

THE STARMAN SAGA
Volume 4

THE STARMAN
COMPANION

*The cover illustrates a scene on page 101
of Volume 2,
The Search for the Benefactors.*

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THE STARMAN SAGA
Volume Four

THE STARMAN
COMPANION



by Michael D. Cooper
(assembled by David Baumann)

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About the Author

Michael D. Cooper is the pseudonym for Jon Cooper, Mike Dodd, and David Baumann, each of whom played a vital role in creating the Starman series. Jon Cooper plotted the stories, Mike Dodd suggested creative plot elements and supervised the stories' scientific accuracy and plausibility, and David Baumann wrote the text, fine tuning details and developing the characters. Cooper is a computer programmer, Dodd is a social worker and zeppelin builder, and Baumann is an Episcopal priest and martial arts master.

TAKE NOTE

**There are many spoilers in this volume.
Anyone who has not yet read
the Starman saga in its entirety
should not read this book.**

THE STARMAN SAGA

Volume 1: The Dawn of the Starmen

Mutiny On Mars (May 19-July 22, 2151)

The Runaway Asteroid (July 24-September 10, 2151)

“The City of Dust” (July 30, 2049-August 2051)

“The Flight of the *Olympia*” (2110)

“The Caves of Mercury” (2112-2113)

“The Orphans of Titan” (August 2, 2130)

“A Matter of Time” (October 12, 2150)

Journey to the Farthest Planet

(January 1-August 22, 2152)

Volume 2: The Search for the Benefactors

Descent Into Europa (August 7-December 25, 2152)

The Treasures of Darkness (March 18-May 6, 2153)

“The Eight Treasures” (10085 B.C.)

“The Sand Tomb” (Summer 2060)

“The Infestation at Sulphur Creek” (June 1, 2153)

“The Plight of the Bumblebee” (June 13, 2153)

“The Ultimate Code” (September 26, 2153)

“Return to Europa” (October 15-December 31, 2153)

Doomsday Horizon (July 30-August 19, 2156)

Volume 3: The War of the Light

The Heart of Danger (September 1-November 9, 2157)

The Last Command (March 11-May 4, 2160; June 2161)

“A New World” (March 12-13, 2161)

“Stars of the Deep” (October 7-15, 2165)

Paradox Lost (summer 2168, but relating events
that took place March 21-April 23, 2155)

Master of Shadows (summer 2169-June 26, 2170; 2171)

Volume 4: The Starman Companion

Cover artwork

Jonathan Cooper

The Starman Companion

is dedicated to the late Valerie Jean Kramer
(December 3, 1949-October 2, 2015).

She was a good friend,
an accomplished book collector
with a memory of impressive comprehension,
and a gifted commentator on our books
as they were being written.
She helped shape the Starman series as it developed
in ways beyond our ability to estimate or tell.
All readers of the Starman saga owe Valerie
more than can be expressed.

We were blessed by her life;
we are diminished by her death.

INTRODUCTION

to *The Starman Companion*

By David M. Baumann

It was sometime in February 2000 that I wrote the first line of *Assault on Mars*. Jon Cooper and Mike Dodd and I had spent more than a year and a half planning how we would produce a series of adventure stories, and we were ready to begin the actual writing. I still remember sitting down at my computer in my upstairs office with some anxiety; although I had written and published many articles for magazines and a couple of non-fiction books, I had not written fiction for more than thirty years. But after all of our planning and plotting, the time to get going had come. I took a deep breath, flexed my fingers, stretched my hands over the keyboard, and set down the first lines: “MAN, can this thing *move*! We were really burnin’ daylight on the way!” Those lines are now on page 71 of *The Dawn of the Starmen*.

The next five years were an intense time of creativity in which we wrote eight novels, two novelettes, and nine short stories, not to mention the five Inter*Stellar newsletters and the seven Starman Chronicles. Taking note of the unexpected popularity and increasing complexity of the Starman series, we updated and rewrote the first book and restored its original working title, *Mutiny On Mars*. After a favorable review in *Analog* magazine appeared in 2003, we were contacted by Americana Publishing in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and contracted with them to produce audiobooks for the first six books and a revised form of the novelette *The Lost Tomorrow*, which were all that we had written at the time. Publishing the stories as audiobooks required some abridging of the stories (except for *The Lost Race of Mars*, which was recorded and published unabridged). Later, when *The*

Heart of Danger and *The Last Command* were finally completed, we thought we were finished. It was the summer of 2005.

Then, thanks to Jon Cooper's niggling feeling that not all had yet been told and that loose ends needed to be tied up, in 2010-2011 we put together *Master of Shadows*, the book we subtitled "The Sequel to the Last Starman Book", followed by "The Caves of Mercury", which we thought would be the last short story. The last customers bought their copies of *Master of Shadows*, and then the once-active message board quieted down and eventually all but stopped. We were finally finished.

But we remembered. We remembered that during the years when the books were being written and published, there was a very active message board in which fans, readers, and the writers of the saga interacted. Between 2000 and 2005, an immense amount of material was written about the Starman saga, by us and by others. A lot of it was inspired by and appeared in the Starman message board.

There were essays on the Christian theology that undergirds the Starman saga, the different personalities of the three Starmen and how they work together, when and why the Starmen weep and whether it was appropriate that they do, how matters of race and gender were addressed in the series, how science and new discoveries validated much of what first appeared as fiction in the Starman series (often surprising even us!), and the nature of the various sentient beings depicted in the saga.

Now, with all texts updated, a project that lasted from the middle of 2015 through the end of 2016, we believe that we have put the story into its final form, appearing as a trilogy of tales. This fourth volume of "extras" includes the best of the essays, appendices, reviews, writers' notes, interviews, and more that help to undergird the saga of the Starmen. Over ten years ago we produced five books we called *The Starman Appendix* (volumes

1-5) that also included a lot of “extras”; the current book is similar to that one, but it has been updated and designed very differently. A lot of outdated material has been omitted, and a lot of new material has been added.

Some material in this volume can be found more than once in one form or another; this is because the material was published more than once in different places. In most cases, for the sake of accuracy and completion, I have preserved the original text even if it meant that the information is repeated elsewhere in the book.

There is a lot more in our archives than appears in this book, but we think that the contents of *The Starman Companion* are the best and most interesting of it all. This volume has been designed to “tell the Starman story” using primary source material. Now, nearly seventeen years since *Assault on Mars* was first offered for sale, there may be very few customers left to purchase this volume or find it of interest. But the Starman Team believes that it is a fitting way to close off the saga of the Starmen, and we feel compelled to produce it as the final entry in the reissue of the Starman Saga.

As we have said from the beginning, we didn’t do this work to make a profit or in hope of becoming popular or famous, or even to have our saga widely distributed, but for the sake of the work itself. We have been told by several people that their lives have been made better by reading our saga. Jon, Mike, and I have also been made better men because of it. No one can or ought to hope for more than that.

David M. Baumann
February 21, 2017

CONTENTS

THE BEGINNING (1998-2000)	15
The First Emails	15
The Origin of the Starman Series	45
Introduction to the	
World of David Foster	45
Afterword to <i>Assault On Mars</i>	47
The Starman Saga	51
<i>(written when the saga was finished)</i>	
Mike's Ideas	54
The World of the Starmen	66
The Ancient History	
of the Solar System	66
The Characters	
The Three Starmen	71
Minor Recurring Characters	75
The History of Earth 2000-2150	85
The Politics of Earth 2000-2150	88
The Nature of the Planets	92
The <i>Star Ranger</i>	104
NPACs	106
The Titanians	106
Starlight Enterprise	106
Summaries of the Original 23 Books.	111
 DURING THE ACTIVE PERIOD (2000-2005)	 127
The First Ad	127
The Text on Early Endflaps	129
One of Jon's Summaries.	130
The Summary of the First Four Books	157
The Dedications and Introductions	
to the First Editions	161

Early Artwork	180
Likenesses of Some of the Characters	190
The Anza-Borrego Desert:	
Twenty-Second Century Mars	197
The Audiobooks—	
Americana and Roy Trumbull	206
<u>What We Were Trying to Do.</u>	209
Is There a Religious Message	
in the Starman Series?	209
Introduction to the Starman Series	212
Another Reflection	216
<u>The Inter*Stellars</u>	221
<u>The Starman Chronicles.</u>	309
<u>Science Validates the Starman Series</u>	313
<u>Essays from the Message Board</u>	335
The Starman Backdrop: Theism	
and Orthodox Christian Theology	335
The Starmen's Martial Arts Training	340
Fight Scenes in the Starman Series	342
Race and Gender in the Starman Series	362
The Starmen's Personalities	365
The Starmen's Tears	368
Sense of Place and Place of the Senses	376
The Failures of the Starmen	379
The Sentient Beings	392
<u>Extras</u>	397
Terrorism and the Nature of Evil	397
Temptation and Choice	398
Science and Religion	400
Myth as Story-Telling	400

Martian Time	402
C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien	403
The Starman Vision	404
Ahmanya	406
The Origin of Ahmanya	406
The Ahmanyen Culture	411
Ahmanyen Physiology	417
Ahmanyens and Animals	418
Ahmanyen Character	419
The Ahmanyen Language	423
The April Fool's Day Post	437
Starman Theme Music	439
<u>The Starman Interviews</u>	441
Susabella Passengers	441
Cosmic War: Light Versus Darkness	445
For Austin Johnson, webmaster of <i>the Bayport Gazette</i>	454

WHEN WE THOUGHT

IT WAS ALL OVER (2005)	501
The Printing History, Sales, and Royalties	

MASTER OF SHADOWS (2010)	503
<u>We Saw Deeper</u>	504
Changing the Xenobots	504
Excerpts from <i>The Last Command</i>	
Relevant for Plot Development in <i>Master of Shadows</i>	523
The Xenobots' Desperate Grab for Artificial Immortality	529

<u>Developing the Last Story</u>	537
Creating the Illustrations in <i>Master of Shadows</i> .	537
Author's Reflections on <i>Master of Shadows</i> . .	556

THE REISSUE (2016)	564
How the Reissue is Different from the Original Version	

NOW THAT IT'S ALL OVER	574
Readers' Comments and Reviews	574
Montezuma Vly—a Tribute	586
Word Count in the Starman Series	594
The Timeline for the Entire Saga	596
Glossary	616

THE DEATH OF ZIP FOSTER	636
Reflections on the Death of Zip Foster	636
The First Guess How the Saga Would End	652
The Final Reading Group	656
The Critical Last Minutes in <i>The Last Command</i>	660
A Response from a Reader to the Death of Zip Foster	663
A Reflection: Alternate Ending to <i>The Last Command</i>	666

THE FINAL CHAPTER	670
The Conclusion of <i>Master of Shadows</i>	

THE BEGINNING (1998-2000)

The First Emails

The first contact between members of what we came to call the Starman Team occurred on June 4, 1998, when David wrote to Jonathan to commend him for his excellent website dedicated to Tom Swift, Jr. Unfortunately, Jon's emails were not preserved, but the relevant portions of the initial emails by David and Mike Dodd are reproduced below. These selections show how the Starman Team initially wanted merely to write a seventh volume to the six-volume Dig Allen series as fan fiction, and how that idea turned into the creation of something quite different and brand new.

June, 4, 1998 *From David*

Dear Jonathan,

What an excellent Web Site! Well designed, great links, lots of information, personal and professional—a real pleasure to browse through it. Thanks for the good work!

I've just started collecting Tom Swift Jr. books. Read them growing up in the 1950's.

Your abundant information about Tom Swift Jr. is really inspiring as I renew interest in these books. Thanks again!!

June 15 *From David*

Dear Jonathan,

Thanks for the response to my e-mail. I am not familiar with Digby Allen. Maybe I will give the series a try.

I was not on your previous e-mail list. The communication I sent you recently was my first to you. I found your page through surfing. But I hope you will keep my address on file for keeping

me informed of changes in your site.

June 19 *From David*

Dear Jonathan,

Through our recent exchanges and my continued investigation of your web site, I learned for the first time about the Dig Allen series. It looks really great! The artwork looks exceptional, too! I have already ordered the first book, and have found multiple copies of all the others on the Internet. Thank you for the lead! I'll read the first and if I like it, will get the others. Sounds a lot like Tom Corbett, which I liked.

Thanks again for your web site, links, and the personal touch. Your reminiscences, suggestions, summaries of texts, etc. make for a terrific site.

In the following email, David says that he is a writer, and mentions writing sequels to the Dig Allen series. The email from Jon to which David is responding probably suggested writing more books in that series. As David recalls, Jon had mentioned that he could plot stories and another Dig Allen fan named Mike Dodd had some wonderful ideas, but they needed someone to do the actual writing.

July 17 *From David*

Dear Jonathan,

Greetings! I have found, ordered, received, and read a near fine copy with dust jacket of The Forgotten Star. I enjoyed it! It makes a welcome companion to my Tom Corbett and (nearly-completed) Tom Swift, Jr. collections. I expect that the rest of the Digs will be in my hands within a couple of weeks. Thanks very much for the lead on this series.

Your article on Dig Allen Doomed to Obscurity is accurate. I've been a serious series book fan and collector for three years, and a hobbyist for a few years before that, and had never heard of Dig Allen before finding your web site. I liked the scene in

The Forgotten Star in which the boys meet the hermit in the Graveyard of Ships, who shows them some real books with actual paper-plastic pages. The boys are awed, having believed that they would never see such artifacts outside of a museum.

You ask for Dig Allen fans. Well, I guess I am one now. I am also a writer of sorts—not professionally, but have done some free-lancing. It might be fun sometime to write a contemporary Dig Allen or an equivalent.

Well, let's keep in touch.

July 18 *From David*

Dear Jonathan,

I think I enjoyed the moon scenes most of all in The Forgotten Star. The drive on Mars read a lot like some of the similar scenes in Tom Corbett. The scene on the asteroid ship was a little jarring after the moon, and a little bit fantastic to me; but I will take it on trust and get into the next volumes. I did enjoy the first book—not least because it is an unknown series! And some of the artwork is excellent! I have set the cover for Journey to Jupiter as my wallpaper.

Writing sequels? I have read only the one so far, so haven't quite got the flavor down, but I've been giving it some casual thought. A short story, or novelette, would be fun for a try. I'd like to put some notes together and then share them with you. Your better knowledge of the series would make you fitted for the editing job. Maybe we'll make a good team!

On **July 25**, *Mike Dodd wrote to Jonathan.*

Subject: The Starover rides again!

Dear Jonathan,

I just revisited your website after a couple of months and I still love it!(I had e-mailed you some time ago and offered to write a synopsis/critique of ROBOTS OF SATURN.)

I enjoyed reading the letter from Paul Greene (I hope the

manuscripts in the closet contain some unpublished Dig Allen material). I also enjoyed your call for re-publishing and/or writing new stories.....few things would make me prouder than to have written a Dig Allen story! (perhaps a modernization of the old stories...keeping the wholesome values but up-dating the science....I know my science!)

Since last visiting your site I have been extremely lucky and found/purchased two DASE [Dig Allen Space Explorers] books; JOURNEY TO JUPITER and TRAPPERS OF VENUS. Reading them now.

Count me in support of any ventures, I'm not wealthy in money, but have been blessed with a good imagination.

Keep in touch,
Over

On **July 27**, *Mike wrote:*

Subject: Re: Hopeful Future Dig Allen Volumes

Dear Jonathan, (Aye!)

Thanks for the information.....now that I know your intended approach to writing “ # 7”, I will be able to jot down some thoughts (and not be too far off base). I never read THE FORGOTTEN STAR, and from your summary of it , it sounds as if I will need to read it to fully understand the DASE universe.

At your service,
Mike Dodd

In the following email, two future titles of Starman books were first suggested.

July 28 *From Mike*

Subject: Re: Hopeful Future Dig Allen Volumes

Dear Jonathan,

Possible new titles: TERROR ON TITAN, RETURN OF THE ASTERIANS, THE MOON CAVES, MUTINY ON MARS, THE

RUNAWAY ASTEROID, THE SPACE SUB (about an expedition through the frozen crust of Europa and into the ocean that lies under it, and definitely finding life).Just some thoughts.

July 28

Paul Greene, son of the author of the Dig Allen series, wrote to Jon and said:

Subject: Re: Who owns the copyright for the Dig Allen series?
Hello Jonathon,

If the copyright reverts back to the author, as you suggest, and the appropriate number of years have passed, then I believe that the copyright probably would be owned by my mother, although I would have to check Joseph Greene's will and other documents. Some effort would be required to find the documents that would establish ownership, so I would like to know more about your plans before I proceed. Do you know how many years from the date of copyright need to pass before it reverts back to the author?

Sincerely yours,
Paul Greene

July 29, *Paul wrote again:*

Jonathan,

I'll help in any way that I can. I will ask everyone in my family who might have claim to a possible copyright to give permission to you to revive the series.

Best wishes,
Paul

July 29 *David wrote:*

If Paul Greene is not sure who owns the copyright, he probably doesn't--unless his father received the copyright, didn't value it very much at the time, and filed it somewhere without

informing his family. Possible, since it's been 35+ plus years since the last book was written. Golden Press (or whoever has acquired them in the meantime) would be the best bet to find out who owns the copyright. Either they still do, or can inform you of the party to whom they transferred rights. If transferred, there would be few, if any, candidates other than Joseph Greene. If Paul Greene is really interested in seeing a renewal of the series, he may have access to Golden Books easier than a stranger would.

A lot of emails followed to and from a variety of people about locating the copyright owner of the Dig Allen series. Curiously, nearly twenty years later, as this book was being prepared Paul wrote to David to let him know that he was trying to acquire the rights to the Dig Allen series and asked whether he and Jon would be interested in writing a seventh novel in that series. Jon and David accepted, though Paul said that acquiring the rights was a "long shot".

In the following email, Mike first suggests the word Xenobots.

July 31, *Mike wrote:*

Dear Jonathan,

Thanks for the info re copyright search, I also enjoyed your ideas for asteroid plots. Last night, it took me a while to fall asleep as several plots were evolving in my head. Some titles kept presenting themselves.....SEARCH FOR THE XENOBOTS, (or Zenobots, if the other variant proves too cumbersome for our public), for example.

Cover art also presented itself, real retro-stuff! I wonder if retro sci-fi might "catch on"?

While we wait, we can compile plot ideas if you want. My books will probably arrive today...I feel like a kid!

Ad astra par ardua,

In the following email, the rudiments of what became the plot of *Mutiny on Mars* are first written down. The subsequent emails show how Mike continued to develop the ideas, many of which were finally used in the published story.

August 1 *From Mike*

Jonathan,

I have a sketch of a plot developed. Our three protagonists some how end up in an “uncivilized” region of Mars.(lets say they are off on some R&R, flying the 22nd cent. version of ultra lights) without a vehicle to get out with. These regions of Mars, lets say, are sparsely populated with interesting little fringe populations of humans who are seeking a life away from “modern” technologies or problems. The guys are being pursued by some kind of “bad guys” who have tracked them down to this area.(or maybe that is the reason the three boys got there) In any event, the guys escape and are trying to make it out to civilization with some vital information that will save a lot of peoples’ lives or something.(there are no working radios in this region)

Along the way they encounter the “wind people”(who use no form of power other than wind power or muscles). They end up bartering three nice land sailers out of these folks and one of the wind people even offers to take the boys part of the way out. (across treacherous Martian desert!) (land sailors are those wonderful 3 wheeled sailing vehicles) After much adventure and cultural bonding, they get to the canal or river that will get them to civilization. Thats’ when they encounter the canal people(who are of course reluctant to help at first. The boys end up trading their fine land sailers for 3 “Mars kayaks”, which they use to get down the canal and across the BADWATER SEA to the outskirts of civilization,(after having to fight off something in the water, just about anything will do). Now this is not a whole plot but a partial story...to be combined with a larger story.

A good name for some bad guys is “the Zanarians”,

especially if they were fascist or totalitarian in nature. (their name is a play on words, first two vowels are pronounced with the long sound).

THis does not necessarily have to be the first story worked on , but could be a part of MUTINY ON MARS.

August 3 *From Paul Greene*

Jonathan,

I thought you might like to know that I spoke with the people at Golden Press and they promised to look into the copyright ownership issue and get back to me.

