

*The future –
the way it used to be!*

**Volume 5: The Inter*Stellars and other miscellaneous
but highly important Starman items**

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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

(Additional volumes are in preparation.)

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 our great Starman fans, without whom this
series would never have been possible.*

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Introduction

Here I am once more, writing yet another introduction to yet another volume of the Starman Appendix. Volume 5 is a significant volume in that it brings to a completion the Appendices that deal with the first segment of the series: there will be no more Appendix volumes written until Starman #10, *The Last Command*, has been released and is in stores everywhere.

When I first started writing these Appendices I wanted to give our readers a look behind the scenes at what it took to produce the Starman books. As the previous four volumes have shown, it takes quite a lot: plots have to be tweaked, chapters have to be written, artwork has to be drawn, printing contracts have to be thrown up in the air in frustration, and so forth. It took a *lot* of work to write those five books, and those of you who have read the previous four Appendices know what I am talking about.

This volume is intended to tidy up the loose ends not covered in the previous four volumes. 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 in the previous four Appendices; 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 in this volume 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 Starman'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 all five Starman Appendices. It's taken a long time to go through thousands of e-mails and put pieces of them in various Appendices, to properly format the e-mails, to footnote them, and to remove all the really boring stuff, 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 Appendices 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.

The Inter*Stellars

Letters

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

Dear Jon and Mike,

The Key to Tharsos¹ 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.² 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 Annuals. (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.³ The Stones of Juno,⁴ 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.⁵

David

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

¹ 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 Appendix, under the “Lost Adventures” section.

² 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.

³ The idea for the Appendix kept popping up, but it wasn't until September of 2003 that it became a reality.

⁴ Another story I plotted and we ended up not using...

⁵ This is how we ended up producing the Inter*Stellars, and later, the Starman Chronicles.

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] #3.⁶ 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!⁷

- > *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...*⁸

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

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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*...

⁸ 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.

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 Martians⁹
- 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
- The disastrous radiation accident that grounded Allen Foster¹⁰
- 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.¹¹ 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 Seafaring 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*

⁹ This story became a reality in the second Inter*Stellar, which published the story *The City of Dust*.

¹⁰ This story also became a reality in the short story *SETI*, which was released in the third Inter*Stellar.

¹¹ 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.

> *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.

> *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.¹²

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?¹³ 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 books, and maybe some

¹² 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!

¹³ Another brilliant idea by Mike! It's amazing how he comes up with these things.

material from the Appendix.¹⁴ 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) bit 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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶ Right?

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!¹⁷

David

DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2000 10:28 PM

¹⁴ The third and fifth Inter*Stellars do include material that was taken from the then-unpublished first volume of the Starman Appendix.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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!

¹⁷ 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.

Perhaps the InterStellars should be spelled INTER*STELLARS....you know, with a star in the middle if the two base words.¹⁸

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 shelf¹⁹— 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.²⁰ 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,

¹⁸ Another great idea! This is exactly what we did.

¹⁹ And this is what we did. That means that each copy has to be cut by hand on a paper cutter.

²⁰ 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 readers 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.)

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.²¹ We're getting comments like Mike's on the message board about the only successful series books²² 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,²³ 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 me²⁴ (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

²¹ 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 books and what approach to take. (None of those letters have been published in an Appendix; 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.

²² I think that the example mentioned at the time was the Chip Hilton series.

²³ 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...

²⁴ Another brilliant idea! This phrase became the title of the letters section of the Inter*Stellars.

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

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 "StellarGram" 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.²⁵

> *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

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

²⁵ It was always important to us not to keep people waiting, especially if they had placed an order.

> > *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.²⁶ And anything else Mike has done 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,²⁷ 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

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

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?²⁸ 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.

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.²⁹

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

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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!

- > *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?*

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.³⁰ 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:*

³⁰ 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!³¹

> *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.³²

Blessings!

David

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2001 2:10 PM

³¹ 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!

³² 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.

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."³³ 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, 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.³⁴ 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.³⁵

David

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

> *Be sure to check out [my sister] April's review of the Inter*Stellar on*

³³ 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.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ Another item to look for when hunting for real first editions!

- > *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).*

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

Benjamin³⁶ 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!³⁷

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*

³⁶ Bennett, a boy about 11 years old at the time, and a member of the Reading Group.

³⁷ 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*.

- > *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*
- > *is being printed? I know that the response to the last I*S wasn't exactly*
- > *overwhelming,³⁸ 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*

³⁸ 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.

