlight correspondence.....I think it's great.
David noticed that NME is very similar to "En ami".....I hope that we CAN weave that extra bit of irony into the series somewhere....irony upon irony.

Mike

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 03, 2002 10:04 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

I've now finished a last, thorough read-through of DIE and made a number of small changes in every chapter. Kevin still says he expects to have the illustrations done by week's end. What he's sent me looks very good! It'll be a fine book. I'm planning on getting the authors' copies made next week, and Kevin and I will handle getting the book package together for the Canadian printer. We're in a good place.

David

DATE: THU, 17 JAN 2002 14:38:39 -0800

Dear Jon,

Kevin sent me a CD with the artwork for the dj on it. It arrived today and looks BEAUTIFUL! He added a feature or two that really give the scene character and a sense of wonder. You'll love it!

David

DATE: MON, 4 FEB 2002 21:22:25 EST

Dear Jon and David,

I am very glad you liked the illustrations⁴⁷⁵...it was an interesting task considering the spontaneity of it.

Some comments:

⁴⁷⁵ Mike did a few illustrations for *Descent Into Europa*.

- 1) I included the sketch of the Silverfire only as a "possible use" item, in case we found ourselves in need of an extra. Please do not feel it necessary to include in the book, unless you really like it...Also, I wanted to justify the trip to the "webcafe" (from where I scanned and sent these illustrations)
- 2) I really like what Jon did with the illustration of Robert Nolan....I drew it with the intention of having it share a page with the text...it worked out very well!
- 3) All the illustrations were scanned and e-mailed at 300 dpi resolution....I did try to scan a couple at 1200 dpi, but my time ran out on the computer at the cybercafe. Jon, let me know if this would have made for an improved image...it will be good knowledge for the next time.⁴⁷⁶
- 4) The two trips to CyberCafe cost me a total of \$9.00 (they charge \$4.50 per half hour of computer usage)...If it is alright with Jon, I would like to deduct this from the \$25 or so I still owe for the books. Is this OK?

Now, for my impression of DIE.....I have now had a chance to read it as a whole book. I am so impressed with it. I know we seem to be increasingly impressed with each book, but David has really done a great job. I love every part of this story. The "name dropping". The description of the Mantaships. Joe's humor when the UB is being dropped into Lake Vostock. Nolan's "moment". The tying together of plot elements. The darkwater suspense. And almond cookies with good Darjeeling tea!

The sample chapter from LROM was really suspenseful and downright frightening...(because I know the place!)

I have a really positive feel about DIE!

Mike

Editor's note: here are some other images of interest related to this book! Enjoy.

⁴⁷⁶ Scanning at 300 dpi was fine; while the publisher required 600 dpi, it wasn't too hard to convert the image to the right size. What took a little longer was taking the scanned image and dropping it down to two colors: while the illustrations were done with blank ink or pencil, the publisher had to be given an image file with only two colors (pure black and pure white) and that meant eliminating all the shades of gray that crept into the illustration when it was scanned. I eventually found a way to do it by (a) dropping the color depth to 16 colors, (b) altering the 16-color palette by hand to make individual shades of gray either black or white, (c) resizing the image to 600 dpi, (d) running a "smooth" filter on the image, and then (e) dropping the color depth back down to 2 colors. The hardest part was adjusting the 16-color palette: there were times when it was hard to decide if a particular shade of gray should be made black or white, and the decision could have a drastic impact on the image.