Also, as I presume that the copyright is owned by my elderly and very energetic mother, I asked her how she felt about reviving the series. She had questions about royalties, but I don't anticipate any problem with obtaining permission.

August 7 *From Mike*

Subject: Mutiny on Mars

Jonathan,

Some bullet thoughts on the ideas:

1) I have yet to come up with a credible reason for a Martian revolt. Somehow the Space Guards must be overtaken, perhaps internally. There must be something in it for the average citizen of Marsport / other population centers, perhaps a false promise sort of thing.

2) You are correct in that the "ancient tunnels" and Dorkas must be integral to the plot.

3) I'd sort of like to see our three heroes sneak onto Mars this way. The mutineer Space Guards have the planet on a radar lockdown and pretty much blast any one they don't want landing. The World Council / real Space Guards come up with a plan by which an old freighter approaches Mars , slows to about 1000mph at 30-40 miles above the planet and automatically blows up , but not until our three heroes jump out wearing

spacesuits and parachutes. This makes for a very exciting plunge into the Martian atmosphere, and gets our guys past the radar.

4) I would love to see a “robot” that is really Borin or Genang in control in the head section.

5) Your suggestion of the return of Con Krag is sheer genius, I would not have thought of that.

August 7 *From Mike*

Subject: More plot points

Jonathan,

For your consideration:

* The leader of the resistance to the mutiny is Old Dorkas, who is operating from the tunnel network, still not widely known. A true “Mars underground”.

* Perhaps in 2030 a comet was nudged out of an Earth intersecting orbit and conveniently sent into a Mars slamming trajectory, causing a huge amount of greenhouse gas to be liberated and spreading dark Mars dust all over the polar caps, which sunlight melts. Mars basically terraforms itself from this point, leading to the Mars of the 22nd century.

* Perhaps ancient Martians are in hi-tech hibernation in the tunnels.....some don't want this info to get out (Mars for the Martians fears) and this is the reason for the rebellion (Greedy men don't want to share Mars with original inhabitants)

Even more later,

August 8 *From Mike*

Subject: Re: Even More Discussion on MOM

Jonathan,

I must say that I really think there is a great story here that will do justice to the memory of Joseph Greene.

Suggestions:

* What if the oxygen-rich pockets are connected by the “ancient tunnels”(but still not common knowledge)

* the established story lines mention Mars hares, Mars kangaroos, and the dreaded Martian desert lizards.....were they indigenous or imported from Earth?
I propose that they are natural, having survived the “dead years” as specially adapted eggs.

*The sea creature that attacks the SEs in their kayaks could be also of egg origin...we could get really creative with such a creature.

Time for chocomilk,

August 10 *From Mike*

Jonathan,

I was going to e-mail you and suggest to you that the tunnels would be built by the ancient Martians as a way of linking their dying atmosphere....but I am pleased to see that you were thinking along the same lines! I don't remember ever encountering this idea elsewhere in sci-fi.

...

I do see the 3 SEs landing, getting some info or something and making the trans desert trek, then the water trek, the finding a tunnel.

Later ,

August 10 *From Mike*

Subject: MOM more

Jonathan,

What if the mutineers have Mars on such a “lockdown” that the resistance can't get radio messages out to the other planets...what would they do?

Perhaps lasers (voice modulated or “morse code”) or how about some of the desert people make large “nasca plains” type rock formations that can be observed from that really good Asterian telescope on Eros? (if they wrote words outright, this might be discovered by the mutineer Space Guard...but perhaps

some sort of “natural formation” might not. Maybe this could be a starting point for the story....maybe someone on Eros studies the messages and figures them to say “send the space explorers...old Dorkas trusts and needs them!”) (or a more sophisticated version of same)

May the luck of Space be with you!

August 10 *From Mike*

Subject: Re: Another batch of M.O.M. ideas
Jonathan,

...

I'd like to propose a new 22nd century device....the nuclear powered atmospheric compressor, there are only a handful, but they allow the wearer to traverse the low air pressure regions (or some of them) They also keep the wearer warm. Part of the adventure could consist of the guys making it to “point X “where the resistance has these devices hidden for them. Just a thought. This way, they could have a high altitude, mountain or crater rim leg of the journey.

As you say, the Wind People should be the ones who demonstrate the tunnels...how about if they then tell the SEs of the semi-mythical tunnels of Taro (or whatever name sounds good) and this is where they will find Old Dorkas and some important leaders of the resistance. Getting to the tunnels of Taro is the hard part (ie Desert, River or Canal, Badwater sea(?) then over the crater rim (high altitude!)

More later,

In the following email, the rough idea of a plot that eventually led to the story, *Journey to the Farthest Planet*, was first proposed.

August 12 *From David*

Subject: A new Dig Allen story

Dear Jonathan,

Greetings! I woke up in the middle of the night with an idea for a new Dig Allen story. Not being able to get back to sleep, the idea developed to the point I had to get up and write it down.

Keep in mind that I haven't read any of the other Digs yet, although Trappers of Venus did arrive in the mail today and I expect the others before week's end. So the following may be entirely unsuitable to the series, or at least may have to be heavily revised in the light of the other books. But at least here is a germ of a beginning. Let me know what you think.

THE TENTH PLANET

A New Dig Allen Adventure

The inner eight planets are visible to the naked eye, and were therefore known to the ancients. Pluto was discovered in 1931 by an astronomer (research the name), who observed that the outer planets showed the effects of the gravitation exercised by a small body orbiting the sun beyond them. This body was later observed through a telescope. Because it was so far away from the sun, its discoverer called it Pluto, after the Roman god of the underworld. He was following the custom of the ancients in naming the planets after Roman gods and goddesses. In the late twentieth century, some scientists wondered whether there might be yet another planet in an orbit yet more distant than that of Pluto, but nothing ever came of this speculation, and the instruments of the time were not able to measure any effects on the orbit of Pluto which this hypothesized planet might cause.

Observation produced the unexpected conclusion that Pluto's orbit was inclined by 20 degrees (get the precise figure) out of the plane of the solar ecliptic. The reason for this was never discovered.

At the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the course of science moved into fields of energy, the unified theory of physics, and communications. Space travel was a low priority for a while, and when it became possible, and then common at the end of the twenty-first century, speculation about a planet beyond the orbit of Pluto had been forgotten.

In the early years of the twenty-second century, the first landing on Pluto took place. It was expensive and produced little new information. Pluto was a small, barren planet with no interesting features and no minerals of value. No one felt it was important to return.

However, Dig's father, born shortly after the Pluto landing, had a romantic interest in the outermost planet. He decides to spend a vacation/sabbatical on a journey to Pluto. The boys, of course, are invited to come along.

Their course is plotted and eventually the ship takes off. The party plans to lay over on Ganymede where the last surviving member of the Pluto expedition lives in retirement. Dig's father wants to meet the man and hear his stories of the historic journey. On the journey to Ganymede, Dig runs their figures through the shipboard navigational computer one final time. He notices that Pluto is not precisely in the spot which the best information predicts, but is rather about five kilometers behind where it should be. Conferring with his father, the party concludes that there is no possible explanation except that Pluto has been affected by the gravitational pull of another body.

Further calculations, coupled with the speculations of the late twentieth century and folklore from the mid-twenty-first century, lead the Allens to postulate the existence of a tenth planet. Drawing together information from archives, and making frenzied calculations, Dig and his father conclude that the only hypothesis which fits the newly-observed facts is that there must

exist a tenth planet of roughly the same mass as Pluto and moving in an orbit about 22 degrees off the plane of the solar ecliptic. The orbit is slightly farther away from the sun than Pluto's, but both orbits are so large and both planets have such little mass, that normally they have no gravitational effect on each other. However, once every 10,000 years or so, the planets come close enough together to cause an unexpected aberration in Pluto's orbit. Since the ninth planet was discovered only 230 years earlier, there has been no opportunity to see, or even suspect, this phenomenon—until now.

Dig's father is elated. What had been planned as a restful journey and fulfillment of a childhood dream, has become a mission of discovery.

Further plot possibilities:

What will the party learn from the sole survivor of the Pluto expedition?

Why is the tenth planet smaller than Pluto but of the same mass? Does it hold a secret?

Will certain low-lives on Ganymede learn of the expedition and try to sabotage it so they can reach the tenth planet first?

August 12, *from Mike*

Subject: Re: A new Dig Allen story

Dear Jonathan,

David's idea has potential...it just needs some adventure/intrigue....properties that I'm sure can be found around here somewhere!

August 15, *from David*

Subject: Re: Still more on The Tenth Planet

Dear Jonathan,

All this is becoming more and more exciting! I have talked

to my son, who is an amateur artist, about doing a cover for a new Dig when the time comes, and he is willing. Of course, I'm not committing us to anyone, even him, without your and Mike's consent.

I think we'll need a team of at least five to make new Digs happen: a primary writer (me), an editor (you), a science consultant (Mike), with the three of us being collaborators on plot ideas and development as we go along. Then an artist for covers and perhaps internals (if not my son, then I know two others who are skilled and I am sure would be willing). And finally a printer (Fred [Woodworth], I trust). We should certainly include Paul Greene in some capacity, too—maybe as “sponsor” or “advisor” or “consultant” or something like that.

Fred and I wrote to each other a few months back about adding new adventures to existing series—this was long before I even was aware of the Digs—Fred is a marvelous writer in his own right. (I had sketched out a sequel to my favorite Hardy Boys story, *The Mystery of Cabin Island*, and sent it to him for comments.) So he likes the idea of new stories very much, but is a little skeptical about the market, thinking that few if any will really be interested; he is probably right.

However, that can work for us if we work it right. Putting new books out to the public probably won't happen because of the enormous expense and little likelihood of general popularity; however, series book fans (and the current and potential Dig Allen fans among them) can be easily identified and contacted through existing periodicals and web sites.

These are well known and advertising would doubtless be FREE. As you say, Jim Ogden, for example, and a number of others, I'm sure would be willing to advertise a new Dig; we could send a complimentary copy of the first new volume to any advertiser, and ask each to review it. A good review would boost general interest, not only in the new books but in the originals. Any initial financial outlay then would be minimal—probably only the cost of paper and ink, etc., to Fred. We can work details out later, but I think this is all very do-able.

I think your notes for the Mars epic are terrific—very exciting! Should make a great story. It seems that the three of us are making some of the same assumptions, so far unspoken: the new books should be plausible scientifically, and should include an update from 1959-1962 of state-of-the-art science—i.e. we include computers, etc.

Your list of potential future titles and basic themes is excellent. We need to be careful that *MUTINY ON MARS* does not sound like a take-off on the Tom Corbett *REVOLT ON VENUS*. Having the takeover come from bad guys in the asteroid belt is better, and a more workable story line. This volume can indeed reintroduce the Dig Allen series to readers, and can be the story dedicated to Mars. The SE's journey on Mars can be like the journey taken by the three guys in Tom Corbett's *STAND BY FOR MARS*. I liked that portion of the book very much. A replacement for the title *MUTINY ON MARS* could be *ASSAULT ON MARS* or maybe *THE DEFENSE OF MARS*¹.

I'm sure you're right that "rocks" is a way of saying that the scientists don't know what's out there. That gives writers more latitude. Pluto will be well outside the orbit of Neptune in 2163. When I get down to putting a real story line down, I'll plot where all the planets will be in 2163. It won't be hard, thanks to a terrific map provided by the National Geographic of where the planets are now and how long each planet's "year" is.

Following up on the Tenth Planet story line: the high increase in radiation detected by the machinery on Pluto can come from abandoned instruments on Vesta which are deteriorating. Your description of an abandoned and decaying base is attractive, and fits very well with the developing plot. Something like seals on the equipment have finally succumbed

¹ This is where the working title *Mutiny On Mars* was changed to *Assault On Mars* for the reason indicated. However, that title really never caught on with us, and when we revised the book three years later, we reverted to the original title.

to the extreme cold and are now cracking and releasing radiation. This can be caused by Vesta's approach to Pluto and the resulting gravitational stresses—which can also raise the temperature slightly, thus giving the final stress to the equipment seals. Mike can give us necessary input here.

Introducing mysteries which are not resolved until later volumes I think can work, but only if we are sure that later volumes will be written. The first new volume, I think, should minimize this element, so we can see if there is really an audience out there for us. Unresolved mysteries will frustrate the reader; we want them asking for more, not giving up because the book seems unfinished.

I guess the next task is to put together an outline of each story, then break it up into chapters. If you and Mike do that for the Mars story, I'll do that for THE TENTH PLANET. Then when we all like the outlines, I'll begin work on a text.

Before that, though, I'd better read the other five Dig Allens!

[In the following email, Mike and David first come into direct contact.](#)

August 18 *From Mike*

Subject: Getting Dig to the Presses

Dear David,

It is good to finally meet you....Jonathan has told me a little about you and has forwarded a couple of e-mails. Any friend of Dig Allen is a friend of mine.

I enjoyed reading your plans for stories, artwork, and about Fred, the potential publisher.

Any story about Pluto and beyond is going to have to contend with remoteness, isolation, and lack of sunlight. I am willing to bet that this will require a "different" approach to writing juvenile fiction, but would certainly be an interesting task.

I really like the Vesta concept. The four major asteroids are very interesting bodies, and the story potential is great.

About cover art...I had thought of offering my services as a

sometimes capable painter and sketcher, but I am probably not as skilled as your son.....I hope that I can make some suggestions on the cover art though.(Are illustrations being considered for the chapters?)

I really hope that this project is able to see “lift-off”, I first saw a DASE adventure when I was about 9yrs old (in 1966) and have never forgotten the wonder, mystery and joy that it brought me.

I will continue to think about the “Pluto/beyond story “and offer any ideas that might help. We must include some reference to the Kuiper Belt, an unknown in the 50s and 60s.(hey, have you considered a mission to the Oort Cloud...the origin of comets..it could also be a prep mission for aninterstellar voyage!)

Sincerely,

The following emails have to do with how the Starman Team moved from the idea of writing a seventh story in the existing Dig Allen world to creating a new series altogether.

Wed, 10 Feb 1999 *From David*

Got some work done on Assault On Mars earlier this week. Jonathan, if you have any pull with Paul Greene, could you urge him to give us the written permission we need from him to proceed with this project. His consent is essential for our paper trail. He needs to say that, given who he is, no definite proof of who owns copyright, etc. etc. he supports and gives permission for our project.²

² This was written when we were still trying to write Dig Allen books. At the time we thought that Paul Greene or someone else in the Greene family controlled the copyright to the Dig Allen series, so we wanted to get written permission from anyone who might be involved to protect ourselves. At the same time we weren't 100% sure that the Greenes had the copyright, so we were in contact with Golden (the firm that published the Dig Allen series).

Thu, 18 Feb 1999 *From David*

Marilyn Kretzer, Subsidiary Rights Director for Golden Books Family Entertainment, finally got a letter to me in response to the one I sent last September 29. The relevant portion is (and I quote it exactly, including the typing and other errors):

“Golden does control rights to Dig Allen series.³ We can not grant permission for you to write new stories on this series as we are planning to relaunch this the Griffin Space Series.”⁴

It is not entirely clear what she means, but they are certainly claiming the rights to Dig and refusing us permission to write new stories. She is likely also trying to say that Golden plans to reissue the series under a new name.

I would suggest that I write back to her and clarify that Golden plans to reissue the series and ask her for more details. Will the stories be rewritten and updated? When will they appear? Also, if you agree, I could offer Assault on Mars and our entire project to Golden as part of the projected reissuing.

Our alternative (besides the obvious one of abandoning the project, which I do not favor) is to go ahead with our plans and make our stories a pastiche, i.e. change nothing but the names. We use the Dig Allen world but write about someone with a name like Doug or Digory Halen, etc. We can tell the Dig fans on our list just what we are doing and why.

³ We still don't know if this is actually true or not; Golden could not produce any proof. The only way to find out who really controls the characters of the series is to find the original contract and that seems to be impossible to find.

⁴ This, of course, was never done. We suspect that Golden simply told us that as an excuse to explain why they weren't letting three private individuals write a Dig Allen even though they weren't going to market it but simply wanted to enjoy it and pass it on to a handful of friends.

Thu, 18 Feb 1999 *From David*

Indeed YES, we'll go ahead in some form or other. I'd still like to write to Golden and just find out what they're doing, but I certainly don't want to hang around and wait to find out. They've as much as said that this just isn't a priority for them and they don't want to take the time to research it. They didn't refer to the contract, remember—they just asserted ownership of the rights, which is what Susan Crane had done before. The paperwork is still in their attic. If you both are okay with it, I'll write to Golden and ask for more information about their plans, just for curiosity's sake, but ask nothing further about DA#7—and then we'll just go ahead. If we take what they say at face value, we are indeed loosed from certain restrictions in our stories,⁵ but we are also untied from Dig Allen. It cuts both ways. But no matter what, our book will be written! It's a good story and people will like it.

Thu, 18 Feb 1999 *From Mike*

Dear Jonathan and David,

I don't know what to think at this point! I do know that nobody loves this series more than we do. I do admire Jonathans' positive take on things, and I do have enough perseverance to want to forge ahead.

Might I humbly suggest that we take Jonathans' suggestion⁶ and go with it. We may also want to have our newly

⁵ Like trying to find a plausible way to explain why vacuum tubes are still used in computers, why Mars is terraformed and why Venus is habitable!

⁶ Jon's suggestion was along the lines of taking the stories we had crafted, altering them to be different enough to where we could publish them without being sued, and then continuing the project. What we *really* wanted to do was finish the Dig Allen series: that series needed another volume or two (we had six more planned, actually) to give it a satisfying ending. It's somewhat amazing that we chose to forge ahead! When we started we never intended to build a new series of books from

re-named characters speak of the strange suspicion that they have that some weird thing happened to them on “that expedition to the Kuiper Belt, where they encountered a worm hole/black hole that may, just may have altered slightly their reality”. In other words, its really Dig and Ken and Jim.....they just don’t completely Know it....they have new names in an alternate universe. Our series need never directly mention the names. They seem to remember having different wiring in their spaceship, they had to get used to these “semi-conductor things”, instead of the vacuum tubes they were used to (maybe they were transported somehow to OUR universe!,...yeah, that’s it!)⁷

In any case, I am for going ahead...and I thank both of you for being so dedicated.

Bloody but unbowed,

[In the following email, Mike first suggests the name Starman for our revised sequels to the Dig Allen stories.](#)

Sat, 20 Feb 1999 *From Mike*

I am glad you like the “alternate universe” idea....it was my intention to have it be both a “little inside joke” and to be a possible way back to the original DA universe should Golden ever come to their senses.

I liked the suggestions and would recommend that the new lunar base be on the Moons’ south pole.....where we know the water-ice is.....and as for what to call this Lunar base,...how about simply, South Pole Base or South Pole for short. Real space guys are going to do stuff like this....they don’t

scratch and start publishing them; only over time did a venture to write one more Dig Allen book (which was to be distributed to maybe 5 or 10 other people) to finish the series off turn into a huge enterprise to launch a brand-new old-fashioned science fiction series.

⁷ We tried hard to find a way to link this new series to the Dig Allen series, but in the end we gave it up. Our series was not going to be the Dig Allen series: it was going to be something entirely new.

worry about the fact that Earth has a south pole. I think it gives the reader a momentary problem to solve that will result in a more thought provoking book.

I suggest that Digs' new name be "Red" (maybe we can rename Jim and Ken with equally descriptive names).⁸ The Space Guard is now the Planetary Patrol or Space Patrol. Perhaps Space Research is known as UNSA (United Nations Space Agency) or maybe even NASA.

I really like the idea of Space Research being lunar-based at first, then moving to the Asteroid.

Space Explorer is such a great name that will be hard to replace adequately. Some suggestions:

Planetologist
Solar Explorer
Planet Explorer
Discoverman
Starman (why not?)⁹

Perhaps we can sneak by this one, and rename Space Research to the Organization of Space Explorers....so then we can call our heroes OSERs ...or something like that.

Sat, 20 Feb 1999 *From David*

I don't have time right now to contribute to the renaming process, except to say that we are all taking our new situation with Golden very positively, and second that I like most of the new names and am confident that we'll come up with some really terrific new terms. Like Jonathan, I think I like Starman,

⁸ Zip Foster has red hair simply because Dig Allen did.