> *know that you only have one left, so it looks like it's time to print up*
> *another batch!*

I'll print up ten more in the next week or so.³⁹

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,⁴⁰ 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:

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.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ 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 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.⁴¹

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

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*

⁴¹ 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*.

- > *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!⁴² I'd hate to get rid of my glider as*
- > *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

⁴² This glider later morphed into the dirigibles that the Starmen tried to get from the Banjoman in *The Lost Race of Mars*.

- > *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...*⁴³

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!!

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?*⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵

David

⁴³ 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.

⁴⁴ I was concerned that David was starting to overwork himself and needed a break...

⁴⁵ 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!*⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷

David

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

⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁷ Now you know where April and Renee Teagarden came from!

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 Bowman⁴⁸.....it 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 already 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*

⁴⁸ Of Arthur C. Clarke's "2001" fame.

> *the last three letters are in lower case?*

I'll call it SETI.⁴⁹

I'm home now for the afternoon and expect to finish the editing of DIE by this evening.

David

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.⁵⁰ 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

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ 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.

orbital mechanics. They have to wait until they get to Saturn before 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?⁵¹ It suddenly occurred to me that I can use it to good advantage in the third I*S. I put an hour 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

⁵¹ This image eventually worked its way onto the cover of Inter*Stellar #3!

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.*⁵²

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.

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!

⁵² 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.

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 Starmen; 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 base*⁵³

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.

...

AMOT⁵⁴ 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*.

Have a great day!

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ Our abbreviation for *A Matter of Time*.

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2002 10:52 PM

I'm glad you like the finished version of AMOT. Yes, the illustration [of Thomas Outbase] 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.
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!⁵⁵

With two short stories coming up and so much material, I suggest that we produce TWO Inter*Stellars at once.⁵⁶ 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.

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.*

⁵⁵ 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.

⁵⁶ This sounded like a good idea to me, so we did!

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.⁵⁷ 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

⁵⁷ 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.

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!

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!⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹ The gap in the text is for the illustration, which you received a couple of weeks ago.

Anyway, let me know what you think and if we need a better, more blockbuster-type ending.⁶⁰

David

DATE: MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2002 9:34 PM

⁵⁸ 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.

⁵⁹ And just think: if it hadn't been for that "farmhouse on the moon" illustration, that first chapter would never have existed!

⁶⁰ I thought it was fine, so we left it as it was!

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,⁶¹ 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 Europeans possible. I'd forgotten that it was the Europeans 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

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:

⁶¹ No one ever caught this plug.

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.⁶²

David

DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2002 10:58 PM

Dear Jon,

⁶² We decided to make Joe's siblings into cousins. This biography for Joe is presented in the first chapter of *Doomsday Horizon*.

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

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.⁶³

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 April⁶⁴ 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 frequently.⁶⁵ 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

⁶³ 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 Ahmanyman child in LROM. David kept this idea a secret even from Mike and 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.

⁶⁴ My brother and sister

⁶⁵ We ended up simply not writing any more of them after the fifth Inter*Stellar: the demand for them simply wasn't there.

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,⁶⁶ 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.*

Could be a good idea. We're at a crossroads now in the series and have a number of exciting ways we can go.⁶⁷

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?⁶⁸ How big is it and how far out? 4 billion miles, wasn't it? How far beyond Pluto? Thanks.

⁶⁶ Mark Johnson's series book convention in October 2002 in Charlottesville, Virginia, where LROM was released.

⁶⁷ This idea later turned itself into *The Starman Chronicles*, in which we wrote min-stories and serialized them.

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 for eight receiving beacons on Ahmanya: 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?⁶⁹ Or are you able to send it on a CD to interested fans for a fee?⁷⁰ 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.

⁶⁸ 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.

⁶⁹ I wasn't, but Valerie Kramer was, and she kindly agreed to post it on her website!

⁷⁰ 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.

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?

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

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,⁷¹ 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.⁷²

While going through the files, I noted that it is exactly one year ago that I joined the team you two⁷³ had already started, hoping to put together a new Dig Allen book called *Mutiny on Mars*.⁷⁴ I woke up after an hour's sleep and dashed out the preliminary idea for the Tenth Planet⁷⁵ 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,⁷⁶ and get a picture of the development of our work from the first idea of writing Dig Allen #7 to

⁷¹ 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!)

⁷² 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.