Figure 18: Kevin's sketch of Zip Foster in a spacesuit



Figure 19: One of Kevin's early sketches of Zip

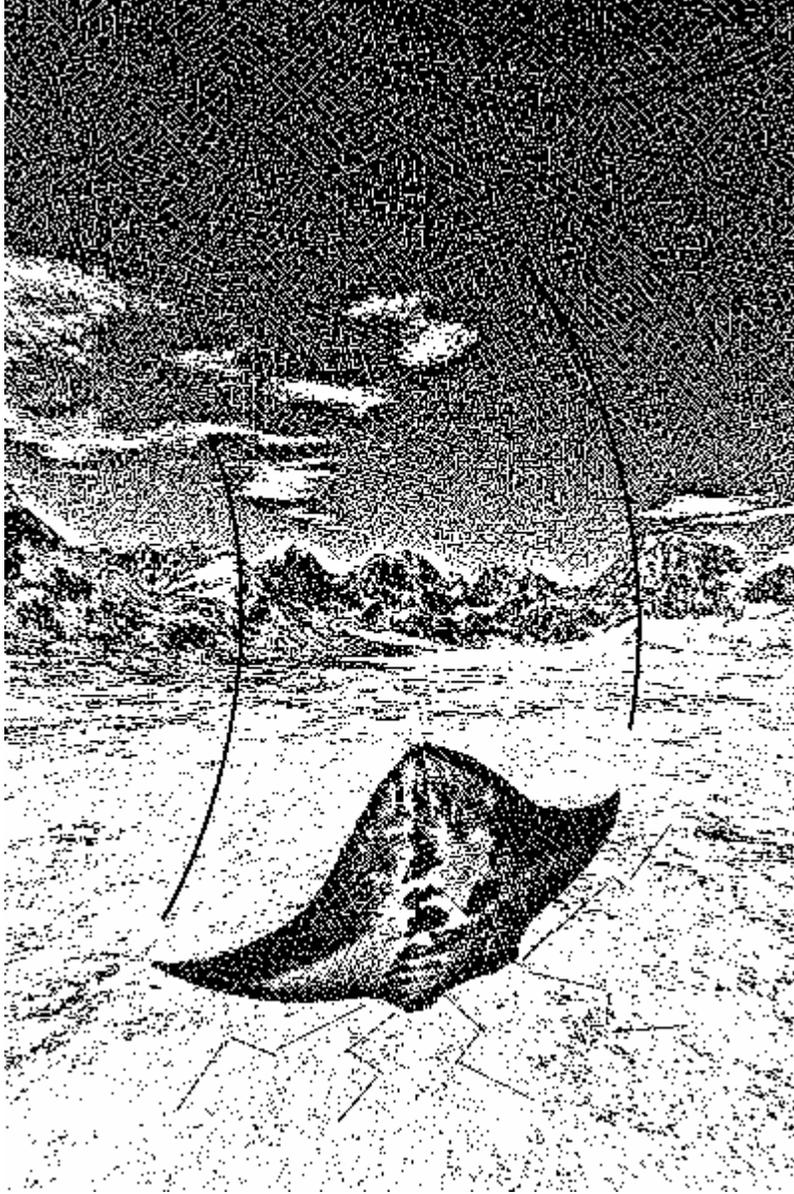


Figure 20: Kevin's sketch of the Underbird breaking through the ice, back when that was still a part of the plot

**Artwork for #5, *The Lost Race
of Mars***

Letters and Images

DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2001 10:18 PM

Dear Mike and Jon,

I'm glad you guys got your books. The painting came from a little book someone gave me for Christmas, called "In the Beginning...The Creation According to Genesis." It is filled with paintings that were either painted for the Creation narrative or easily apply to it. The one I used is only 3" by 4 1/2" in the book, but scanned very well on Marge Avery's scanner. She enlarged it for me. I made photocopies and ran it through my printer to get the lettering on it. Turned out great!

The painting is by Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902) and is called "Sunset in the Yosemite Valley." The scene is right here in California! The painting itself is in a place called The Haggin Museum in Stockton, California—that's a medium-sized city somewhere east of San Francisco. That's not close to me—roughly 400 miles north.

I'll write to the authorities there to see if we can use it for the cover, but I doubt they'll let us. If not, the theme it presents can be adapted easily for an original painting by my father or even by me. That might even be better.⁴⁷⁷

David

DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 04, 2001 9:56 PM

Dear Jon , David and Bill,

Wow! The cover [for *The Lost Race of Mars*] is supernice! It really is a perfect cover. It just exudes ancient glory, a sense of forever, an exotic timelessness, and a call to adventure!