⁹ This had been suggested before in other e-mails that have since been lost. We were opposed to it at first, but we warmed to the idea and eventually decided to use it. Five books later, it's hard to imagine choosing anything else!

too. I'll give it some thought and get back to you both by the end of next week. I will be traveling with my father Monday through Thursday, and will take some time during this trip to reflect on the whole situation.

Tue, 23 Feb 1999 *From Mike*

I am in love with the idea of giving the name Lee High Eagle to the first Mars walker....."Lee Eagle has landed!" It is the perfect historical irony.¹⁰

... If the New Space Explorers use ships with ion engines they might be referred to as IONEERS.

The STAROVER might be renamed the STARANGER. I do like this name. (Or maybe STAR RANGER).

I would like to use an old term somewhere in the story (series), Expeditionary Force. As in INTRASOLAR EXPEDITIONARY FORCE....please let me know if this term always has a military connotation. If it does, then we will probably do without it.

Perhaps EXPEDITIONARY TEAM is better.

In the following email, David offers to produce what later became a large working document we called "The World of the Starmen". It is reproduced in full later in this book.

Thu, 25 Feb 1999 *From David*

Of the many messages we have sent back and forth, the key reshaping of Dig Allen's world is found in Jon's messages "Notes on DA, Part I" from Feb 19 and "Letter to Golden and notes on Assault on Mars" from Feb 22.¹¹ I think these need to be our first working documents. I'll work these around a bit into

¹⁰ This was actually done! No one seems to have noticed anything unusual about it...

¹¹ Jon didn't save the e-mails he sent, and Mike and David don't save the e-mails they receive, so these notes have been lost.

a single document and get it to you in a few days for final approval.

In the meantime, all our other discussions seem to boil down to this:

- Dig Allen will become Daniel “Red” Boyd or Hale or Halen. I could go with any of them, but lean slightly to Halen—Dan Hale is close to Dan Quayle.
- Jim and Ken Barry will become John and Carl Greene.
- Space Research will become either the Intrastellar Space Agency (ISA) or Intrastellar Expeditionary Force (IEF). In later books there may be an Extrasolar Expeditionary Force (which could also be Interstellar Expeditionary Force).
- Space Explorers will become the Space Pioneers, commonly known as “Starmen.”
- Venustown has not been renamed yet.
- Luna City will become Plato Base, commonly called “The Pole.”
- Marsport will become Eagle Town, named after Lee High Eagle, the first man to set foot on Mars on July 4, 2031. (By the way, the surname is High Eagle, not plain Eagle. I suggested the name because Ray High Eagle was my Indian Guide leader more than 40 years ago, to add minorities to our plot, and also to echo “The Eagle has landed.”)
- Space Guard will become Space Patrol.
- The Starover will become the Staranger or Star Ranger. (I prefer Star Ranger, since Staranger looks a little like Star Anger.)
- Borin and Genang have not been renamed yet.
- Old Dorkas and Con Kraggs, et al, have not been renamed yet.
- Ioneers has a clever ring to it and I kind of like it, but it also sounds a little bit too Disney for my taste—like Disney’s

“imagineers.” But it is catchy. It could work. But if it a matter of choosing between this and Space Pioneers commonly called Starmen, I prefer the latter. Maybe the term ioneer could be used to refer to the guys who work the engines—overhauling, refueling, etc., at the planetary pit stops. (“Come on,” urged Red, leading the way. “The Star Ranger’s in good hands with the ioneers. We’ve got to find Old Dorkas on the far side of Eagle Town.”)

Wed, 2 Jun 1999 *From David*

The Starlight Company is a marvelous concept, and having exploration driven by profits rather than bureaucracy is plausible.¹² The new plan clearly makes this book Red Halen #1 rather than DA#7, while retaining the “boiled down basic appeal” as Larry said. The team of three, as newly designed by Jon, sounds a lot like the Tom Corbett threesome, which is an aspect I enjoy in that series. Thus, Red Halen can include the best of Dig Allen, Tom Swift, and Tom Corbett.

Wed, 2 Jun 1999 *From David*

Dear Mike and Jon,

Quoting Mike: If we genuinely want to produce something new and fresh AND be on the leading edge of a consumer/social trend,...then let's set our space commerce driven heroes in a historical period where civilization is just coming out of a cultural Dark Ages....the "Uncivil Times", "the Hate years",

¹² This was Jon’s favorite brainwave! He didn’t like the way that space exploration was driven by the government in the Dig Allen series, and at any rate it seemed more reasonable to him that in real life the colonization of space will be done by a series of private companies. He suggested the creation of Starlight Enterprise, which would be responsible for colonizing outer space, building spaceships, educating and commissioning Starmen, etc. We decided to go with this idea, and the results can be clearly seen in the series.

“the selfish times”, “the Dis period”. Sort of reflecting an extrapolation of the worst aspects of our current society... I am a believer in the hopefulness of young hearts and perhaps young readers would recognize and embrace the possibilities inferred in the series....

Great idea! I like it.¹³

This concept was the beginning of what we came to call The Collapse. It was integral to developing the world of the Starman in the mid-22nd century.

Fri, 25 Jun 1999 *From David*

Nice articles on the magnetic field and anti-gravity, Jon. Should be very helpful in putting together the David Foster world. Joseph is a fine replacement name for James, by the way.

When I was on retreat last week, I put a lot of time in on the new world, with the intention of putting some further revisions on the summary of Assault on Mars. But I realized that we need to have a commonly-accepted view of this new world before I start tinkering again too much with the summary. Switching from Dig Allen #7, to Red Halen,¹⁴ to David Foster is a bigger job than I had anticipated—at least as far as writing the summary—since we are building an entire new world.

¹³ This was a fantastic idea by Mike. Many times throughout the writing of the Starman series the three of us would get the same idea all at once; this is one of those cases. We worked together on this concept and eventually came up with the Collapse: a time during the mid-21st Century in which a great many things were destroyed. There are a great many reasons why we chose to use this concept; those reasons are outlined elsewhere.

¹⁴ The only difference between Dig Allen and Red Halen were the names of the characters. The Starman world was very different, and hence it took a lot of work to change Dig Allen #7, *Mutiny on Mars* into Starman #1, *Assault on Mars*.

I'd like to receive everything that Jon sends from his fertile mind and then organize it into a systematic plan—a thorough “introduction” to the world of the mid-22nd century according to David Foster. It's fine with me if Jerry Rigg lived in it first, too.¹⁵ So Jon, when you think you've sent your last shot, let me know and I'll get to work and draw up a complete orientation to the new world. When we three are happy with the result—and Larry Smith, too, if we want to include Jerry Rigg and his world—then I can get to work on the summary in earnest. Sound okay to you two?

Mon, 23 Aug 1999 *From David*

A couple of detail questions: Currently the founder of Starlight Enterprise is Tom Starlight. It occurred to me that Tom is perhaps the most frequently-used name in the series book world. There are Tom Corbett, Tom Quest, Tom Slade, Tom Swift, and Tom Swift Jr. Do we want to consider using another name, such as Andrew or John or some other apostolic name?¹⁶ Or perhaps use Thomas? Or staying with Tom is fine with me, especially as he is already an historical figure when the series opens. There is kind of a mild hint of the Tom Swift series in the way we've done it, I think—father and son, major scientists, even calling their outfit Enterprise. Just a thought. What do you both think?

Second, even though we're settling in on calling our series the

¹⁵ At the time, Larry Smith was working on a series of old-fashioned science fiction books called the Jerry Rigg series. As it turned out, none of these books were ever written, but at the time the series looked pretty promising. Jon still has the outlines that were written for that series.

¹⁶ Jon told David that we ought to keep the name, and came up with a convincing reason for doing so. Jon came up with all the names of the major characters and nearly all of the minor ones as well – David Foster, Joe Taylor, Mark Seaton, Steve Cliff, Richard Starlight, Tom Starlight, and many more. He had a definite reason behind it.

Starmen series,¹⁷ I noted as I cast my eyes over my shelves that no other series has that kind of title. They are all named after individuals, even when there are several individuals in partnership (like Ken Holt and Sandy Allen; Rick Brant and Scotty; Tom Quest, Whiz Walton, and Gulliver; the only exceptions would be sibling teams like the Hardy Boys, X Bar X Boys, and the Dana Girls, but they are still called after their characters). I still don't have a problem with calling our production the Starmen series, and don't mind breaking new ground, especially for good reason. But do you think we ought to reconsider and go with the David Foster series after all? Again, your thoughts?¹⁸

August, 1999 *From David*

One last key question: do we want to call this The David Foster Series or The Starman Series?¹⁹

August, 1999 *From Mike*

I like the "world" so far....have no problems with its credibility OR potential for telling a good story in. About the name for the series...."the Starmen" just may be too reminiscent

¹⁷ Notice that it wasn't called the Starman series yet!

¹⁸ Jon said make it the Starman series. The reason was simple: if we called it the David Foster series then we had to have David Foster be in every story, and he didn't want to lock us into that. Calling the series the David Foster series meant that we could never have a story in which something bad happened to David Foster and he wasn't in a couple titles. If we called it the Starman series, however, then we could do as we wished.

¹⁹ This was an important question. Calling it the Starman Series would allow us flexibility: we could focus on other characters, broaden our horizons, and have a greater variety of missions. It would also be something different and help the series stand out. In the end that's what we went with, and I think it's worked out pretty well.

of the Movie STARMAN.....David Foster series is certainly descriptive and in keeping with juv sci-fi traditionHowever, before we kick “the Starmen series” out the door, could we find out just how frequently it has been used in sci-fi.?.....I personally know only of twicethe Movie (where it was use in the singular form) and in some juv sci-fi series recently mentioned.....Tom Corbet(?) or something like that. I certainly find it a Romantic name that harkens back to the golden age, while not completely leaving the present. I can’t help but try to work in a subtle Christian reference here.....you know, wise men who seek the star.

Perhaps we CAN get away with calling it the STARMEN SERIES.....without sounding too much like some other series.

The combined image of the words THE STARMEN SERIES and the suggested logo is certainly a powerful one, and may play just right on the mind’s eye of potential readers.

Tue, 24 Aug 1999 *From David*

Jon’s comments on the founder of Starlight Enterprise are well taken. Let’s keep him as Tom.²⁰

Same with naming the series the Starman/Starmen series, as I hastily wrote this morning. Shall it be Starman or Starmen? There is a slight parallel, perhaps, in the Doc Smith “Lensman” series from the 1940’s. I just checked my copies; they use the singular–Lensman series.²¹

...

Re: Xeno communication with bad Earthmen. Good, workable idea. The series is getting better and better.

²⁰ Since none of the e-mails Jon wrote were saved we have no idea what those comments were!

²¹ We don’t remember why we decided on Starman instead of Starmen. It may have been the fact that ‘Starman’ had a slightly better ring to it.

In the year and a half between the previous email and the following, our working document, “The World of the Starmen” was created; the first book, *Assault On Mars*, was written, printed, and offered for sale with an excellent response; and Jon and David had met for the first time when he and his brother Mike and father Stan visited David in California. On that trip they took a day trip to the Anza-Borrego Desert which was the model for Mars and where the real mud caves can be found.

Monday, January 15, 2001 *From David*

Dear Jon and Mike,

I hope that the Starman series is not so obviously a copy of the Dig Allens.

I don't think so.

Good question! I don't think they are either: we're not copying any plots, and we have made a good number of changes. Yet, there are loads of similarities:...

I agree completely. We put in the similarities on purpose so that it would be reminiscent of the Dig Allens—and that's a lot different from being a copy. I think that people will say (as they ARE saying) “This is a great new series” rather than “This is just a copy of the Dig Allens.” It would be interesting to know just how many of our customers are even familiar with the Dig Allens. Some would be, certainly, but I'll bet that many of them don't know Dig.

The Origin of the Starman Series

At various times and for a variety of purposes, the Starman Team wrote several summaries of how they came to produce the Starman series. Here are three of them.

This summary was produced when the Starman Team had decided to abandon the idea of writing more stories in the Dig Allen series and create something entirely new.

Introduction to the World of David Foster

The 1950s were the era of the Cold War, the Space Race, and high interest in space travel. Television shows, model kits, movies, and books for young people reflected the fascination of the time. The books included such popular titles as the Tom Swift Jr. and Tom Corbett series. Single volumes such as *Rip Foster Rides the Gray Planet* by Blake Savage sold well. Blake Savage was a pseudonym of Harold Goodwin, who also wrote the highly acclaimed Rick Brant series under the name John Blaine.

In 1959, Golden Press published a book called *The Forgotten Star*. The author was Joseph Greene, who introduced Space Explorer Digby Allen in the first of what would become six books known as the Dig Allen series. This short-lived and little-known series set in the 22nd century chronicled the adventures of a three-man team of teenage space explorers.

In the summer of 1998, three of the Dig Allen fans began to collaborate via email with the goal of publicizing the series and writing new books for it. Paul Greene, son of the author, gave the team his full support. Paul's thorough search of his home failed to turn up the original contract his father had had

with Golden Press, and therefore could not give official, legal permission for the writing of new books in the series. Golden Press, when contacted, could not produce a contract either, but claimed that it existed somewhere in their archives and that, frankly, they were not interested enough to search for it. Nonetheless, they asserted that they owned the rights to the books and denied permission to the team of three to write additional volumes featuring the characters of the Dig Allen series.

Undeterred, the team of three decided to craft a new series, similar to but quite distinct from the Dig Allen series. They actually felt liberated from the responsibility of maintaining the Dig Allen world, on which they had assembled a large file of notes. After more than eight months of thought and research, producing well over a hundred pages of email correspondence and creating a couple of dozen files of plots, background material, and scientific information, the David Foster world began to take shape. This web site is dedicated to the David Foster world of the 22nd century, and is the matrix in which a new series of adventures will be developed.

Our target audience for this budding series is ourselves and people like us, who are interested in series books and might be open to an addition to the genre, hopefully exciting and well written. We intend to produce a series of stories which are encouraging of the human mind and spirit; extol the virtues of courage, honesty, and good-heartedness; and whose characters follow a philosophy that life is good, the creation is exciting as well as beautiful, hope is reasonable and worthwhile, and the spirit of adventure is worth pursuing.

The books will be privately printed and available as cheaply as possible. Our goal is not to make money, but to make

books: we want to see a new Renaissance of quality juvenile literature. We will list the author as Michael D. Cooper, a pseudonym which is a combination of the names of the three originators of the series. The first book, *Assault on Mars*, will be ready soon.

The following was originally printed as an Afterword to Assault on Mars.

In 1959, Golden Press published a book called *The Forgotten Star*. The author was Joseph Greene, who introduced Space Explorer Digby Allen in the first of what would become six books known as the Dig Allen series. This short-lived and little-known series set in the 22nd century chronicled the adventures of a three-man team of teenage space explorers.

The titles of the books and their dates of publication are:

1. *The Forgotten Star* (1959)
2. *Captives in Space* (1960)
3. *Journey to Jupiter* (1961)
4. *Trappers of Venus* (1961)
5. *Robots of Saturn* (1962)
6. *Lost City of Uranus* (1962)

More than thirty-five years later, Jonathan Cooper (born nearly two decades after the last Dig Allen book appeared) launched a web site dedicated to Tom Swift with a subsection on the Dig Allen series. Jon had discovered series books in his early teens and developed an interest in Dig Allen. He began recording the names of people who contacted him after they had run across his web site and shared an interest in this obscure series. Eventually Paul Greene, the son of the author of the Dig Allen series, made contact with Jon through his web site. Jon learned from Paul that Joseph Greene, Dig Allen's creator, had died in 1990. The character of Jogren in *Assault On Mars* is a tribute to him.

In the summer of 1998, a team of three Dig Allen fans began work which eventually led to the creation of a new series that was similar to but quite independent and distinct from the Dig Allen series. After a year of collaboration, thought, and research, the team produced well over a hundred pages of email correspondence and had created a couple of dozen files filled with plots, background material, and scientific information.

From this matrix the world of David Foster began to take shape. Twenty-three Starman stories now exist in varying stages of completion. In addition, a web site dedicated to the Starman Series has been set up. It contains much of the background of the David Foster world from which the stories are created. Many other notes and files also exist but have not been posted on the web site since they are either too detailed for general interest or reveal too much of the plots. As the series develops, the web site will be updated.

These are the team members:

Jon Cooper is a college student living on a farm in Hurricane, West Virginia. Though all three team members contribute very smoothly to the development of each book, Jon is the primary plotter of the stories. Jon's family has traveled for business during his entire life. He has already visited nineteen foreign countries and lived in three, including a stay of several months in a thousand-year-old former monastery on an island in the Saone River in France.

Mike Dodd is a zeppelin builder of early middle-age in Norfolk, Virginia. He is the science advisor for the series. His wedding ring is made out of a moon rock, and he owns an authenticated piece of Mars, for which he paid \$100. From his knowledge of astronomy and the nature of the Solar System, he has contributed a number of ideas which have shaped the stories in unique and

exciting ways. Several eerie settings and unexpected twists of plot have added a distinct flavor of fascination to the world of David Foster.

David Baumann is an Episcopal priest in his early fifties, who follows the high Anglican tradition in Placentia, California. He is also a karate instructor and a free-lance writer. He does the actual writing. From plot summaries several pages in length he crafts the final text adding details, secondary characters, and minor plot twists. At the end, no story is presented to the public until all three team members are in full agreement.

The pseudonym we have chosen for the author's name is Michael D. Cooper, a combination of the names of the three originators of the series.

For *Assault On Mars*, these three were assisted by Bill Baumann, a retired aeronautics engineer and amateur artist in Northridge, California. He produced the cover painting and internal illustrations for the first Starman story. He also designed the *Star Ranger*, the Starmen's spacecraft.

The printer and binder of *Assault On Mars* is Fred Woodworth in Tucson, Arizona, who in his spare time produces periodicals such as *The Mystery and Adventure Series Review*, featuring articles on series books; and *Fred's Multigraph Letter*, dedicated to printing as done before the advent of modern technology, when printing was still an art. Every one of the books has been bound by hand, without the use of any electronic machinery whatever.

At the time *Assault On Mars* was completed, the members of this highly unusual team had never met in person (except for Bill and David, who are father and son).

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 are well aware that the golden age of series books ended in the late 1960's. Nevertheless, perhaps against the odds, we want to create a series of stories reminiscent of that age. In the Starman series, there will be no foul language and no extreme violence. We intend to produce a series of stories which encourage the human mind and spirit; extol the virtues of courage, honesty, and good-heartedness; and whose characters follow a philosophy that life is good, the creation is exciting as well as beautiful, hope is reasonable and worthwhile, and the spirit of adventure is worth pursuing.

The stark, sandy terrain of the Anza-Borrego Desert in southern California provides the setting for 22nd century Mars. Its dry streambeds, strong winds, occasional downpours and flash floods, and native flora and fauna have been adapted for use in this story. There is even a mud cave in this desert, which is exactly as described in *Assault On Mars*. The illustration on page 101 is taken from photographs. Other real places in this desert will be incorporated into future stories in the Starman series.

The Starman web site may be found at
<http://www.starmanseries.com>

[This is still the URL to our website.](#)

Finally, this summary was produced when the Starman saga was completed with the publication of *Master of Shadows*.

THE STARMAN SAGA

AN EPIC TALE TOLD IN THE CLASSIC SERIES BOOK STYLE

In the summer of 1998, a team of three fans of the classic children's series books of the 1950s made contact with one another through a web site dedicated to the Tom Swift Jr. series. The three men—Jon Cooper, Mike Dodd, and David Baumann—found that they had not only a common interest in such books, but a combination of skills that had the potential to produce a similar series in their own day. They began a collaboration that eventually created a new series for readers in the twenty-first century, books in the genre of Tom Swift Jr., Tom Corbett, Dig Allen, Rick Brant, Ken Holt, and other juvenile series that had been popular fifty years earlier. Their collaboration eventually produced the Starman Saga: a story comprised of nine novels, two novelettes, and ten short stories.