⁷³ 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 ednacooper@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.

⁷⁴ 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.

⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁶ Files which, I think, unfortunately no longer exist!

assembling the complex world of David Foster and its 22 volumes.⁷⁷ 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?⁷⁸
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.⁷⁹ However, if people are using compads, money will have been replaced. Will Mars retain currency? Can something else be counterfeited? Maybe compads.
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.

⁷⁷ I don't remember what book we were leaving out, but we ended up with 23 volumes, not 22.

⁷⁸ 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...

⁷⁹ 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.

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?⁸⁰

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!"⁸¹ 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.

⁸⁰ 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 any anywhere else.

⁸¹ 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*!

Gonna log off now and get ready ta go ta work.

David

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!⁸²

David

DATE: SATURDAY, APRIL 01, 2000 9:09 PM

⁸² 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!

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.

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.⁸³

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.⁸⁴

⁸³ We did like the idea, and so we adopted it!

David

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 01, 2000 11:06 PM

Dear Jon and David,

Excellent idea, Jon⁸⁵and 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 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 name⁸⁶that 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".⁸⁷ Continuity can sometimes be a chore, but then if we ever get to that point, it will be a wonderful chore!

⁸⁴ 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.

⁸⁵ I had suggested that we include references to other adventures the Starman 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 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...

⁸⁶ 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.

⁸⁷ 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."

Onward and Spaceward!

Mike

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:⁸⁸

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!⁸⁹

David

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

⁸⁸ 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!

⁸⁹ 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.

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*⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹

David

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.⁹²

> *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.*

⁹⁰ My sister.

⁹¹ 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.

⁹² 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.

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.⁹³

David

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,

⁹³ 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.

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 corbomite or a stasis chamber halfway to Alpha Centuari.

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

> *Our books do have lots of characters* –⁹⁴

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 –*

⁹⁴ 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.

> *and I think we can do it!*

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.⁹⁵

David

DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 2000 5:25 PM

> *I realized something recently. The Dig Allen books*

⁹⁵ 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.

- > *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!...*⁹⁶

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.⁹⁷

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*
- > *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 #23,⁹⁸ 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.⁹⁹ I'm hoping that someone besides us

⁹⁶ No, I have no idea what I was talking about.

⁹⁷ This is why we weren't always introducing new alien races! We've tried to keep it to a minimum.

⁹⁸ 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.

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.¹⁰⁰

> *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.
> 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

⁹⁹ 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.

¹⁰⁰ 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!

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.¹⁰¹

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 following, which is from about three years ago at least. Thought you'd like it, as it turned out to be rather prophetic.¹⁰²

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 Towey 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.

¹⁰¹ 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!

¹⁰² This is pretty amazing: David was already thinking about writing series books before I met him!

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 Hults 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 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 current interest in that Iola and Callie will play a little more active part than usual. Like it so far?¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Nothing ever came of this, unfortunately, but it is an interesting idea.

David

DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2001 11:36 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

Origami fan art.¹⁰⁴ 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*Stellar¹⁰⁵), 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

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 now¹⁰⁶but ultimately, I see no reason to stop "peeling the onion".....it is just a matter of

¹⁰⁴ 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!

¹⁰⁵ We did. See I*S #2.

¹⁰⁶ 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

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!"¹⁰⁷

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.¹⁰⁸

David

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.¹⁰⁹

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

menace out there *beyond* the Xenobots, lying in the distant future... This is the only time this is mentioned anywhere in the Starman series.

¹⁰⁷ Mike was right, and so I laid the "cloud of darkness" idea aside for now. I might go back to it later, maybe...

¹⁰⁸ 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!

¹⁰⁹ Here we go: Mike Dodd comes up with the official slogan of the Starman series!

> *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?¹¹⁰

David

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...¹¹¹ It'll be our first*
> *"Starman Fan Convention"!*
>

¹¹⁰ We certainly did! It was a lot better than our old slogan: *Making the 22nd century an age of hope and adventure.*

¹¹¹ 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.

- > *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...*

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 throwaway 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.¹¹²

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.

¹¹² 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 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.*

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!*

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.¹¹³

Mike

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 04, 2001 10:53 AM

Dear Jon and Mike,

¹¹³ 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!

- > *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.*¹¹⁴

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*
- > *The Stones of Juno*¹¹⁵ *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.¹¹⁶ 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.¹¹⁷ 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.¹¹⁸

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*

¹¹⁴ 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.