Well done Bill Baumann!

Mike

⁴⁷⁷ We eventually based the cover art for *The Lost Race of Mars* on this painting!

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2001 2:27 PM

I saw the final copy of the dj yesterday for LROM. My father put the Star Ranger in the scene, and it looks FANTASTIC!! It is REALLY a MARVELOUS painting!! And Nick has expressed interest a couple of times in doing the cover for OL.⁴⁷⁸

David

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2001 9:33 PM

To get a good scan of the LROM artwork, Jon, you'll need to contact my father. At this point he has the only completed artwork. I've seen it, but there is nothing beyond the original. The scan in the I*S is not complete, since he has added the Star Ranger to the cover. It looks so cool!!!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2002 10:14 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Valerie suggested that a map of the terrain in LROM might be helpful—something like what occasionally appeared in the Rick Brant series. It would show where Eagle City is, Bethesda, Brandow, the lichen field, etc. I could do that rather easily and put it into the introductory material. Or would it be better in an Inter*Stellar, or even the web site? What do you think?⁴⁷⁹

David

⁴⁷⁸ *Operation Luna*, the famous lost Starman book...

⁴⁷⁹ We thought it was a great idea, so we made it happen!

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2002 11:51 PM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Here are the new and revised illustrations. The new one is Camping in Armstrong Forest. I also fixed up the scene with Daniel Teagarden in the narrow canyon and the double crater. Finally the floating face has been completely redone. I kept the face (I doubt I could do that one over again) and just pasted it into a completely new drawing.

There are still four illustrations to go.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2002 12:09 AM

Kevin sent me a draft of the endpapers. I'll forward it to you in a moment. It has an attractive, mysterious feel. He features a crescent moon, so it has to be Montezuma's Castle and not a scene from LROM, but it looks very nice!

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2002 9:30 PM

Dear Jon,

*> I like the idea of putting it in the book! Books with maps are cool, and it
> wouldn't have very much of an impact on the length of the book. Sounds like
> a terrific idea!!*

We'll do it.

...

- > *It is indeed inspiring! I really like the new illustrations – they're just*
- > *fantastic. The scale of the one with the face seems a bit off (the face is*
- > *way too big) but when it comes time I can fix that. I'll also make it so*
- > *that you'll never be able to tell that the face was pasted in – these*
- > *things can be done.*

I figured you could edit it. I might even redo the drawing again, as I have a better idea.

- > *By the way, do you have access to a scanner? I'll need a digitized version*
- > *of these images if I'm going to prepare the final manuscript, and nothing*
- > *beats a piece of paper scanned on a flatbed scanner at 600 DPI. I have one,*
- > *but it's here, of course, and not in California...*

I'm planning on giving you the originals to take back with you.⁴⁸⁰ In addition, I do have a scanner and access to one. I've never been able to get mine to work. Gateway says that the software isn't quite ready for it and that I'll be informed when it's ready for download. On the other hand, I did something accidentally last week and it began to scan something, so it can work. Doubtless you'll be able to figure it out. But either way, you'll have the originals.

- > *By the way, are we going to have any illustrations of any of the*
- > *characters? We have those great photos to work from and I was just curious!*

I'm working on illustrations now of Zip, Mark, and Stenafi in the garden, and Joe with the arachnoid. Just keep in mind that figures are my bane. I certainly do anything effective from the photos.⁴⁸¹

David

⁴⁸⁰ At this time I was planning a weeklong visit to David in California, which took place in mid-July of that year. During this trip we finished the work on LROM together and got it off to Friesens to have it printed.

⁴⁸¹ This is actually all we exchanged concerning the artwork for *The Lost Race of Mars*! David was handling it, so we just left it all up to him, and he handled it very well.