The three men came to refer to themselves as the Starman Team. The Team was well aware that the golden age of series books ended in the late 1960s. Nevertheless, perhaps against the odds, the Team wanted to create a series of stories both reminiscent of that age and appealing to contemporary readers. Like the classic books, there would be no foul language and no extreme violence in the Starman series. The series was designed to encourage the human mind and spirit and extol the virtues of courage, honesty, and good-heartedness. The lead characters follow a philosophy that life is good, the creation is exciting as well as beautiful, hope is reasonable and worthwhile, and the spirit of adventure is worth pursuing.

In July 2000, the first volume of the Starman series was offered to the public. *Assault on Mars* was a lighthearted attempt to tell an adventure story. Its first readers acclaimed it with fervor beyond the hopes of its creators. The Starman Team then set to work in earnest. A growing roster of fans offered artwork, technical assistance, and helpful commentary. The fan base for the series continued to spread, and the support for the books created a demand for a second edition of the initial volume to upgrade its quality and bring it up to the style of the subsequent volumes. The initial adventure was rewritten and retitled *Mutiny On Mars*.

The author of the Starman series was listed as Michael D. Cooper, a combination of the names of the three originators of the series. Jon Cooper is a computer programmer living in Harriman, Tennessee. Though all three team members contribute very smoothly to the development of each book, Jon is the primary plotter of the stories. Jon's family traveled for business throughout his childhood and teen years. During that time he visited nineteen foreign countries and lived in three, including a stay of several months in a thousand-year-old former monastery on an island in the Saone River in France.

Mike Dodd is a social worker and zeppelin builder living in Norfolk, Virginia. He was the science advisor for the series, and made certain that the scientific information is accurate and plausible. His wedding ring is made out of a moon rock, and he owns an authenticated piece of Mars, for which he paid \$100. From his knowledge of astronomy and the nature of the Solar System, he contributed a number of ideas that shaped the stories in unique and exciting ways. He has also suggested several eerie settings and unexpected twists of plot that have added a distinct flavor of fascination to the world of the Starmen.

David Baumann is a semi-retired Episcopal priest, who follows the high Anglican tradition in southern Illinois. He has also been

a martial arts instructor and a free-lance writer. He did the actual writing. From story summaries several thousand words in length he crafted the final text adding details, secondary characters, and minor plot developments. At the end, no story was presented to the public until all three team members were in full agreement.

Though the series was intended to fit into the genre of the classic series books, from the beginning the Starman series was not envisioned as a sequence of unrelated adventures like those of the classic era; rather, the Starman Team first roughed out an epic spanning a period from the dawn of time to the distant future. The Starman series, though made up of a set of separate adventures, actually tells one long story that continued from book to book. The saga is set during the 2150s and 2160s, a short but intense span of time that saw a host of momentous events in the epic.

During these years, the people of Earth gradually learned the true history of the Solar System and took their part in the second defense of the Solar System against its ancient enemy. This defense began in *Mutiny On Mars* and continued on an expanding scale in the subsequent books. The real enemy was not even identified and encountered until the third book. Although there are many clues in the first four books, the full history of the Solar System was not revealed until the fifth book, the gripping conclusion to the first segment in the Starman saga.

Beginning with the sixth book, *Doomsday Horizon*, the tension ratcheted up as the enemy finally comes out of the shadows. The penultimate volume, *The Last Command*, chronicled the vast interstellar war that pitted Earth and her allies against a monstrous tyrannical alien force. Final victory is not assured, however, until an unlikely hero faces off against a previously unsuspected enemy in the consummation of the Starman saga in the final volume, *Master of Shadows*.

Mike's Ideas

Throughout the years of work on the Starman series, Mike contributed many imaginative and creative ideas. Unfortunately, not all of them were preserved in a single file, but many were. Here are a few of them. Where an idea was used, a note follows, but there were many ideas that Mike brought up that were not used. Some of them are reproduced here.

About Europa and its thick ice layer.....worry not, Jon.....while it IS very thick by Earth standards (Probably many 10s of kilometers thick) it is highly fragmented.....sort of like thousands of tectonic plates, with lots of rubbing friction causing heat which probably means melted ice for much of the area in between the plates.....so easiest access to the interior would probably be by taking the risky route through one of these cracks (highly selected, of course!) And since at least one scientist theorises that the colored matter dumped out onto the surface of Europa at these cracks is organic material, WE can have the sub meet some trouble almost right away (how about the single cell bioluminescent creatures that like to clump on the any smooth surface/ warm surface and thereby cover up the viewports/ camera lenses.....leaving our heroes “flying blind”)

From this idea came the layer of organic material that obscured the Underbird in its first descent through the European ocean.

...

Speaking of inventions.....I was thinking that we might want to introduce a character who is the Starlight Enterprises' version of James Bond's "Q". Not a carbon copy...but our version of an inventive genius with some interesting personal traits...(such as an extreme desire to be a Starman, but has an equally strong fear

of space travel....it could make for some interesting tensions and situations....we could even have him overcome his fears in a later book and join the guys in a great adventure in which he makes a hero of himself). He could be initially introduced as the guy who provides the Starmen with whatever special equipment they might need for a mission.

From this suggestion came the character of Ralph Q. Coxhead in *Descent Into Europa*. The middle initial “Q” is a tribute to James Bond’s Q. It was Coxhead who designed the *Underbird*. The name Coxhead is a tribute to a printer in the early twentieth century, and thereby to Fred Woodworth who printed *Assault On Mars*.

...

I was reminded of some Sci-fi stories in which paraplegics were depicted in zero-gravity situations. In these stories they are able to get around quite well by using their arms.....and I guess this pretty much would be true. I suggest that we include at least one such character in a future story.....perhaps a female.

This suggestion led to the character of Kristina Bethany who was introduced in *Journey to the Farthest Planet*.

...

Was thinking about characters the other day....would like at least one of the principles to have a kind of block or emotional characteristic stemming from a childhood trauma or tragedy that he had to overcome...you know, the kind of situation the other guys might have to be sensitive to....perhaps we already have this and I just have not “caught on”. but either way, I think it will help to round out the series.

This led us to introduce Starman David Foster's traumatic fear of radiation exposure unconsciously inculcated into him by his father, and thereby added a powerful feature to the relationship between Zip and his father, and a tremendous factor in Zip's critical decision when he was on the Luxan moon in *The Last Command*. This suggestion from Mike, then, shaped the Starman saga in ways impossible to measure.

...

About future plot points....I have been giving a second look recently to what is called "Zero-point energy" (sometimes space energy)....I bet you guys have heard of it....it is actually a bunch of stuff, a lot of it is bogus (modern day perpetual motion machines), but I have come to accept some of it as real.....it has been used to explain the excess heat in "cold fusion" and in some other phenomena. Some advocates say it will revolutionize the world with unlimited energy for all, others say it is very diffuse and is not really worth tapping (personally, I am of this category)but I bring the subject up because it is going to continue to grow as an area of interest....the controversy and speculation will ferment over the next few decades.....and WE can include it as a working reality in our fiction....we could have it as a greatly sought after secret...it could be an old discovery of one of our older races.....we could use it to explain some of our hollow asteroid "paradises/dystopias" (no solar collectors, no atomics, but how do you explain that nice steamy jungle in the Belt?! You know, the one with all the primitive alien dinosaurs and hostile plants that the guys have to cut their way through, to get to the hidden cave where they rescue the Star Admirals' daughter from the evil mechanoid slurpmonsters!) I will send some info on Zero-point energy to you guys.

This led to the use of the "quantum froth" drawn on by Stephen Hoshino in *The Heart of Danger*.

...

At this point I would like to suggest one of the ideas that I have been playing with of late. Imagine a “race” of small robots, crudely humanoid in design, inhabiting an airless asteroid such as CERES, just going about their own business, mostly avoiding interaction with the rest of the solar system. (They get discovered in one of the books.) These guys are about the size of Jack and Jill, if we want. They have a nice relatively peaceful life.....miniature cities or dwellings on the surface...probably some mining under the surface. Their dwellings have no need to be airtight..no glass over the windows....no need for food (however they grow plants for esthetic beauty in greenhouses or in little “airquariums”), they communicate with each other by radio. They might be really good with telescopes (no atmosphere) and might have been technologically advanced for a while, but don't really have their heart in colonizing or travelling much...(Possibly not really in their “programming”) They just might be able to show us things like their telescopic photos taken hundreds of years ago of Earth...perhaps neat stuff like that first time those little ships sailed westward from that “big continent” to that “double continent”. They could be the unofficial historians of the Solar System....actually all this old info they have could be a highly protected secret that lots of different groups would be interested in.....

The origins of these robots would also be a mystery ...perhaps even to themselves...are they a benign offshoot of the Xenobots, are they a Titanian experiment, an Ancient Martian experiment, extra-solar? Did they result from some lost nanobot technology.....no longer certain of their purpose (lots of story potential here!)

One thing is certain...although they are peaceful and generally cooperative, they are very protective of the “history files”they have accumulated (or some other neat technology or skill they have). Due to their limited numbers and resources, they do not develop at the same rate as say Humans do. They are not

indestructable and sometimes actually carry little lead shielded capes and hoods in the event of solar flares or magnetic storms. (Actually , finding one of these little capes could be a clue that results in their discovery by the Starmen.)

The first encounter could be written to be very special....silent at first...until a common radio frequency is found...lots of hand gesturing and following the little guys across the weird airless terrain until the team is led to a “giant” (by Cereian standards, but small by human standards) underground pressurizable chamber (that the Cereians generally use for something else) where the Starmen can safely remove their helmets for a “face to face.”(perhaps the Starmen were found “in trouble” with their air running out and no solution in sight)

Of course Starlight enterprises along with a lot of others want to know how these guys were able to fend off the Xenobot attacks....they have many secrets.

They could have little vehicles and might even have hobbies/ or sports such as going out into the undeveloped parts of the asteroid and going “ four-wheeling” or something!

Just some suggestions. If Ceres is too important to other stories or does not readily fit in with the established context of the series, then we can certainly feature them on a smaller, unknown asteroid (lots of those).

From this suggestion came the greegles. At first these were just an amusing part of the story; the name came when David asked a teenager who was first learning about our story what these little items should be called, and he said, “greegles”. However, they later developed into the major plot element that came to full fruition in *The Last Command* and *Master of Shadows*.

...

I was reading the latest issue of Astronomy magazine and they have an article about the newest view of Mars that is

emerging.....(those Mars Global Surveyor images are awesome!).....A planet with underground rivers and active volcanoes, there is new speculation that the underground rivers and rocks may be where the life is.

This led me to think about Ceres.....which is much smaller, but has the benefit (at least in the past) of internal heat from the decay of radioactive aluminum (if I remember the element correctly)....well, perhaps Ceres also has underground liquid water!.....I bring this up as we might want such life enabling “facts” to be included in a history of the Starman World before we paint ourselves into a corner.

...

For years the Russians hid their top-secret rocket research & development center by putting it in the heart of downtown Moscow, in a building that for all the world looks like an ordinary rundown apartment building. This might be a good idea to hide some enemy research lab in a foreign country! Who would look downtown?

Perhaps, somewhere, have some murals on the wall that are the key to something. Maybe they tell the past – or the future? Perhaps they give away some startling information.

[From this paragraph came the idea of Uneven Stephen's magnificent mural carvings in the tunnels beneath Eagle City.](#)

...

Have David present misleading ideas about who built Tharsos! At first (in #2) David might suggest that Tharsos was built by an alien race from another star; Tharsos was some sort of generation of seed ship, but they died out for some reason. Then in #3 he suggests the same, noting that after they arrived they established

a number of bases at other locations in the solar system.

In #4 (toward the very end of the book), it is revealed that Tharsos, in its original configuration, could travel many times faster than light; it could make wormholes thousands of light-years long easily. David then revises his theory slightly, noting that perhaps they were from another galaxy instead, or from some far corner of the galaxy. By this point he is getting a lot of respect for this race; it has done some remarkable things. He's also getting hotter on his theory: perhaps Jogren was just a wind person who stumbled across some ancient equipment.

Then in #5 we come and blow all the theories away, showing that in reality this ancient race was from MARS...

...

I have invented another weird life form if we want to use it for descriptive effect. Imagine a crablike or spider-like creature that has a gas bladder giving him high buoyancy. This buoyancy would send him right up to the bottom of the ice and keep him there on the "ceiling"...now the guy can walk around upside down for a major part of his life, or all of it. I don't know what to call this thing, but perhaps it would be best just to have the Starmen discover them and mention amongst themselves that someone would have to eventually name this bizarre life form. "Wow,...look at all those odd crabbies walking on the ceiling!" "They must be gas buoyant...sure do look weird!"

These curious life-forms were described in *Descent Into Europa*.

...

I have an interesting and unusual space fact that we could weave into the series at some point. During the dramatic Apollo 13 misadventure the astronauts had to severely restrict their use of electricity....meaning no heater. The guys got really cold and

miserable (humidity 100%)...but they eventually found out that if they stayed very still, they warmed up (contrary to the usual “keep moving to keep warm”.)

The reason for this is that without gravity to cause the warmer air to rise up and away from the body, the warm air just adhered to their body. (A flame will not burn long in zero gravity for the same reason) Interesting, isn't it? These phenomena will only work in weightless conditions, so we would only want to use the idea in a spaceship in transit or in orbit situation (not accelerating)...it might be useful in a space station or a VERY small asteroid situation.

...

Date: Around August 11, 1999

As far as the logo or emblem for the series.....I like the idea David had about the spaceship in a starfield.....but may I suggest that one of the stars be brighter and stylized with four diminishing rays coming off of it.....with just a hint of extra length in the bottom ray.....I'm sure you see the subtle effect. Its there for anyone who wants to see it....but it is not overt....a metaphor for the series.



This is a scan of Bill Baumann's original painting of the Starman logo.



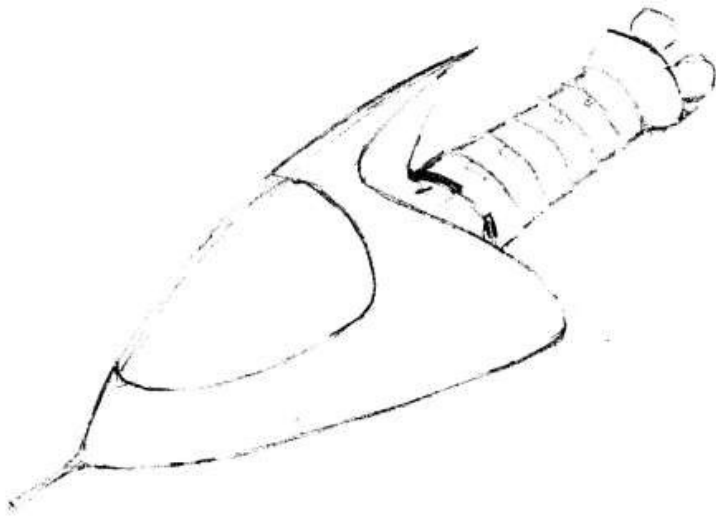
This is the computerized drawing of the Starman logo

Another brilliant idea from Mike! We loved the idea and used it, and this logo can now be found on the spine of the Starman books. It really captures the spirit of the series, and at the same time hints at the symbolism placed in the books.

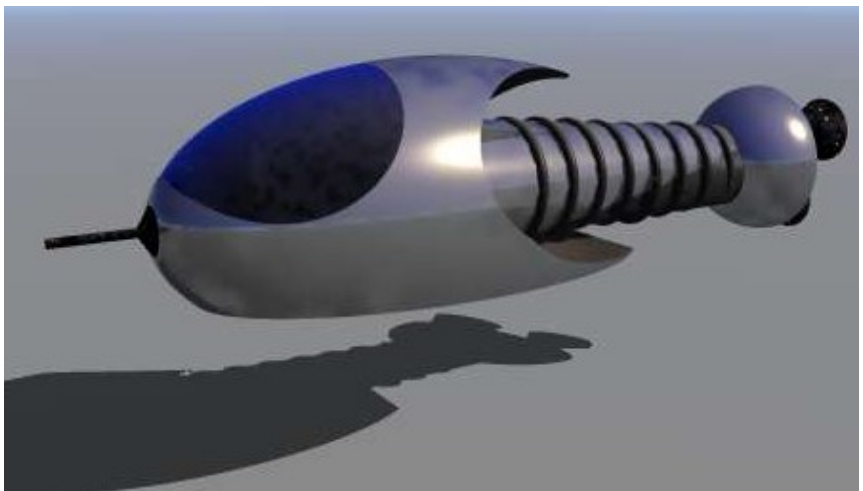
...

Perhaps we can have the little fighters be carried parasitically in the hold of larger ships, then we can call them: FIghter REcon Weapon System, Parasitic

From this suggestion came the FI RE W S P or firewasps, the small, ultra-maneuverable fighter ships.



Mike's Firewasp sketch



Jon's 3D model of Mike's Firewasp

Thursday, November 2, 2000 *From Mike*

Dear Jon and David,

Jon's reworking of the Firewasp on Bryce is awesome! I really like what you have done to it. ...

Perhaps we could raise a little project money/promotion by selling medium sized posters of the Jon's Firewasps....perhaps with a little Starman logo on the poster. I have no idea about the practicality of printing such a thing. But I do know that it is a very exciting and fresh look at Classic Spacecraft design. On the larger spacecraft, parasitic fighters like the FIREWASPs could be kept in a hold known in spacer jargon as the "waspnest"!

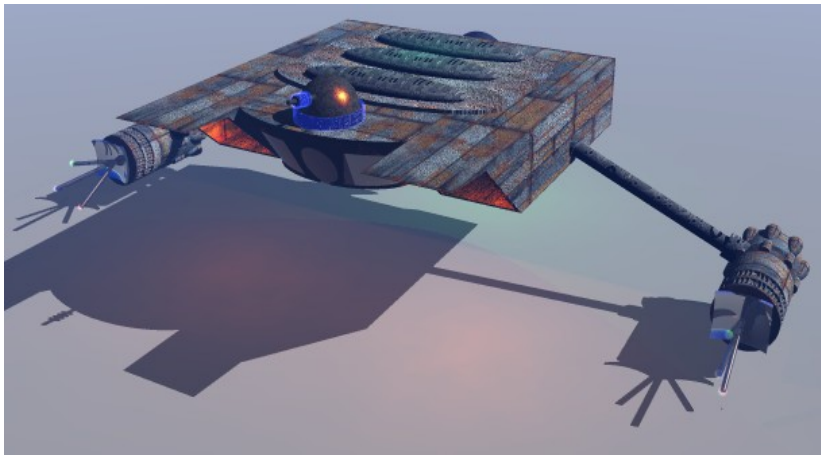
Friday, November 3, 2000 *From Mike*

Dear Jon and David,

Yes, I will take a crack at designing some larger ships...I have been playing around with a few ideas...trying to get a "classic" feel. Streamlined hulls and swept fins catch a lot of flak for being useless in space.....but perhaps in the future "aerobraking" will be a common method of deceleration (saves fuel that way)....even for ships that just want to go into orbit about a planet, not necessarily to land on the planet.

Now, my REAL desire is to see Jon eventually render a Bryce version of the Xenobot fighter. Remember that the design goes back to 1969 for me! A couple of times I almost sat down and built one out of wood.²²

²² Mike's Xenobot fighter design can be found on the cover of the first edition of *Doomsday Horizon*.



Jon's 3D model of Mike's Xenobot fighter

The World of the Starmen

This is the document that David drew up, assembling the ideas he and Jon and Mike had come up with over several months. It was intended to define the world in which the Starman stories would be written. Our intention was to refer to it as the books developed to ensure that we maintained consistency to our vision.

THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Many thousands of years ago, the terrain of Mars was not as hostile as it is now. The fourth planet had large oceans, an atmosphere, and a host of flora and fauna.

Most importantly, Mars was the native home of a large population. The inhabitants of Mars had, over the centuries, developed a large and flourishing civilization that was home (at its height) to nearly a billion Martians. They had established cities all over their globe, and had built a respectable culture. The Martians were not without flaws, and they waged war among themselves just as we do, but as a whole they were a respectable race.

Over the course of time, they developed the science necessary for space flight and built outposts on Phobos, in the Asteroid Belt, on Mercury (for minerals) and Venus, and even Earth's Moon. The Martians made some preliminary journeys to Earth, but Earth's high gravity, dense atmosphere, vicious animal life, and native population convinced them to leave it alone for the time being.