¹¹⁵ Another in-between Starman adventure story I've plotted. I have its summary in the files; maybe it will be told one day...

¹¹⁶ 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!

¹¹⁷ 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.

¹¹⁸ 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.

- > *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.*

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:¹¹⁹

ASSAULT ON MARS
 THE RUNAWAY ASTEROID
 JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET
 DESCENT INTO EUROPA
 THE LOST RACE OF MARS
 OPERATION LUNA¹²⁰

(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:¹²¹

¹¹⁹ 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."

¹²⁰ 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!

¹²¹ That's what we did! A note very similar to this did appear as a forward in *Descent Into Europa*.

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....

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.¹²² 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.¹²³ 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

¹²² 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.

¹²³ 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.

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

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.¹²⁴ 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.

¹²⁴ This is very true: compare *Flight of the Olympia* (which I wrote) with *The City of Dust* (which David wrote).

David

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 06, 2001 1:08 PM

- > *I still haven't come up with a plot,*¹²⁵
- > *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 #2.¹²⁶

...

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.¹²⁷

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)

¹²⁵ 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.

¹²⁶ At this point we were numbering our e-mails so we could see if any were getting lost.

¹²⁷ 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.

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.¹²⁸

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 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 woodwork 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.*

¹²⁸ 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*.

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 Zimbardo¹²⁹of 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

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

¹²⁹ Argo Silvestri became the model for Yancy Dufaure in DIE.

- > 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!!¹³⁰

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
- > thing to have.¹³¹

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

¹³⁰ I was quite surprised to see that the Starman books had made the recommended reading list for a public library!

¹³¹ At this point I had started gathering information for the Starmen Appendix. I was a long way away from releasing it, but I was thinking about it and had started work on it.

> *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.¹³² I suspect that certain 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

¹³² 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.

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.

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 Markinko¹³³ 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!*

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

¹³³ 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!

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 1.79.¹³⁴ 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.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Getting the books printed and produced is a whole other subject, and will be discussed in a different Appendix.

¹³⁵ 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.

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 using 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.¹³⁶ I have more hope of a response here than I do from McIntosh and Otis.¹³⁷

> *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.¹³⁸

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!¹³⁹ We may want to look into maximizing this potential.

¹³⁶ 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.

¹³⁷ A top New York agency where Dorothy Markinko worked. Even though she was in her eighties, she still did a little work for them.

¹³⁸ 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.¹⁴⁰ 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 LROM¹⁴¹ 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.¹⁴² I am sure that Leslie can do it¹⁴³ and I have a built-in group of people willing to help—her family and all the colleges students. But 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.¹⁴⁴

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.

¹³⁹ 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!

¹⁴⁰ 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.

¹⁴¹ 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.

¹⁴² 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.

¹⁴³ Leslie Owens, dedicated Starman fan who has donated many hours of volunteer labor, and a member of the Reading Group.

¹⁴⁴ 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.

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

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.¹⁴⁵ The inference was that they were motivated by much more than money. It would have been considered 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 RESEARCH¹⁴⁶ 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:*

¹⁴⁵ 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!

¹⁴⁶ From the Dig Allen series

- > *people like them would be in extremely high demand in the industry.... It*
- > *might be interesting to have very wealthy explorers for a change...*¹⁴⁷

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.¹⁴⁸

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 sometime, 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.¹⁴⁹

David

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.

¹⁴⁷ 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.

¹⁴⁸ 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.

¹⁴⁹ 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.

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.¹⁵⁰

Mike

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 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

¹⁵⁰ 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...

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.¹⁵¹ 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!

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,¹⁵² 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

¹⁵¹ 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.

¹⁵² 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.

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 Julian¹⁵³ is so wonderful (see my X Bar X Boys web site¹⁵⁴—there's a picture of me on the counter¹⁵⁵)—it is not a nostalgia thing: it is an actual soda fountain from the 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.¹⁵⁶

Anyway, on to our options: I'd suggest that we do this—see what happens, if anything, with Penguin and McIntosh and Otis.¹⁵⁷ 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.¹⁵⁸

David

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 04, 2002 8:59 PM

Dear Jon and David,

¹⁵³ The small, historic gold-mining town barely survived the great fires in California that raged in October 2003.

¹⁵⁴ <http://home.pacbell.net/dbaumann/>

¹⁵⁵ You can find that photo at this page: http://home.pacbell.net/dbaumann/series_books_in_general.htm

¹⁵⁶ We had! It was a very cool soda fountain – an amazing piece of history.