Slowly, the Martians built better spaceships and expanded outward to Jupiter, Saturn, and beyond. Eventually they discovered the interstellar drive and launched their first ship into space beyond the Solar System.

The ship immediately brought the Martians into contact with an incredibly fierce space-faring race called the Xenobots. The Xenobots had been at war with the inhabitants of their neighboring planets for centuries, and had slowly conquered their nearest star systems. When the Martians came into contact with this alien race, the Xenobots exulted that they had a new enemy to conquer; the Xenos (as they came to be known in our Solar System), turned their attention to Mars and launched a large interstellar war.

The Martians had an advantage over the Xenos that, while the Xenos had more resources, their natural warlike tendency had made it incredibly difficult for them to use those resources efficiently and develop new technologies. As a result, the Martians had a number of very powerful weapons that the Xenos lacked.

Not much is now known about the war except that it was immeasurably fierce. In the end, the Martians beat back the Xenos clear to their home system and bombed them back to the Stone Age, but only at an enormous price. Almost all the Martian bases throughout our Solar System were completely destroyed. The terraformation projects on the uninhabitable planets and the moons of Saturn and Jupiter were likewise destroyed. The thick but livable atmosphere of Venus was poisoned, and its ecosystem was damaged beyond an ability to regenerate itself—dooming it to become, after several centuries, an intolerable furnace.

Most critically, Mars itself was savaged. All of the life on the surface was destroyed, and the oceans dwindled rapidly. The only survivors of the war lived in cities located deep underground, or in bases hidden in deep space or the Asteroid Belt. The Martians had won the war, but they had nearly been destroyed themselves.

Almost all of the above-ground Martian civilization was utterly destroyed in the first wave of attacks by the Xenos. When it came, the attack was far fiercer than the Martians had anticipated in their most extreme moments. The Xenos clearly had the goal not only of Martian genocide, but a scorched-earth policy, intended to wipe out any trace of Martian civilization. The vehemence of the attack was incalculable. When the Martians accepted that the destruction of their planet a given, they went underground. Martian defenses prevented the Xenos from continuing their attack and completing their genocidal attack below ground, and a counter-attack by a large Martian fleet returning from the outer planets drove the Xenos away.

The Martian cities, gardens, fields, forests, and animal life were utterly destroyed, reduced to little more than dry dust. This radically altered the atmosphere and weather patterns, and started a process by which the oceans receded and the water froze at the poles. However, nearly 10% of the population (one hundred million people) survived in the subterranean cities. These cities had been prepared, like enormous bomb shelters, when the ruthlessness and ferocity of the Xenobot race had been discovered two centuries before the ultimate battle.

The millennia that followed saw the continuing decay of the atmosphere and the ultimate drying up of the oceans. All that

was left for people of Earth to find, centuries later, were crumbled ruins scattered widely, and the minutest evidence of manufactured items, but not enough to tell them who they belonged to or what the state of their civilization was.

Losing in a single generation everything they had won took the heart out of the Martians. Not willing to start from scratch all over again, they simply retreated to the heart of their planet and put most of their race in suspended animation. A few chose to stay “alive” and watch over the machines, man the cities, and so forth. These “watchers” numbered only a few thousand, and devoted themselves to running and maintaining the secret underground cities. Occasionally they would take an old spaceship and leave Mars to visit an old base, to check up on activities outside Mars, or to see if the Xenos had returned.

Most often, the Martians would fly to Earth to see how Earth was advancing. Earth was very important to the Martians, and they pinned all their hopes upon it. Their hope was that, one day, the natives of Earth would develop the capability of space travel and come to Mars with the technology the Martians themselves no longer had, and would rebuild Mars.

Eventually, Earthmen did arrive and settle on Mars. Slowly they began to transform it and make it habitable again. They found a few intriguing ruins and devices, but of the living cities and Martians themselves they found nothing, for the Martians were keeping themselves hidden until they felt the time was right to reveal their existence. They were still wary of contact with alien races. Besides, most of Mars’ terrain was still very hostile: it did not come close to being the friendly, green Mars of old.

The Martians could not keep themselves completely hidden, however. A sighting here, or a strange event there, eventually made men curious, and an expedition (headed by David Foster, who had encountered an ancient Martian earlier in the series) was sent to settle the question once and for all. The story is told in the sixth book of the series, *The Lost Race of Mars*. The expedition found the Martians, and the hidden race agreed that the time had arrived to come out of suspended animation and reinhabit their underground cities.

Trade quickly sprang up between the planets, for each race had goods and services the other lacked. Earth had many resources that the Martians needed: the Martians had a lot of advanced technology that Earth knew nothing about. Between the two, the Martians (though not without opposition by some colonists, of course) started rebuilding their cities on the planet's surface, with industries and factories, and eventually extraterrestrial bases.

When contact was made with the Xenos again, the Martians went into high gear. It was quickly obvious that Earth alone could not defeat them: they would need as much of ancient Mars as they could get to do the job. In book #22, *The Return of Mars*, Earth and the Martians pool their resources to recreate as much of ancient Mars as they could (the factories, the ships, and so forth), and in book #23, *The Last Command*, they launch an all-out attack on the Xenos. The second war for the survival of the Solar System begins, against its ancient enemy

THE CHARACTERS

The Three Starmen:

NAME: David “Zip” Foster

POSITION: Leader of the Starman Trio

HAIR COLOR: Bright, flaming red. Goes with his somewhat volatile temperament.

EYE COLOR: Gray.

HEIGHT: 5’ 6”. Somewhat short for a Starman, but he makes up for it partly in build, fast reflexes, and a high-class brain.

TEMPERAMENT: Is very active; has trouble sitting still and waiting. Is very loyal: if his friends are in danger, he will go and help them regardless of the personal cost. Is straightforward with his friends, but can be cautious and crafty around his enemies. Morally, he is very decent: he is honest, respectable, takes his word and honor very seriously, and will not break the law even if he thinks it’s ridiculous. Does not have much patience with shifty people or criminals. He respects authority, but if he thinks they’re wrong he will debate with them and try to get them to see his point of view (as opposed to many youth who don’t respect authority in the least). He will take a lot without getting angry, but once he is aroused it is very difficult to calm him down. Some things will set him off easily: a threat to his family or friends will do the trick. Is somewhat less cautious than he should be; at times his impetuosity and failure to think before he acts get him into real trouble.

SKILLS: He specializes in Deep Space exploration, survival, and leadership. If given a planet to explore, he can quickly come up with a plan that will guarantee success. Is an expert

at identifying natural resources, rocks, and local terrain. If given a problem, he can think it through and come up with a solution with the equipment available. He also has a tendency for hunches; sometimes he will get a brilliant flash of insight, which is usually (although not always) correct. He is a natural leader: when he is around a group of people, he gravitates toward the top as people come to him for orders and directions. He excels at organization and decision-making. He loves space and alien environments; the blackness of space and the stars are very dear to him. He is most at home in space.

HISTORY: Was born on March 12, 2134. Series starts in 2151, when he is 17. He lived most of his life on the Moon, where his father was working for the Exploration division of Starlight Enterprise (he had retired from Starmanship for health reasons [radiation overdose] some time earlier). David developed a hunger for becoming a Starman when he was young, and throughout his young life he strove to become one. When he was 14, he entered the Starlight Academy, and he graduated three years later—the youngest graduate in the history of the Academy. Before he could be given a ship, the *Assault on Mars* episode occurred.

NAME: Mark Seaton

POSITION: Engineer/Fixit man for the Starman Trio

HAIR COLOR: Black

EYE COLOR: Brown

HEIGHT: 6' 3". Built very solidly, but he doesn't have superhuman strength. Is somewhat tall and brawny. A good guy to have on your side in a fight!

TEMPERAMENT: He loves to study and read, and as such is the most “educated” of the three. If there is an odd fact to know, he will know it. Sometimes he has a tendency to talk in overly-complex language. Is good at techno-speak. He also has a great sense of humor. At times, when faced with people who pretend to be “experts” at things they don’t know anything about, he has been known to speak complete mumbo-jumbo in a knowing air. He has much of the same good character traits that David does, with the exception that he tends to be somewhat overly slow and cautious—and thus he helps to balance David out.

SKILLS: He specializes in engines and large, complex machinery. He has always had a talent for working and understanding machines, and he knows the workings of the average rocket from stem to stern. His specialty is rocket engines and power plants: if something is broken, he can find a way to fix it. He excels at jury-rigging devices, and finding a way to do the impossible with practically nothing. He speaks almost reverently about his machines, and hates to see a device that isn’t taken care of. Keeps his starship in tiptop shape. He is also the brains of the three explorers; while he isn’t good with hunches, once given an idea he can consider it logically and eventually come up with a good answer—although it may take some time.

HISTORY: Was born on June 23, 2133. Series starts in 2151, shortly after his 18th birthday, which makes him the oldest of the Trio. He lived most of his early life on Earth, and at a young age he got a job at a local spaceport, repairing engines. His natural knack at machines landed him a scholarship at the Academy, where he studied for a number of years until he graduated. Before he could be assigned to a ship, the *Assault on Mars* episode occurred.

NAME: Joseph Taylor

POSITION: Pilot/Navigator for the Starman Trio

HAIR COLOR: Brown

EYE COLOR: Green

HEIGHT: 6' 0". Even though he's two inches shorter than Mark, he seems much taller because he is very thin and lanky. His elbows and knees seem to be going all places at once. Can be very quick and lithe if the need arises—he's the fastest runner of the three, and broke an Academy record for the 100-yard dash..

TEMPERAMENT: Joseph is an outdoors man, and is at home in jungles, swamps, forests, or whatever kind of terrain is thrown at him. He has a lot of survival knowledge: if it is possible to survive in a given environment, he can find a way. Is a very good hunter, and a crack shot with a weapon. Likes to talk and joke about the wonders of the great outdoors. Has a love for green things, for living things, and is most at home on Earth. Joseph shares much of the good qualities of David and Mark. What Joseph lacks is a head for direction: he is a great worker, but to work most efficiently he needs someone to get him started moving—someone like David. The Trio is effective: David has the hunches, which Mark works out, and Joseph executes. David tends to over-react, while Joseph tends to under-react—and so a balance is reached. At times there are exceptions, but they are rare.

SKILLS: He specializes in flight and navigation: if Mark can get it to fly, Joseph can fly it. He has flown everything from ancient biplanes to interplanetary rockets, and if he hasn't flown it before, he can study it and figure out how to get it off the ground. His father was one of the best navigators in

the Solar System, and he passed a lot of his knowledge and skills to his son.

HISTORY: Was born on September 17, 2134. Series starts in 2151, just before his 17th birthday. He is the youngest of the Trio, but not by much. His father was a navigator on the flight that made both his and David's father famous, but the same accident that put David's father out of commission ended Joseph's father's career as well. His father taught him much about navigation. Joseph and David were both in the same class in the Academy (Mark was a year ahead of them), and they got to know each other fairly well. Joseph graduated a few months after David did, but before he could be assigned to a ship the *Assault on Mars* episode broke out.

MINOR RECURRING CHARACTERS

NAME: Steve Cliff

POSITION: Spy and undercover man for Earth.
Occasionally will work with the Trio.

HAIR COLOR: Black

EYE COLOR: Brown

HEIGHT: 6' 3". He is an enormous, somewhat fat man. Seems very harmless and innocent. Has a constantly jolly look on his face. Is somewhat reminiscent of Santa Claus, with a bit of Oriental pirate thrown in.

TEMPERAMENT: He seems to be a very jolly fellow, but that hides a very sharp and serious brain. He can think very fast, and is a phenomenal actor. He is great as an undercover

agent: he looks so innocent that no one suspects him until it is too late. He has an ancient banjo, which he enjoys playing and is actually good at playing.

SKILLS: He is good with undercover work, with spying, and with working among the vast underworld of the Solar System to find the information he needs. His jolly character puts people off their guard—which has ended the career of many a crook. He is very, very dangerous with any kind of weapon. He is not very athletic, but his vast mental powers and wisdom more than makes up for this. He is one of the top counter-spies working for Earth. He has a somewhat shady reputation, which comes in very handy when trying to gain the confidence of criminals.

HISTORY: During the early part of his life, he ran the most successful smuggling racket ever known in the history of the Solar System. He knew all the tricks about evading guards, all the secret places, and all the men of the Underworld. No one could ever catch him, or prove anything that he had done. Eventually, he shut down the smuggling racket and seemingly retired, doing only a small odd-job here or there.

In reality, the whole thing was a sham: he has been an ace undercover agent his entire life. His supposed smuggling gave him the cover he needed to work undetected in the Underworld. Few people beside the Trio know this, however; most believe him simply to be a somewhat shady, but lovable, character—which is good for his undercover work.

NAME: The Titanians

POSITION: Small, miniature extraterrestrials. Good to have around in tight spots. Occur fairly frequently, and often accompany the Starmen on their expeditions. Are a high-spirited, active, adventuresome race.

INFORMATION: Small (about 7" tall), gray, thin, highly skilled humanoid creatures found living in the valleys of Titan by the First Deep Space Expedition in 2130. Can live in deep space without a spacesuit if necessary for a short period of time. They are partly anaerobic: can go without oxygen, and can live on Mars comfortably (but Earth's atmosphere is a strain). Highly adaptable, and able to live in very hostile environments. Very versatile, and highly skilled with machinery. Their people have built a large, somewhat primitive civilization on Titan. They have not developed spaceflight, but have refined machinery far more than Earth has. A somewhat limited (due to the extreme distance between Saturn and Earth) trade has sprung up between Earth and the Titanians.

When the series starts, the Titanians are the only alien intelligent life forms known to Man (although there have been unconfirmed rumors and strange sightings on Mars and in the Asteroid Belt). Their language is quite different from that of Man and was very hard to learn until Starlight Enterprise built an enormous, complex, experimental Translator which could imprint the language in minutes. As of yet few can speak Titanian fluently except for a few Starmen. Starmen are, in fact, almost the only people who ever make the voyage regularly out to Saturn: it is far too

distant and treacherous a voyage for anyone else. The human inhabitants of Titan rarely return to Earth.

Only two Titanians (nicknamed Jack and Jill, as no one can even come close to pronouncing their real names) live outside of Titan, and both are located on the Moon (although both often accompany the Trio on their expeditions). They volunteered to go to Starlight's laboratory for experimental purposes, and they were just ready to go back to Titan when the *Assault On Mars* situation intervened and they went to Mars instead.

NAME: Oritz Konig

POSITION: Head security man for Starlight Enterprise. Often oversees the actions of the Starmen and makes sure everything is OK.

INFORMATION: This man is responsible for overseeing the security of much of Starlight Enterprise. He isn't a plant official, but it's his job to make certain that everything is safe and well. He is a large man, very strong, firm, and of regal bearing. He can be easygoing and friendly with his friends, but is firm and unyielding—and courageous—to his enemies. He will not back down, regardless of the odds. Fear is not part of his makeup. He is one of the finest security officers around.

NAME: John Rwakatare, usually called “Rock”

POSITION: Head engineer of the Advanced Design Department of Starlight Enterprise. Second in command of SE in Richard Starlight’s absence.

INFORMATION: Guides the research and exploration teams, invents new equipment and techniques. Doesn’t go into space very often, but is an able spaceman when necessary. Was offered the position of Starman upon graduation from Starlight Academy, and was the first (and thus far only) person ever to turn down the honor. Where Richard Starlight likes to be “on the go,” Rock prefers to be at home most of the time with his wife and four children. Has a remarkable and rare combination of a filing-cabinet mind and an ability to dream. While eminently logical at all times, can also come up with “leaps beyond logic” in which inspiration confidently answers a challenging situation.

NAME: Jesus Montoya

POSITION: Ioneer

INFORMATION: Although not particularly well educated, Jesus is a top mechanic, very good with his hands. His awareness of rocket engines is second only to that of Mark Seaton. Whenever special equipment or urgent repairs are needed on the Trio’s spaceship, Jesus is the one able to achieve the desired result in the time required. His “down-home” wisdom is a welcome contrast to the often over-technical, textbook-based suggestions of the “experts.” He is a constant reminder that a top education doesn’t always teach

one everything one needs to know. His personal history is only gradually revealed as the series develops.

NAME: Allen Foster

POSITION: Famous explorer and father of David Foster.

PHYSICAL MAKEUP: Graying hair, red eyes. Is a tall, older man—in his 50's. He can still get around and still has a fine brain, but a radiation overdose that occurred during the famous Ganymede Expedition precluded him from any major physical activity and caused his early retirement.

INFORMATION: Was the leader of the First Deep Space Expedition in the year 2112—twenty years before his son was born. The expedition made him famous, but it also forced his early retirement. After returning from the expedition, he trained a generation of Starmen (including his son) and did a lot of research and development work on designing new settlements and ships. Is a highly famous and well-respected man; even his enemies wouldn't dare touch him. He is still very sharp, and can more than handle his own if he gets into trouble. Is an all-round sterling character—one of those people who are larger than life—but is still kind and amiable. He doesn't have a tendency to jump to conclusions as his son does, and is constantly calming his son down and telling him to take it easy and think things through.

RELATIONSHIPS: His son highly respects him, but for the first part of the series he lives in his shadow; many accuse David of “riding on his father's coattails” and using his reputation. Eventually David is able to establish his own

reputation, and by the fifth or sixth book in the series, becomes well-known, famous, and respected in his own right.

NAME: Keith Seaton

POSITION: Father of Mark Seaton, the engineer of the Trio.

PHYSICAL MAKEUP: 5' 9", graying hair, brown eyes. Looks much like his son, and has the same massive physical build. Is starting to get up in years, but he hasn't lost his massive strength yet. Is a bit shorter than his son.

INFORMATION: He was the head engineer on the famous Deep Space Expedition, but he managed to escape the radiation that damaged the health of his crew members. When his Captain, Allen Foster, was grounded on the Moon, however, he decided that he didn't want to part with him and so stayed there and worked in Starlight's Research & Development department. He is an excellent rocket engine and nuclear propulsion mechanic, and in the series he will be instrumental in designing the hybrid reactor and engines that take his son to Polaris. He is a key figure in the ninth book, *Project Polaris*, and he was the "key man" who was kidnapped in an attempt to halt the project. The man has a very sharp brain, and, like his son, he is good at reasoning things out.

RELATIONSHIPS: He personally tutored his son about engines, and much of his son's expertise comes from him.

NAME: Charlie Taylor

POSITION: Father of Joseph Taylor (the Trio's navigator)

PHYSICAL MAKEUP: 5' 7", graying hair, bright green eyes. Is more solidly built than his son.

INFORMATION: He is an expert navigator, and became famous for being the navigator aboard the first successful expedition to Pluto (an earlier expedition resulted in the death of all on board). Over the years he has had a legendary career as a test-pilot for Starlight Enterprise and, before that, a crack pilot in Earth's space force. Currently he is living on the Moon and is semi-retired, serving as a cargo or liner pilot. He is also a good teacher, and was the Trio's teacher on navigation in the Academy.

NAME: Richard Starlight

POSITION: Head of the famous Starlight Enterprise

PHYSICAL MAKEUP: 5' 9", black hair, gray eyes. Is about 57 years old.

INFORMATION: Richard is the latest of the famous Starlight clan. He has guided the company for the past 32 years since both his parents were killed in an accident in one of the early Mercury colonies. Richard has guided the corporation from being mainly lunar-based into an interplanetary empire, and along the way expanded Earth's presence to Mercury, Mars, and beyond. The most distant colony is on Saturn, but Richard hopes to establish colonies

even further out once a better and more economical drive system can be worked out.

Richard is a legendary figure, and has possibly done more to explore space than any man in history. He is highly regarded, and is a powerful, influential person. Richard is married to a woman named Jan. Jan is an adventuresome lady: she's active, smart, and at her husband's side. Richard does a lot of traveling, and is a hands-on person: he has mined ore in the asteroids, put up buildings on Titan, designed and flown starships, and so forth. Jan has been there with him, carrying her weight and helping him along. Since he has had so much hands-on experience and knowledge, his employees view him as someone who actually knows them and sympathizes with them, as opposed to just being another bureaucrat.

In the early volumes and those that deal mainly with exploration, Richard will probably only be a minor character (perhaps the Trio meet him in the first book, *Assault on Mars*, when Richard, familiarly known as Rick, personally briefs them on what he wants them to do on Mars, how it will be done, and so forth). In the later books that focus more on the corporation, though, he will probably be more important. Richard also might accompany the Trio when they go to Mercury, as that's where his father died; perhaps they'll uncover something there of interest.

NAME: The President

POSITION: He's simply the President, period. Whenever something needs to be done, the President steps up and handles things. He seems to rule Earth, but when he speaks, he speaks for all of the Solar System. He is a man of extraordinary charisma.

CHARACTER: The President is the archetype of what Presidents ought to be. Think of Ronald Reagan, Abraham Lincoln, or George Washington as examples: an older man, wise, good with words, and a straightforward, “Tear down this wall, Mr. Gorbachov!” kind of person. We know what the Presidency has become; he symbolizes what it ought to be.

Currently, the President comes into play in the beginning of the first book, when the Security Council has its debate and Mars negotiates with Earth. He may also play a role in the later volumes (especially the last two), but that’s too far into the future to tell.

NAME: Elizabeth Allen

POSITION: David’s mother, and the Captain’s wife.

NAME: Kathy Allen

POSITION: David’s 8-year-old sister. She, along with the rest of the Allens, lives on the Moon in Tycho City.

NAME: Barbara Seaton

POSITION: Mark’s mother. Lives in Tycho City.

NAME: Laura Taylor

POSITION: Joseph’s mother. Lives in Tycho City.

THE HISTORY OF EARTH, 2000-2150

In the late 20th century, Earth went through a long time of material prosperity—a time which many people thought would last forever. This prosperity, however, was coupled with a decreasing morality. Violence, lawlessness, and wars were on the rise: few thought it was safe to be outside at night.

Eventually things went sour. In the 2010's, the world economy started to drop, and headed toward a steep recession. Normally the world would have recovered, but the declining morality of the world had created severe cultural instability which few wanted to admit. When millions of people lost their jobs, those people became dependent upon government welfare. The governments could not meet the welfare demands, and decided to increase taxes and decrease benefits.

This angered everybody, and when the recession turned into a depression in 2040 the world went mad. Riots flared up in dozens of cities. Bank runs happened all across the globe. A panic filled the air. Governments tried to crack down on their citizens, but the discontent was so global that they were helpless.

Slowly, one by one, the governments of the world collapsed. The infrastructure of the planet started seriously to decay. The citizens, not brought up in with moral anchors, refused to pay any attention to any leader, and the period known as the Collapse prevailed.

Life was awful. Many terrorists and fanatics got hold of some of the thousands of loose nuclear weapons and detonated

them in many cities. These weapons were not the multi-megaton bombs capable of destroying several hundred square miles at a shot, but small bombs whose effectiveness was intended to be achieved by a process known as “swarm bombing”—that is, unleashing dozens of small nuclear bombs over the target. Small but fierce wars were waged between different factions as they battled over control of various areas. Normal life was impossible, and many millions of people died.

By the time the Collapse ended in 2090, the world was in shambles. Most of Earth’s large cities had been destroyed. Much of the infrastructure was gone. Earth had no launch capacity. Technicians, scientists, and doctors were extremely rare.

But the next generation got together and rebuilt. Being kind to your neighbor became important again. The concepts of stewardship, accountability, and mutual responsibility revived. People began to take pride in their work, and watch out for the other fellow. Things were a far cry from perfect, but it was a start.

In that kind of environment, Earth painfully rebuilt what had been lost. One of the most critical losses was access to raw materials. Most of the mines that were left were deep mines that required sophisticated technology and infrastructure to obtain.

Most of Earth’s mines were destroyed or rendered inaccessible through radiation during the Collapse, creating a need for rebuilding them or discovering new sources of ore. In addition, most of the mines were quite depleted, leaving only the most difficult and expensive ones still available.

By 2090 Earth had developed a workable fusion reactor. The construction of such a reactor solved a lot of infrastructure problems: instead of rebuilding a couple of thousand power plants over the globe, people could simply build a handful of fusion plants that could do the job just as well. Unfortunately, the fuel for fusion power (deuterium and tritium) is very expensive—so expensive that some people believed that it would be worth spending \$40 billion dollars to set up a colony on the Moon to bring it to Earth because a single space-shuttle load of it would be worth about \$1 trillion.

Thomas Starlight founded Starlight Enterprise in 2089. Tom had developed a way to use a nuclear propulsion system to reach the Moon. Armed with this technology, Tom and his wife Sandra built several colonies on the Moon that mined the rare ores, refined them, and shipped them to Earth.

Tom Starlight's first mine was a tritium mine for the fusion reactors of Earth. Once Tom had that mine running, he started exporting other hard-to-get minerals: platinum, gold, iridium, titanium, and so forth. Since the Moon has lower gravity and Tom could operate in a near vacuum (no weather, no mudslides, no rust, ...) he could mine a lot of these metals with far less overhead than his competitors on Earth could. Also, Tom's shipping costs were less: since the Earth has more mass than the Moon, Tom basically has to ship the ore "downhill"—and by using orbital mechanics he can easily deliver the ore to any place on Earth.

Some metals—like aluminum, which comprises 8% of the Earth's crust—are cheaper to mine and produce on Earth. Most other companies provide these metals. But Tom has a decisive advantage with other metals—an advantage so great that he's willing to go to the Asteroid Belt to get them.

The corporation proved to be very profitable, and soon had expanded and was supplying much of Earth's raw materials. By 2110 Tom had designed the technology to expand to the asteroids, and soon even more ore was pouring in.

Tom's real objective, however, was the planet Mercury. Mercury was known to have many fantastic deposits of rare minerals. Mining them, however, proved to be a nightmare: the extreme surface temperatures and fierce environment destroyed many early stations. In the end it even defeated Tom himself: in 2119 Tom and his wife Sandy were killed when a refinery they were visiting on Mercury exploded.

The corporation then came into the hands of their 25-year-old son, Richard, who continued to run the firm the way his father had. Richard managed to solve the problems of living on Mercury, and under his careful direction, Mercury became one of the Solar System's pivotal resource points.

In 2151 when the series starts, Earth has recovered from much of the affects of the Collapse. Few of those living are old enough to have experienced the worst horrors of the period. The human population of the Solar System is around 2 billion. Passenger travel between Earth and the Moon, Mars, Mercury, and the Asteroids is fairly common via passenger liners that can span the distance in a matter of days to a maximum of two weeks, depending on the relative location of the ports.

THE POLITICS OF EARTH, 2000-2150

In the late 20th century, the Communist block nearly disappeared with the dissolution of the Union of Soviet

Socialist Republics. The only Communist nation remaining in the Western hemisphere was Cuba. The People's Republic of China remained the world's most populous country and the sole Communist nation on the world scene which had to be reckoned with. However, the rise of multi-national corporations brought all the nations of the world into an increasingly-interdependent relationship, and many of these nations wanted to invest in China.

Political unrest in China, often subdued in the latter half of the 20th century by force or by fear, was never completely obliterated. In the first decade of the 21st century, the leadership of China was a council mostly comprised by very old men. Their successors, although still hoping to retain power in a Communist government, realized that the old ways would not succeed, and that it was merely the sheer size of their nation that maintained its position as a world power. They knew that they would have to allow foreign investments into the nation if China were not to become isolated from the rest of the world.

These foreign investments eventually brought in the ways of the wider world, including a reasonably efficient computer network and internet communications. A controlled press was no longer possible, or even conceivable. Eventually a crisis of leadership brought about a bloodless coup. After a brief period without leadership, and somewhat to the alarm of Western business interests, in 2021 the Chinese people restored the Emperor. Within a decade, Taiwan and China had become one nation again. The nation was well on its way to economic stability when the Collapse caught up with it. China was established as a strong nation under a constitutional monarchy when the rest of the world was rebuilt in the last years of the 21st century.

Africa escaped much of the worst of the period of the Collapse, having little which was sought after by terrorists, and few targets worthy of nuclear destruction. After the nuclear terror of the mid-21st century, Africa found itself suddenly and unexpectedly in a position of world influence. The world trauma of nuclear devastation brought about a sharp reaction in the survivors for a strong, conservative foundation. People looked to their roots as individuals, families, nations, and an entire race.

Although this was severe, even frantic, in the first generation after the devastation, it was mitigated in the second generation, and became more balanced. People looked to Africa as the cradle of human civilization, and enormous interest grew up in the roots of human history. More significantly, as the world's greatest emerging Christian culture, and having most of its population intact, the African nations bound themselves together in a loose federation similar to the original thirteen American colonies. The African Federation was formed in 2101. Their civilization began to rival medieval Europe's as a culture with enough force to shape human destiny. With easy access to knowledge through the internet, the emerging culture quickly surpassed that of the Middle Ages, which was often marred by superstition, lack of empirical science, and general lack of education. The robust Christianity of Africa, melded with the technology of the 21st century, provided the necessary foundation for a powerful world consciousness, spiritual and racial revival, and an optimistic future.

In the United States, the nuclear devastation was severe. Most major cities were destroyed, but the outlying and rural areas, for the most part, survived. New leadership arose from these areas, and the American spirit, which had gradually been

eclipsed by special-interest groups, lobbyists, fringe organizations, and major corrupt economic interests, was largely purified. Along with a world-wide turn toward the conservative, the “old values” became popular, if not always followed. A generation of leaders arose with a popular appeal similar to that enjoyed by the “log cabin” presidents. A candidate who claimed to have simple values and homespun philosophy was guaranteed to win support from the remaining American population. Although it was in doubt for a time, the United States remained the major world player. The African Federation was the other major world player. China and recovering Europe were not far behind. Europe, however, was marked by a bitterness resulting from the loss of many of its treasures in art and architecture in the violence of the early years of the Collapse.

There arose a sizable “counter-culture” in South America, where poverty had remained fairly widespread, even in the boom years of the early 21st century. The Collapse did not change the fortunes of the populace very much, since most people there were already only a little above bare sustenance. But an attitude of resentment toward those who were better off, which had existed from the late 20th century, grew rapidly and deepened when the rest of the world, especially the United States and Africa, recovered from the Collapse in little more than a generation. Like Africa, South America was not as devastated by the nuclear horror; unlike Africa, it did not move into the mainstream of world culture. Poverty remained, and anger toward the rest of the world hardened. Never too much of a political threat, in the early 22nd century South America nonetheless became a breeding ground of a criminal element which, with enough ill-gotten funding and organization, became the source of the majority of humanity’s public enemies.

In the rest of the world, as a generation arose which had not lived through the Collapse, most of the problems of the 20th century became, literally, history: racial and economic division, overpopulation and the consequent overuse of the world's resources, and spiritual emptiness. Although the major religions like Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, etc., remained, the gradual perception of the world as a single community brought peoples of all kinds into frequent contact. African-style Christianity became the world's most influential religion, similar to the age when the Roman Empire legalized Christianity in the early years of the fourth century. Intercommunication and interdependence brought about tolerance without condemnation. A large number of cultic groups arose, but never exercised much influence.

THE NATURE OF THE PLANETS

The David Foster series begins on July 4, 2151. On that date, if one looks down upon the Solar System as one looks at the face of a clock, Jupiter is located at about 11 o'clock, Uranus and Neptune are at about 10:45, Saturn at about 12 o'clock, and Pluto at about 1:30 o'clock.

Mercury makes a complete orbit around the sun in 88 earth days.

Venus makes a complete orbit around the sun in 225 earth days.

Mars makes a complete orbit around the sun in 687 earth days, or nearly two earth years. Its day is 24.6 hours long, only slightly longer than earth's

Jupiter makes a complete orbit around the sun in 11.86 earth years.

Saturn makes a complete orbit around the sun in 29.46 earth years.

Uranus makes a complete orbit around the sun in 84 earth years.

Neptune makes a complete orbit around the sun in 164.8 earth years.

Pluto makes a complete orbit around the sun in 248.4 earth years.

EARTH: The Earth is still the home for the vast majority of humanity. Extra-planetary industry is becoming of growing importance, but it has yet to take over or even surpass the production capabilities of Earth's two billion citizens.

Earth's environment is a mixture of good and bad news. On the bad side, some sizable portions of landscape consist of biohazardous and radioactive sites. The Collapse saw a lot of large cities blown off the map, and the ruins of New York, Cairo, Shanghai, and Paris will probably be uninhabitable for many centuries to come. Few large cities exist anymore; only a mere handful claim home to more than a million people.

On the good side, there is an undergoing effort to make Earth a cleaner and greener place. Research is being done to find a way to clean up the radioactive waste left from the Collapse, and efforts are being made to keep the Earth clean. There is, in general, an increasing drive for better stewardship

and a desire to take better care of the environment, and there is a movement to move the “dirty” industries to other, little-inhabited planets. This has caused some strife among the colonists, some of whom feel that they are being “used” as a cosmic dumping ground for pollutants.

Earth is still divided into a large host of countries, both large and small. As the series is based in outer space and spends almost all of its time off of Earth, the David Foster series will not be much concerned with nationalities, races, or borders. For the purpose of the series, people will be described as coming from Earth, the Moon, Mars, etc., instead of France, Germany, and the like. Exceptions will be made only out of necessity.

Earth has had the capability to start building cities in the ocean for some time now, but there really hasn’t been a need. The population count hasn’t yet recovered from the long and catastrophic Collapse, and is hovering around 2 billion. Starlight Enterprise has built some small cities underwater where it is conducting mining enterprises, but that is the exception and not the rule.

Most of Earth’s raw materials come from deep space. When Earth went through the Collapse, she lost a lot of her mines and mining capacity. After the Collapse, many metals were hard to obtain, and it was simply cheaper to export them to Earth instead of mine them at home. Most heavy metals such as uranium, thorium, and gold are imported from the Asteroid Belt.

Most of Earth is better off than at the end of the 20th century, thanks to a general willingness to work hard and rebuild everything that was lost in the Collapse. The advances in

technology have made Earth a pleasanter, safer, and more interconnected place to be, while the neighborliness and friendliness has made life more pleasant—but not perfect. In general (and this should be stressed, for life is still far from being a Utopia), the spirit is more optimistic and friendly than it was in the late 20th century, although some tension is beginning to grow in some areas.

The “good guys” on Earth are located in North America, the African Federation, and China. South America is still fragmented into small pieces and is the backwater realm of the planet; there is a sizable and growing element of discontent and strife there, which will be the primary source of the “bad guys.” Australia is uninhabited and is only used as a testing ground. There is a general feeling of bitterness in Europe, which has the potential for trouble, but can also be overcome. The Pacific Islanders are eager to be a part of the new world, as are the peoples of Asia.

THE MOON: The Moon is of growing importance in the year 2150. It plays a major role in the defense of Earth, in manufacturing, mining, biological research, and medical care (many older people prefer the Moon’s lower gravity). The Moon also plays a pivotal role for another reason: it is the capital of Starlight Enterprise and houses most of its manufacturing and research stations.

The capital of the Moon is Tycho City, located near Tycho Crater on the Moon’s North Pole, where large water deposits were discovered in the early 21st century. The sprawling city has a population of 8 million, the most populous city anywhere in the Solar System. On its outskirts lie the vast Starlight compound and several important military bases.

Most of the Moon's cities are located underground, with few structures open to the fierce heat of the sun. Now that stronger materials are becoming more available, more structures and domes are being built on the surface. There have been some hopes that the Moon could be terraformed, but so far no practical way to accomplish this has been discovered.

Tycho City houses much of the Moon's infrastructure, but there are a number of other cities as well. All told, the Moon is home to 13 million people, with more coming all the time. Since men can live longer in the Moon's weaker gravity, people are flocking to it all the time, and now that the effects of the Collapse are wearing off it is a booming place.

The Moon is a key place in the Solar System, as it is home to most of the Solar System's manufacturing industries. Ore is shipped from Mercury and the asteroids to the Moon, where it is refined and launched to Earth, Mars, and the other planets.

MERCURY: Mercury rotates; the side facing away from the sun is *not* covered with ice. Hostile Mercury has some of the Solar System's richest ore mines, but because of the fierce temperature it has remained largely uninhabited. There is one small permanent settlement that is mining one especially rich thorium mine, but that is the exception. Thomas Starlight tried to set up a mining industry on Mercury and failed, and actually was killed when visiting a mining colony on that planet. His son Richard managed to establish and secure one colony, but has decided to wait to establish others until the level of technology is improved.

VENUS: Venus is even more inhospitable than Mercury, and as such has no colonies or settlements at all. Starlight would like to terraform Venus and restore the once-breathable atmosphere which the Xenobots destroyed, but so far does not have the technology.

MARS: Mars is shaped like a pear, with towering volcanic mountains in the south, and a smooth lowland in the north that was once an ocean and, in the 22nd century, is becoming one again. A three-dimensional map of Mars shows that the planet is a land of extremes, with the highest, lowest and smoothest land forms found in the Solar System. There's about 19 to 20 miles difference between the highest and the lowest points on Mars, about 1 ½ times the range of elevation seen on Earth.

In 2150 the first stage of Martian terraformation has been completed, and many parts of Mars are habitable. The atmosphere is still very tenuous and hostile outside of the deep craters that hold the cities and the Atmosphere Plants, but if one has a small supply of oxygen and is willing to go slowly, one can travel just about anywhere on Mars without a spacesuit.

The terraformation of Mars began early in the 21st century when a shower of meteors slammed into the planet. Although this was a natural phenomenon, scientists on Earth saw that this was a wonderful opportunity to begin the terraformation of the red planet. They quickly sent a number of unmanned rockets programmed to release of a large number of genetically-engineered microbes that were designed to break down the rock into breathable atmosphere. The first manned landing took place in 2014, when the Captain of the NASA

spacecraft *Ares*, Lee High Eagle, set foot on the planet. To hurry the process of terraformation, a few large Atmosphere Plants were set up in some specially engineered deep craters so that a few cities could quickly be established. Those plants have been maintained, and have given the crater cities a denser atmosphere than the rest of Mars.

One most unfortunate and unanticipated side-effect of introducing microbes from Earth to Mars was not discovered until decades later: the rapid spread and mutation of certain strains of the microbes, which produced a hallucinogen like cocaine or marijuana, only far more potent and dangerous. This drug, of course, was made illegal – but that didn't stop Certain Individuals from creating illegal underground bases on Mars to manufacture and export it. Human foes, most of them from South America, are behind this industry. When the Starmen go to Mars to look for ancient abandoned Martian bases, they learn that these secret sites make fine hiding places for unscrupulous drug dealers.

Mars is still under terraformation. New forms of life are being engineered and released in an attempt to render Mars even more habitable. The process is a slow one and has had some serious setbacks, especially during the Collapse when many inhabitants died and the survivors returned to Earth, but it is progressing.

Currently, close to 20 million people live on the cities of Mars. Of those, 10 million live in the large crater that houses Eagle City, the capital of Mars. Named after Lee High Eagle, Eagle City has become the grand port of Mars, with a large space center, military defense outpost, and important refineries.

Eagle City is located in Crater 91, about 40 to 50 miles across, and very deep. It is located at about 25 degrees North and 276 degrees West. (The Pathfinder landed at 19.33 degrees North and 33.55 degrees West.) The atmospheric pressure is not artificial, but is generated naturally. NASA chose a deep crater as well as an expansive one, to establish the most Earth-like environment. It has to have fields to grow crops, large factories, houses, spaceports, mines, etc. Terraformation is very expensive: NASA would want to do this only once, and to get the most for their money they chose a crater large enough to serve their needs for quite some time.

Economically, Mars has some importance, but it is not as important as the Asteroid Belt (the center for mining heavy metals) or the Moon (the center for manufacturing). Mars is vitally important as a supply station for the asteroid mining colonies: the Asteroid mines get all of their supplies, food, and air from manufacturing facilities on Mars.

The Martians are adapted toward the thin end of the Earth's atmospheric pressure range, like people living high in the Andes, only more so. However, the Martian atmosphere has some rare trace elements necessary for a Martian's full health, and difficult for a humans to tolerate for lengthy periods of time with taking a dietary supplement.