¹⁵⁷ 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!

¹⁵⁸ You've probably seen references like this all throughout the various Appendices. 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.

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).

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,¹⁵⁹ we might*

¹⁵⁹ 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.

- > *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?¹⁶⁰

- > *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 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 party¹⁶¹ 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 SETI¹⁶² 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.

This never happened, and that is probably a good thing: it would have been expensive to reprint all five Starman books!

¹⁶⁰ 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.

¹⁶¹ A party in which unbound copies of the first Starman book were bound so they could be sold.

¹⁶² A Starman series short story

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.

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.¹⁶³

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,

¹⁶³ 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.

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?¹⁶⁴

- > *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.¹⁶⁵

- > *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.*¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ 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 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.

¹⁶⁵ This idea eventually turned itself into the short story *A Matter of Time*.

¹⁶⁶ 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.

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*.

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 MS¹⁶⁷ in case we ever want to go for the third edition. The POD¹⁶⁸ 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?)¹⁶⁹

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...*¹⁷⁰

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...*

¹⁶⁷ Manuscript

¹⁶⁸ Print-on-demand

¹⁶⁹ Yup, he was.

¹⁷⁰ 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.

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.¹⁷¹

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...*

¹⁷¹ 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.

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

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 01, 2002 8:32 AM

Dear Jon and David,

Jon , the new JTP cover mock-up is awesome¹⁷².....the 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.¹⁷³

The news about the national Christian radio interview is great!¹⁷⁴ 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,

¹⁷² 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...

¹⁷³ 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.

¹⁷⁴ 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.

> *What do you think of this draft I made for new Bryce¹⁷⁵ 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
> 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:¹⁷⁶

- *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 European 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

¹⁷⁵ I did my 3d modeling in a program called Bryce 3D.

¹⁷⁶ 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*?¹⁷⁷ 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

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.

¹⁷⁷ 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!

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:¹⁷⁸

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.

¹⁷⁸ 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.

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.¹⁷⁹

David

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 29, 2002 3:43 PM

> *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 FIREWASP.....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

¹⁷⁹ I think that neither of these things were done...

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

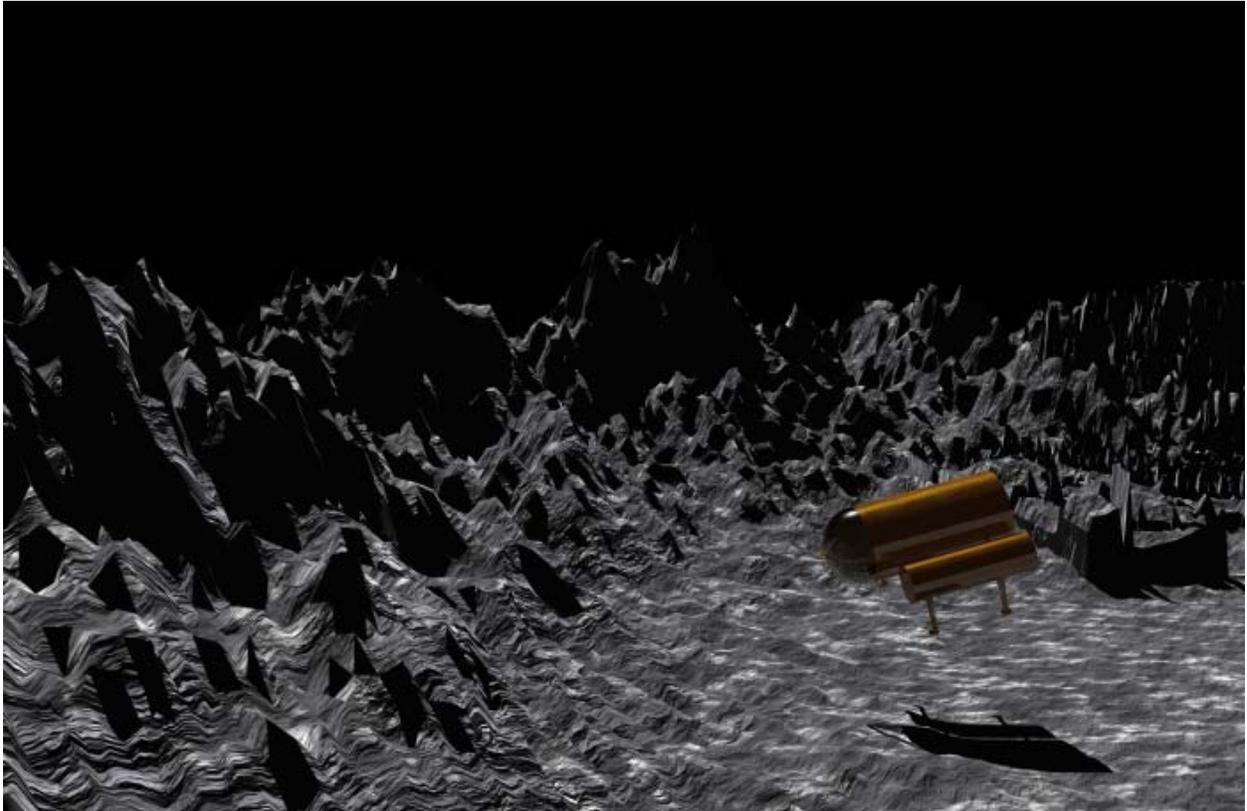
DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 03, 2002 9:21 PM