When people of Earth began to terraform Mars in the early 21st century, they had not discovered that there were any ancient Martians. Therefore, the plan was to create an atmosphere similar to Earth's. When the Martians were discovered and later began to emerge and restore their planet, the terraformation process had to be altered to suit the planet's natural inhabitants. This is not difficult because of

the similarity of the atmospheres; it was, however, vital for the Martians' survival.

After Mars was changed so it suited the Martians, humans could live in it, but its thinness and atmospheric "tang" provided by the trace elements made it very uncomfortable for those humans who weren't used to it—and even those who were used to it couldn't remain out in it for extended periods of time without the dietary supplement.

The ancient Martians, once they reclaimed their planet, out of gratitude to Earth and as a sign of partnership, left Crater 91, Earth's original base where Eagle City is located, to the humans as a permanent base, and helped them set it up so that, inside the crater, the environment is very Earthy. Outside, though, the environment is that of ancient Mars.

On Earth, or in any situation of Earthly atmosphere, such as a spacecraft or colony, the Martians are able to move freely with the use of a small adapted NPAC which actually thins rather than compresses the air. For short periods of time—perhaps a day or even two—they do not even need this, although they are not terribly comfortable. For them, it is similar to an extremely humid day.

THE ASTEROID BELT: The Asteroid Belt hasn't been explored much at all. Ceres is the largest and most important asteroid in the system, with a population of around 100,000. It doubles as a spaceport, and is a stopping-over and refueling point on the long voyage between Earth and the outer planets. Advances in propulsion have vastly cut the time it takes to get from Earth to deep space, and many flights now

bypass Ceres completely, depending on the relative location of the ports of the journey.

Besides the one passenger base at Ceres, there are a few mining bases and perhaps a small colony here and there. There are no other population centers. The Asteroid Belt supplies most of the Solar System's minerals and raw materials. Starlight Enterprise does most of the ore mining and refining, although the Belt houses a number of competing companies. However, there are many independent miners, living a life not too far different from the near-lawless, gold-rush mentality of California in 1849. The world of inhabited asteroids is a true frontier life: it breeds hale, hearty, strong people.

The way it usually works is this: many asteroids have a small mine or two from which the raw ore is extracted. The ore is then shot, via an electromagnetic launcher, to Starlight's sprawling refineries on the Moon. Once it is refined and processed, the metals are then re-launched to wherever they are needed.

Minerals and other raw materials are found in the greatest quantities in the Asteroid Belt. However, mining is difficult because in the 22nd century, the Belt is about 90% unexplored, and the movement of the asteroids is extremely complex. Although a number of attempts have been made to chart, track, and predict the orbits of all the asteroids, this has remained a frequently frustrated dream. Mercury is the planet richest in minerals, and has the potential, if the hostile environment can be overcome, to produce a lot of important ore, but it will likely always be second to the Belt. Independent asteroid miners drift around the asteroids,

hoping to make a lucky strike. It is thought to be the home to many gangs of pirates or rebels, but so far no one has been able to amass the strength to throw them out and keep them out for good. An occasional raid might be made, but the asteroids cover too large an area to police effectively. Many stories have been told of strange things sighted in the Belt, but so far nothing has been verified.

THE OUTER PLANETS: Because of the enormous difficulty and expense of getting into deep space, relatively little has been done with any of the Outer Planets, except as noted below. The Inner Planets offered greater rewards and obviously were much more accessible, so aside from a couple of Deep Space Expeditions in the early 2100's, the Outer Planets have mostly been left alone. If a faster and cheaper method of propulsion can be developed, the exploration and colonization of the Outer Planets could take place.

JUPITER: Jupiter is the first planet in the System with rings, including one described as a "hula-hoop wobbling around its fat waist." The rings consist of tiny dust particles kicked up by space rocks hitting Jupiter's four inner moons and dragged into orbit around the solar system's largest planet. Jupiter's rings, unlike the famous ones around the planet Saturn, cannot be seen from Earth. They were only detected by the Voyager 1 spacecraft in 1979. Except for some thorough examination by passing space ships, neither Jupiter nor its moons have been approached by humans. There are plans, however, to investigate Europa, one of the moons of Jupiter, whose climate has the greatest possibility of sustaining life.

SATURN: Saturn was first explored in the Deep Space Expedition of 2130. Not only was the expedition a success, but it resulted in the astounding and completely unexpected first meeting of Earthmen with intelligent extraterrestrial life. The expedition discovered humanoid beings barely half a foot tall who live on Titan, the mysterious great ringed planet's largest moon. Unfortunately, an accident with the reactor gave much of the crew a good dose of hard radiation, and grounded nearly all of them on the Moon for life.

The Titanians (as they were named) are a highly skilled people. They can live in deep space for short periods of time, do not need oxygen, and can "rough it out" in an atmosphere like Mars (although Earth's atmosphere is a bit thick for them). They have developed a large network of cities, and seem to be a prospering race. They have great skill for building complex machines, and are also adept at building simple spring and gear-driven apparatus. After the members of the Expedition discovered them, the Titanians were taught about electricity, electronics, rocket propulsion, and many other advances that Earth science had developed. They showed great aptitude and learned quickly. They have become experts at electronics, and are already beginning to construct their own rockets, computers, and advanced machines.

There is a small settlement of Earthmen on Titan, but due to the vast distance between Earth and Saturn and the hostility of the atmosphere on Titan, it remains very small. Other than that, Earth has not established any colonies in the Saturn system, but once a faster drive becomes available it is predicted that it will become a crowded place.

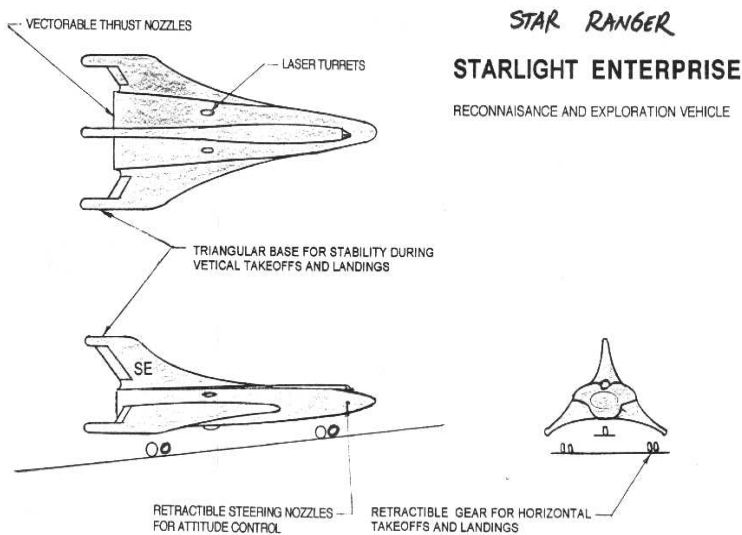
URANUS and NEPTUNE: Little is known of these two very similar planets except what space probes have revealed. Uranus is the only location in the Solar System that has enormous quantities of hydrogen. Neptune may have some sort of liquid water ocean and there is a layer in the atmosphere where, surprisingly, the temperature is quite hospitable. Additionally, Neptune has an interesting moon or two—one being Triton.

PLUTO: In a burst of enthusiasm for interplanetary exploration, sparked in part by a world-wide desire to do a Great Deed in the generation after the Collapse, an expedition of explorers was sent out to reach the farthest extremity of the Solar System, bypassing even the nearer of the Outer Planets, and land on Pluto. The first attempt, made in 2117, ended in disaster when the expedition suffered system failure somewhere between the orbits of Saturn and Uranus. Stirred by this failure, a second and successful attempt was made in 2124. The success was mostly symbolic, as the initial exploration of Pluto led to the not-surprising conclusion that the outermost planet is barren. However, the technological triumph of the expedition made possible the exploration of Saturn and its moons a mere six years later.

THE *STAR RANGER*

The *Star Ranger*, the spacecraft used by the Starmen, is described as a “Starlight Enterprise Reconnaissance and Exploration Vehicle.” The rocket is designed to be able to takeoff and land both vertically and horizontally. Using the atmosphere as a source of lift is most efficient for horizontal takeoff and landing, so the rocket must have lifting surfaces and directional control surfaces. Therefore, it has wheels for

landing like an airplane, but also has three tail fins for whenever vertical landing and takeoff are required. When the Star Ranger must land and take off where no atmosphere exists, it must use its propulsive force to lift off and to ease into a landing. In such a case the triangular fin arrangement provides a stable base. The main engines' exhaust nozzles are vectorable to maintain vertical alignment for both takeoff and landing. The small vectorable nozzles in the nose are used for attitude control when the main propulsion engines are not on. During space travel, it uses SE antimatter drive.



The image Bill Baumann drew of the Star Ranger

NPACs

The “breathing gear” used by the Martians is a compact nuclear powered air compressor or NPAC (ancient Martian technology) which looks as if it has some sort of filtered intake and is capable of compressing the thin atmosphere during the terraformation process. It has a large thick disc-like device with intake vents, and resembles a round or oval backpack. There is one central unit with a large intake valve. Its purpose is to draw in a too-thin atmosphere, compress it, and make it breathable to the wearer. It is not an air tank, as air tanks last for a limited time, and getting one recharged every few hours would place a serious cramp in a week-long trek through the Martian desert. All that is really necessary for an NPAC is an intake, a helmet with a visor and air tubes going to it, and some sort of suit to keep off the fierce heat, keep in some cool air, and to protect the wearer from an occasional dust storm.

THE TITANIANS

Although Titanians can live for a time outside a controlled environment they do not want to make a habit of it; it would be similar to humans standing outside in a heavy rain. Whenever they travel with the Starmen, the Starmen’s spacesuits have a pack specially designed for carrying Titanians. It can provide them with their own environment, and can be detached and used as a small vehicle. Normally it attaches like a backpack, riding high up so the Titanians can see over their host’s shoulder.

STARLIGHT ENTERPRISE

In 2090, the Collapse had just about ended. Most of the world was trying to put itself back together, and to rebuild

from the enormous devastation of the period. One of the world's most pressing needs was raw materials: with most of the world's mines and processing plants destroyed or irradiated, ore of any kind was in great demand.

Recreating the world's mines with the limited technology that had survived proved to be a difficult if not impossible task. It occurred to a number of people that a better idea would be to go to the Moon, establish bases and mines there, and then ship the processed ore to Earth.

With this goal in mind, a number of people started firms, built rockets, and attempted to build lunar bases. One of these people was a fellow by the name of Thomas Starlight, and in 2089 he founded a company later known as Starlight Enterprise.

Tom Starlight was an Earthman. He was born on Earth in 2060, in the middle of the Collapse but after its most violent period. Tom was a resourceful, energetic, inventive person who personally designed the hybrid rockets, bases, and mining equipment used by his company to mine the Moon.

Due partly to his business savvy, partly to his inventions, and partly to blind luck, Starlight Enterprise (or "SE") soon proved to be a big success. By 2100 SE had expanded and was by far the largest lunar mining corporation, and Tom had already started expanding to asteroid mining.

Tom quickly capitalized on his phenomenal success, and soon established large manufacturing plants on the Moon. He mined the ore, processed it, produced goods out of it, and then shipped it all over the Solar System—and made quite a fortune doing it. Tom was fanatical about producing high-

quality, tough, and durable goods, and soon the SE brand was known throughout the Solar System as being *the* best brand-name for heavy equipment. SE designed and manufactured products like mining equipment, fission and fusion reactors, spaceships, basic building materials needed in the colonies, robots, and more.

It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that SE single-handedly colonized the Solar System. Tom always took the long view of things, and was content to lose big money in the short run in order to achieve long-range goals. With this in mind, Tom often founded colonies that made little or no money, and often spent billions of dollars on expensive research projects that would not come to fruition for a hundred years.

One of Tom's early problems was a lack of well-trained men. Tom wanted to recruit bright, resourceful people to explore and colonize the Solar System, but the educational system of that day was not turning out people of the caliber he wanted.

To remedy this problem, in 2103 Tom founded the Starlight Academy. The Academy, funded and backed by SE, was the most up-to-date university in existence, and many of the top minds in the Solar System taught there. The standards at the Academy were very, very rigorous: only top-caliber people could even hope to squeak through; the lazy did not have a chance. Many people applied to the Academy, and only a few were accepted—and fewer still managed to graduate. A degree from the Academy was an impressive achievement indeed, and those who had such degrees were in extremely high demand.

Of all the graduates from the Academy, the very best and finest went on to become Starmen. These Starmen were SE's explorers: SE outfitted them with ships and equipment, and dispatched them to explore, colonize, and discover the most remote and hostile corners of the Solar System. Starmen were respected, honored, and revered—and they were rare. By 2150 when the series begins, only 56 people carried the honored title of Starman.

Tom worked hard to ensure that SE never devolved into a cold, dry, corporation focused on making money. To Tom, space exploration was something he did because it was fun and rewarding; he tried to make money simply because he needed money to do his exploration. It was colonization and settlement that was his real goal, and profits always took the back seat—although Tom did work very, very hard to ensure that he did have the money to achieve his goals.

Tom (and his son Richard, who followed in his footsteps) was very much a hands-on leader. As often as he could he was out in the field, designing new equipment, talking with employees, and making sure that everything was running smoothly. Sitting in a corporate office at a desk did not appeal to him; he wanted to be out there doing things.

Tom saw to it that SE was very concerned about its employees, and tried to make SE a good place to work. He was concerned about the welfare of his workers, and tried to give SE a family atmosphere. While SE was never perfect, in a large part Tom succeeded: jobs at SE were very much sought after, and equally hard to get.

Tom wanted to make sure that his employees had the same attitude he did. He didn't want people working for him who

simply saw it as a job; what he wanted were people working because they loved it, because they liked SE's goals, and because they *wanted* to be out there in space.

One of Tom's goals was to set up a mining colony on the planet Mercury. Mercury had some of the Solar System's most fantastic sources of raw material, and Tom wanted to start tapping the planet's resources. Mercury, however, was incredibly hostile. With surface temperatures of over 600 degrees on the sun side of the planet, and 450 below zero on the other, these extremes doomed all of his early attempts at settlement. Eventually Mercury claimed him as well: when Tom visited his colony on Mercury in 2119, an accident wiped out the entire colony and killed both him and his wife.

At this point, the firm passed into the hands of his son Richard Starlight who continued to run the company along the lines that his father had. Under his guidance, SE continued to expand into new fields, settle new worlds, and grow in importance. Richard made some strides on Mercury and was able to set up a small permanent mining base, but as of 2151 the problems of mining Mercury have not been fully licked.

Summaries of the Original 23 Books

In the beginning, back in 1999 before the first book was written, the Starman Team envisioned 23 stories in what we then called “the David Foster series”. Below are the titles and summaries of the original 23 books; the titles and the summaries were written by Jon. Although the Starman series eventually weighed in at only ten books, it did retain the central plotline of the original 23; in fact, in many ways it went beyond the plan of these first titles. Moreover, some of the ideas in books that were never written were adapted in some of the short stories or included in published books.

When the list was first made available, Jon Cooper wrote *Editor’s Note: The following is a brief summary of the events of each title. For those interested in writing any of these books, more detailed information is available. We kept the information brief here because we didn’t want to spoil the entire series for our readers!*

1. Assault on Mars
2. The Runaway Asteroid
3. Journey to the Tenth Planet
4. Descent Into Europa
5. Operation Luna
6. The Lost Race of Mars
7. The Fight For Uranus
8. The Secret of the Asteroids
9. Project Orion
10. The Search for the Xenobots
11. The Caves of Mercury
12. Trouble on Titan
13. Danger at L5
14. The Children of Neptune
15. Moonquake!
16. The Rings of Saturn

- 17. The Venus Project
- 18. The Starlight Maneuver
- 19. Star Station One
- 20. Voyage to Polaris
- 21. The Door to Yesterday
- 22. The Return of Mars
- 23. The Last Command

1. *Assault on Mars*

When the series opens, new Starman David Foster is on Mars for his first assignment. Pirates from the Asteroid Belt, in a sudden attack, take control of the Martian settlements. Aided by a number of treacherous colonists, the pirates blockade the mines in the Asteroid Belt, vital to Earth's well-being and for which Mars is the primary supply post. The pirates also withhold from Earth the medicines which only Mars supplies. Unless Earth hands over control to the pirates, human civilization in the Solar System will suffer grievously.

Not having faced hostilities in nearly a century, Earth is ill-prepared for any defensive action. However, new Starmen Joseph Taylor and Mark Seaton are called on to make a secret entry into Mars and team up with David Foster, who alerted the authorities to the full situation before being forced to go into hiding. Equipped with a new, experimental, and top secret antimatter drive, the two Starmen and their undercover partner, Steve Cliff, enter Martian airspace disguised in *The Spud Peeler*, a decrepit cargo ship. Their assignment is to find David Foster, sabotage the pirates' communications network and weaponry, and allow the forces of Earth to land safely and free Mars from the assault by the pirates.

This book introduces David Foster and his companions, tells how they become a team, and presents the world of the Starmen—filled with adventure and beauty, supported by the best current and theoretical science, and showing that good triumphs over evil.

2. *The Runaway Asteroid*

Angered by the defeat of their plans of conquest, the defeated conquerors direct their secret asteroid base on a collision course with Earth. The pirates are certain that the asteroid will hit Earth and destroy it. Everything is in their favor: not only is the asteroid naturally very dark and practically impossible to spot against space, but the ancient Martians outfitted it with a sheathing device that makes it impossible to spot via radar. No one will see it until it is practically on top of Earth, and by then it will be too late to divert the hundred-mile-long asteroid—and the Earth will be destroyed!

3. *Journey to the Tenth Planet*

Starlight Enterprise made an astonishing discovery: Pluto is *not* the most distant planet in the Solar System. Long hidden because of its bizarre orbit but discovered by records found on the ancient asteroid base, SE decided to send an expedition to explore it.

Because of the immense distance between the new planet and Earth (close to ten billion miles), SE places the Trio and a crew in a new experimental spaceship powered by a new kind of fission-fusion breeder reactor.

The goal of the expedition is to establish a base there to explore what is thought to be one of an ancient race's jumping-off points to other Solar Systems. The three Starmen are on board as part of the crew. Trouble hits the ship almost as soon as it leaves orbit, and continues to plague it all the way there. When the ship lands and the base is founded, a dangerous mutiny sweeps the crew. Who is trying to stop the expedition, and why? Is there any truth in the rumor that the Tenth Planet holds the secret to interstellar travel? The Trio race against time to find out — before it's too late!

4. *Descent Into Europa*

A probe to Jupiter's moon Europa reveals that a substance found on Europa is useful for forming the hybrid

multidimensional materials necessary to create the interstellar drive discovered on the Tenth Planet. Starlight Enterprise is very interested, and so dispatch an experimental high-tech spaceship, capable of acting as an undersea submarine to explore and perhaps colonize this dangerous underwater region. The three Starmen, accompanied by a small gathering of experts, explore the area and try to learn what happened to the vanished crew members of a prior expedition that landed many decades ago. They also try to get to the bottom of rumors that there is life on Europa, and none of it is hospitable...

5. *Operation Luna*

For centuries, Earth assumed that the Moon was dead. No life forms were ever discovered on it; no ruins or relics from any old civilization were ever found buried. As a result, the Moon was classified as an uninteresting site and no one ever bothered to explore it carefully.

Then one day a Starlight-owned mine on the Moon opened up a new level, and found a large complex of tunnels—artificial tunnels, complete with the alien machinery that carved them out. The news rocked the Solar System: someone had been living on the Moon!

Starlight Enterprise dispatched the three Starmen, along with an exploratory team, to examine the tunnels and see where they lead. The tunnels are old and treacherous, however, and it turns out that they are not the only ones interested in uncovering their secrets. The stakes are raised extremely high when the exploring Starmen discover a chamber containing what are apparently mummies of an alien race...

6. *The Lost Race of Mars*

After examining the ancient ruins on the Moon, Starlight has decided to send another expedition to Mars. SE Labs finally remembered that the three Starmen came across a mysterious old man while trekking across the desert in *Assault on Mars*. Could the ancient race still be alive?