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



The proposed second-edition artwork for Journey to the Tenth Planet

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.¹⁸⁰

...

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,

¹⁸⁰ 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.

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

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.¹⁸¹ 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

¹⁸¹ 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.

DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2002 6:53 PM

> *-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.¹⁸²

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?¹⁸³

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 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.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² That would have been nice! As far as I could tell, though, the Analog review didn't result in any orders...

¹⁸³ We did, and he enjoyed them, and he even mentioned them in another issue of Analog.

¹⁸⁴ 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

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*
> *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

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.

- > *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 great¹⁸⁵.....a*
- > *very nice way to be accurate/realistic in our locations!*

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.¹⁸⁶ I did look at it more carefully, though, and charted it out it 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*

¹⁸⁵ 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.

¹⁸⁶ 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.

> *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

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.*¹⁸⁷

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.¹⁸⁸

Mike

¹⁸⁷ 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.

¹⁸⁸ 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.¹⁸⁹

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.*

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...*

¹⁸⁹ This is another intriguing idea that we never did: we ended up producing the Starman Appendices instead.

- >
- > *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.*¹⁹⁰

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 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).¹⁹¹

> *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,

¹⁹⁰ 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.

¹⁹¹ 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.

When we three had dinner at Ruby Tuesday's in Charlottesville,¹⁹² 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!)¹⁹³

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.¹⁹⁴

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?

¹⁹² 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.

¹⁹³ 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 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!

¹⁹⁴ This is exactly what we decided to do!

David

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.¹⁹⁵ 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.

Mike

¹⁹⁵ 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.



3d Bryce render of the Xenobot model I built. This is showing the back of the ship. You already knew, that, though, right?¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ David, however, apparently didn't know that! His detailed description of the Xenobot ship that appears in *Doomsday Horizon* reverses the back and the front. By the time we figured out that he had it wrong, the ship had been described in such detail in so many places throughout the book that it would have been a monstrous effort to repair it, so we left it as it is. The cover painting David did for DH also shows the ship with back and front reversed.

**Bonus Section: 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 Sun¹⁹⁷My 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 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.

¹⁹⁷ At the time we came up with this idea, we were working over the plot for *Journey to the Tenth Planet*.

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 Key¹⁹⁸ 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 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*]¹⁹⁹ Mars decided it was time to reveal the secret. The secret had been held for long enough: Tharsos could now be resorted and used

¹⁹⁸ 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.

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 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...

¹⁹⁹ 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*.

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.²⁰⁰

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 only a matter of time before Tharsos was ready, and the war on the Xenobots could begin!

Advertising Blurb:

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 Ahmanyans. 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.

²⁰⁰ 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...

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" scenarios²⁰¹I 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.

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

²⁰¹ "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."

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 Krag's²⁰² 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

²⁰² of Dig Allen *Captives in Space* fame!

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.

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*.²⁰³ 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...

²⁰³ No, I cannot give you a copy of these. Don't even ask.

"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..."

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.²⁰⁴ 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!!!!!!*

²⁰⁴ 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!

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...!]

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 computers 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 shown 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 wildlife: 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 Cereiens 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.²⁰⁵ 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.

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 Cereiens 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 Cereiens 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

²⁰⁵ 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!

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 sparring 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.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ With this note, the Appendices 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