The new expedition quickly gets into trouble when it accidentally comes across a vast illegal operation that is engaged in the production of a highly illegal hallucinogen more dangerous and deadly than cocaine. The operators of the syndicate have a huge interest in seeing that the Trio never returns to tell their story. The chances of the Trio are slim — or are they? The Trio engages in a race against time to find the lost race of Mars before the Syndicate finds them!

7. The Fight For Uranus

Starlight Enterprise wants to start development on a new hybrid fusion drive with enough power to drive a ship to the stars. To work on their drive, though, they need a to build a research station on a planet that has access to enormous quantities of hydrogen—and the distant planet Uranus is the only location in the Solar System that fits the bill.

SE decided to send a ship to establish a colony and research station on the surface of the planet, and they send the Starmen along to help. As is well known, the surface of Uranus proves incredibly hostile — but not as hostile as certain special interests that want to make certain that Starlight Enterprise never develops FTL technology. Who are these people, and how are they sabotaging the works? The Trio rushes to find the answer to these secrets and save planet Uranus from nuclear destruction!

8. The Secret of the Asteroids

It has long been known that the asteroids have many secrets. Many asteroid miners have reported strange sightings and odd happenings. Some curious machines have been found. Odd stories abound; old men who have lived in the asteroids all their life have had many curious experiences.

When an asteroid miner stumbled onto Mars and claimed to have discovered an enormous alien starship, SE decided to get to the bottom of the rumors. They dispatched the three Starmen to go with the asteroid miner and examine seriously the reports of the strange happenings in the Belt.

The task of the Starmen is hampered with the asteroid miner suddenly disappears. Tracing him proves difficult: the Belt is a big place, and is filled with criminals and pirates of every type. The Starmen soon discover that the alien ship has some incredible powers, and are plunged in a race against time to find it before a vast criminal syndicate discovers it and puts it to its own purposes...

9. *Project Orion*

Equipped with a large supply of mineral from the European colony, data from the colony on Uranus, and information from the Martians on how to build a good faster-than-light propulsion system, Starlight Enterprise has begun constructing an interstellar ship named *Orion* in the Sahara Desert. The project is under tight security, but evidently not tight enough: classified secrets are leaking out of the project and experiments are failing for unexplained reasons. Things began to get serious when a top scientist and one of the Trio suddenly disappear. Who is behind these things? Does this tie in with the vast Sahara reclamation project that is going on? Are the enemies human, or are they receiving help from the hostile civilization that destroyed the Martians many millennia ago? The book comes to a climax when the powerful hybrid reactor becomes unstable and threatens to explode—and the explosion would pack enough power to vaporize the entire station and turn the entire Sahara into glass!

10. *The Search for the Xenobots*

Centuries ago, a race of alien beings invaded the Solar System. They were repulsed, but only at the cost of destroying the Martian civilization. Now the Xenobots are returning, and are still as warlike as ever—their plan to destroy Earth's new starship *Polaris* was defeated by only the narrowest of margins.

It is known that the mysterious Xenobots are plotting some disastrous new plan. They must be stopped, but first they must be found—but no one knows where their hidden base is. The clues to this mysterious race are scattered all over the Solar System,

and lead the Starmen on a wild chase through the swamps of Venus, to the station at Ceres, to Titan, and finally back to Earth itself. Just where are they located, how do they tie in with the supposedly defeated renegade pirates hidden in the asteroids, and why are they so interested in Professor Clive's solar research station? The Starmen must discover the answer soon, and time is running out!

11. *The Caves of Mercury*

With the Xenobots temporarily defeated, the Starmen turn their attention to a local mystery. It has long been known that the broiling planet of Mercury had an extensive underground network of caves. As of yet only a very preliminary exploration has been made, so the famous three Starmen are sent in to explore. They are accompanied by some Titanians, scientists, and by a group of Martian scientists who want to find what they think was an ancient Martian outpost buried somewhere deep in Mercury.

The planet quickly proves more hostile than anticipated—incredibly hostile. Hot magma, poisonous corrosive gases, and intense radiation are only part of the problem. The intense electromagnetic radiation constantly fouls up their suits, and much of their equipment won't work. To compound the problem, it is soon clear that the ancient Martians put up an elaborate security network around their city intended to keep all comers out. It is a race to see if they can penetrate the elaborate Martian defenses—or even make it back to the surface alive!

12. *Trouble on Titan*

For several years, the native inhabitants of Titan have lived in peace with the residents of Earth. Trade had sprung up between the two races, and Titan has become home to a booming colony. When the Titanians were discovered, the race was somewhat primitive, but they have caught on quickly—very quickly, in fact: most of their society has caught up to the space age, and the Titanians are already designing a first-class starship.

Someone, however, is stirring up trouble on Titan. Resentment is growing against the men of Earth, and Starlight wants to know why. Who would want to cause trouble between them and the humans? The three Starmen had better find out—and soon, for already the aliens are breaking relations with Earth, expelling all humans, and refusing any human access to Titan...

13. *Danger at L5*

The space station at LaGrange Point Five at Earth is of great importance to the Solar System. First built and launched by Jerry Rigg in the early 21st century, the station has grown and expanded until it is a major point of commerce and industry.

The station at L5 is in grave danger, however. For some unknown reason, the fusion reactors are no longer working correctly: no one can keep them online, and the finest minds in the Solar System cannot figure out why. At the same time, the plant that provides a livable atmosphere for L5 is also failing, and for equally obscure reasons.

The three Starmen are sent in to investigate. What is destroying the L5 station? Is it some strange quirk of space, or is someone making a deliberate attempt to destroy L5? The Starmen have got to find out, and quickly, for if the problem is not solved soon L5 will have to be evacuated — and destroyed!

14. *The Children of Neptune*²³

Starlight Enterprise sends a large research ship to Neptune, with the Starmen and a large crew of scientists and researchers. Some of the scientists will test some newly-developed equipment, metals, and “active shielding” that are very useful on cold, extreme places with high gravity. SE plans to use this equipment in deep-space colonization and mining. Other

²³ This title was selected as a tribute to the Dig Allen series, which was the original inspiration for the Starman series. *The Children of Neptune* was the title of the seventh book in the Dig Allen series, but was never written.

scientists will conclude several decades of research on an antigravity procedure with a thorough test in the field. Neptune is selected, as it is the last planet in the Solar System which has not been visited by humans. It is suitable for the tests, and the Starmen are charged with exploring and mapping the eighth planet, with its amazing extremes and harsh environment.

The first but temporary landing site is Triton, a moon of Neptune, in order to do some careful, detailed, and close-up investigation of the planet before attempting a manned landing. After determining that they can land safely, they do so and the different groups begin to work. As the others are conducting the experiments, the Starmen begin the process of exploration and discovery.

Much to their surprise, they find evidence of a previous landing. There are some tools, some prints, some signs of digging, etc. A cursory examination shows that these signs, although few, are scattered all over the planet. This shows that they were not made by any native intelligent inhabitants (of which there are none), but by visitors. They are dated at more than 20,000 years in the past. As the primary purpose of the exploration goes on, speculation runs off and on throughout the book: Who visited Neptune first? Who were its first children?

15. *Moonquake!*

The citizens of the Moon were flabbergasted one day when a minor seismic disturbance shook the pole. The scientists at Starlight were taken by surprise, for the Moon was geologically dead: there couldn't *possibly* be earthquakes on the Moon!

That didn't keep it from happening, though, and soon afterward it happened again—and again. Soon the scientists started getting worried, for the moonquakes were getting more and more severe. All that was needed was one good quake and all the citizens on the Moon would be dead—and that quake could come at any time...

16. *The Rings of Saturn*

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...

17. *The Venus Project*

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!

18. *The Starlight Maneuver*

The Xenobots are becoming alarmed at the recent successes by the Earth and Mars alliance. Earth and Mars are getting stronger and stronger. Mars has been terraformed. Venus has been terraformed. Mercury is being mined. The Asteroids are colonized. If the Xenobots don't do something quickly, Earth will gain access to the stars and will almost certainly wipe them out.

It is very clear who is behind Earth's growing power: the one and only Richard Starlight. If he were removed, they reasoned, the rest of the Solar System would crumble very easily. They determined that Richard Starlight must die, and he must die soon...

19. *Star Station One*

Earth's first interstellar starship *Polaris* is almost complete, and its crew is being picked out. Soon the starship will be launched to the stars—and if it works, a host of others will follow.

In view of future events, Starlight Enterprise has decided to set up a spaceport on the distant planet of Pluto. The planet is certain to become a major stopping point in the future; it will be the Solar System's gateway to the stars.

In the final few months before the launching of the ship, SE sent a crew of engineers, along with the three Starmen, to the cold and distant planet Pluto to set up a spaceport there. The Starmen had some qualms about going, for the base at Pluto is certain to become a key resource in the near future. The Xenobots were certain to oppose the creation of the base, and do all that was in their power to stop it. The Starmen requested that a fleet of battle cruisers be sent to protect them, but SE declined: they were certain that since the Xenobots had been expelled from the Solar System (in *The Search for the Xenobots*), they would not be a problem. It turns out that the Starmen were right...

20. *Voyage to Polaris*

Earth's first starship is finally complete. She has been tested, outfitted, and manned. Her destination: the star Polaris, which seems to hold special significance (for an unknown reason) in ancient Martian records.

The ship is launched, and when out in deep space it creates a wormhole, which it enters. Sustaining the wormhole proved to take far more power than had been expected, though, and the wormhole collapsed before the ship could leave. The result: while the ship still made it to Polaris, she was very badly damaged.

The crew managed to land on the planet specified by the Martians, and examined their ship. Most of the ship proved to be repairable, but the spacedrive and hybrid reactor were a total loss. The crew and Starmen were stranded!

There was still a chance, however: the planet held a vast, crumbling city built by the ancient Martians. It was believed that there might be a couple of starships hidden somewhere in the ruin; perhaps, if they could be found, enough parts could be gathered to build a working one and fly home.

Trouble develops when the Xenobots discover their presence at Polaris, and send hordes of troops to find and capture them. They must somehow evade their captors long enough to discover the ships and fly home. They must act quickly, for if the Xenobots grow tired of searching for them, they may decide simply to destroy the entire city—and them with it!

21. *The Door to Yesterday*

At the end of *Voyage to Polaris*, David Foster is captured by the Xenobots and the rest of the expedition returns home without him. SE and the other two Starmen are desperate to find some means to rescue him. Now that the ancient Martians are on the point of emerging from their underground cities, the ancient documents become vital not only for reestablishing the planet, but for learning more about the Xenobots. Frantic for information so that they can effect a rescue, the Starmen scour

the documents available to them.

They are stunned to the point of amazement, which gradually turns into desperate hope, when they find that the ancient Martians had a legend that, somewhere “way out in the Oort Cloud beyond the solar system, where the comets are born” there was something called the Door to Yesterday. This device, according to the legend, was created by an unknown intelligence that lived in an unknown system, and slowly drifted through space for millennia until it landed deep inside the Oort Cloud and was held there. The legend has it that the device was very hard to locate and, once found, very hard to use (it was disguised as something else, perhaps) but it had the power to move the user into the past or future.

The legend of the Door as a time machine causes the Starmen to see time travel as a desperate gamble to go back in time to a point before David was captured and avoid the circumstances that led to his capture. They determine to make the attempt to find and use this legendary device, if it exists. The Xenobots’ human spies learn of this gambit, and inform their bio-metallic masters. Of course the Xenos want the device very badly for their own purposes as well as to thwart the rescue, and it’s a race to see who can find it first, in the dark unexpected and unexplored Cloud the unexpected abounds. The Xeno ship sheathes itself from the beginning and tracks the *Star Ranger II* closely to the point where the *Star Ranger II* initiates Wormhole Drive and is drawn into the vortex of the beginning of the wormhole. The Starmen are unaware of the other ship until it is too late. The presence of the second ship throws off the WD calculations seriously, so the point of destination is short of the Oort Cloud—thus precipitating the race to the Door through normal space outside the Solar System.

22. *The Return of Mars*

The Starmen return from the Oort Cloud, and are greeted with cheers by the worried men at home. They return to the study of the ancient Martian documents so that they can locate the

home of the Xenobots—and the only way to do that is to recreate the ancient Martian networks and cities.

Soon, the ancient cities are uncovered and re-inhabited. The enormous fleets of ships come out of hiding and are rebuilt and enabled. Ancient bases, battle stations, warships, satellites; with the help of Earth and the Martians, soon their civilization is rebuilt and re-inhabited.

This rebuilding of Mars does not go without notice. The Xenobots are aware of the danger of a combined Earth and Mars, and go all-out to stop them. Explosions, sabotage, and an attempt to create ill-feeling between Mars and Earth are all desperately attempted.

David, held captive at the extra-solar Xenobot headquarters, learns of a desperate plan to invade the Solar System and, using small satellites, to destroy the hybrid antimatter power stations. If the power stations can be made unstable, they will not only wipe out most of Earth and Mars but also destroy their power supply—making them easy prey for the invading Xenobots. Using all his skill, David sends a message to Earth. The message must be received in time, and Earth must find a way to stop them, for the entire Solar System hangs in the balance.

23. The Last Command

At last, Earth and Mars are ready to go out and defeat their enemies, the Xenobots. With everything in order, the President makes a formal declaration of war and sends out the combined fleets of Earth and Mars against the alien invaders—and the second interstellar war begins.

The battle wages far and wide. While the Xenobots are more numerous and cover many star systems, they are very weak; their ships and armaments cannot begin to compare with those of Earth. They have had many centuries of years of battle experience, however, while Earth has never fought an interstellar war. It is a close battle—very close—and after a while it looks as though the experience and fierceness of the Xenobots just might give them victory. The early gains of Earth begin to erode, and a

sudden raid vaporizes the outpost on the tenth planet. Something will have to happen—and that something comes through David Foster.

David, who was captured by the Xenobots in *Voyage to Polaris*, has been held prisoner in the capital city. The Xenobots largely ignored him; they looked upon him as a bargaining piece—a hostage—if they ever got into trouble. When the war began, however, a group of Xenobots who were unhappy with the tyrannical home rule rescued him. They could not return him to Earth, for they had no means of leaving the planet—but they could use him here at home. They heard of his exploits when the pirates took over Mars, and they had him head up similar underground efforts here.

At first David's efforts are somewhat limited, for there is little that he can do in the tightly-controlled capital. One day, however, he discovers a priceless secret: the ships in the fleet are powered directly by the sun! The Xenobots were never able to harness fusion or antimatter, and instead developed a device that could mine the sun for energy. That explained why they always lost battles held in deep space: cut off from their power source, they were like sitting ducks.

After hacking into a central computer, David discovered that the ships couldn't mine stars directly: they could only mine the stars after establishing a small space station in orbit around that sun. The bulky equipment on the station mined the star; the warships then tapped into the station. If these solar stations could be destroyed, the Xenobots would lose their energy source and would be forced to surrender.

Acting on this information, Earth located and destroyed the Xenobot energy stations orbiting their star, and the stations orbiting other stars controlled by the Xenobots. The battle then moved to the Xenobot home system, where David was held captive. The power station there was tightly protected; Earth was unable to reach it. Earth was equally unable to break through or conquer their army; while they could prevent them from leaving, they couldn't destroy them—and if they didn't, it was only a

matter of time before they came back even stronger than ever. Someone from the inside was going to have to destroy that final power station, and that someone could only be David.

It was painfully obvious, however, that it was a suicide mission. It would be very difficult—practically impossible—just to get to the station. Whoever got to it, though, had to destroy it as quickly as possible, or the Xenobot troops would come storming in. Once the station was destroyed, however, one couldn't leave (as all their ships are powered through that station!)—and with no power, the fields would collapse and the station would explode, killing all on board!

DURING THE ACTIVE PERIOD **(2000-2005)**

David wrote the first Starman book, then called *Assault On Mars*, in about three months. He sent a master copy to Fred Woodworth, who printed 500 copies. Each one had to be handbound, which required approximately one hour's work for each book. In June 2000, David drove out to visit Fred in Tucson, Arizona to help him bind nearly 100 copies, and then take several heavy boxes back to his home in California to bind the rest. Early in July, the first ad was placed on various websites.

The First Ad

The Starman Series

by Michael D. Cooper

© 2000 David Baumann, Jon Cooper, Mike Dodd

July 2, 2000

Starman #1, *Assault on Mars* is now available!

Starman #1 is now in print! We have printed 500 books (100 of which have been sold). Each book is hardback (with a full-color wrap dustjacket) and carefully bound by hand. If you would like to

order one, e-mail us and we will tell you our mailing address.

Each hardbound book costs

\$20, and that includes priority-mail shipping and handling to any United States or Canadian location (a \$3.50 value!). All profits made on this book will go into a fund that will be used to print Starman #2 and the rest of the series. The cost of printing Starman #1 was underwritten by the generosity of several people, but we would like to print #2 out of our profits. To afford even a minimal print run for book #2 we will need to sell at least 200 copies of Starman #1.

Also, work is well under way on the next three Starman Books! The manuscript for #2 THE RUNAWAY ASTEROID should be written by Fall 2000, #3 JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET by the winter of 2001 and #4 DESCENT INTO EUROPA by next spring. Stay tuned!

The Text on Early Endflaps

The text on the endflaps of a book with a dust jacket (also used on the back of a book in casewrap format) is designed to create interest in a possible reader. It should introduce the story in a compelling way without providing spoilers.

*THE STARMEN~
MAKING THE 22ND CENTURY
AN AGE OF HOPE AND ADVENTURE*

At the beginning of the 21st century, the world economy boomed. Within two decades, however, a severe, global depression set in. Governments fell and the infrastructure of the planet decayed. The age became known as the Collapse, characterized by unrestrained criminal opportunism.

Starlight Enterprise was founded in 2089, committed to rebuilding the Earth and its culture. Originally dedicated to finding new sources of energy, the company quickly became known for high ideals, philanthropy, and interplanetary ventures.

In the early 22nd century, Starlight Enterprise produced its first Starmen. With their exploits, an age of exploration and discovery began—a time not seen for more than six centuries, when Columbus, Magellan, Drake, and others had set sail to discover new worlds.

The Starman series chronicles the adventures of Starmen David Foster, Joe Taylor, and Mark Seaton during the glorious middle years of the 22nd century. In the course of their adventures, the Starmen learn that the history of the Solar System is far different from what Earth had long believed, and discover the urgent need of the people of Earth to defend and preserve their home from an implacable foe.

One of Jon's Summaries

Jon Cooper is the real story-teller on the Starman Team. Mike contributed many ideas to perk up the story, and David fleshed the story out into the actual text, but the Starman saga is first of all Jon's story, the product of his imagination. Each book began with a summary that Jon created and sent to Mike and David for comments. Usually the others had little to add; once all three members were satisfied with the summary, David set out to write the first draft of the story.

There were several times when, in the course of the writing, David came to a point in the details of the developing plot where he couldn't see a logical or plausible way to the next step, or noted a confusion or contradiction of some kind. He'd appeal to Jon, and by the next morning Jon had solved the problem.

To show how the stories began, on the next page begins Jon's summary of the third story, *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. Refer to page 26 to find David's initial idea of a Dig Allen adventure about the discovery of a tenth planet. Below is what Jon did with the idea after the Starman saga had got its start in the first two books. Those who are familiar with the third Starman book as eventually published will see how many things in the summary were changed as the story developed. All three Starman Team members were involved in shaping the story as it grew, and nothing was considered complete until all three members were satisfied. But here is how it began.

JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET

version 2.0

SCIENTIFIC REFERENCE:

<http://ffden->

2.phys.uaf.edu/213.web.stuff/Scott%20Kircher/fissionfusion.html

This is how the fission/fusion drive would work! I have this file saved: if you can't get it let me know and I'll send it to you. This is worth reading!

=====

IDEAS

* The action doesn't really start until well into the book; this could make it hard for our readers to get into the story. If possible, have the beginning have an atmosphere of tenseness and danger: the story needs something to build suspense. Also, once the star is discovered, start having legends about a 'black star' circulate. These are spread by the bad guys simply to create fear: they're hoping to scare the Starmen away from the planet. It doesn't work: the Starmen never lose courage throughout the entire book.

* Remember that Joe is the navigator! Have him do the piloting/navigating/etc

* Have the Starmen meet the Titanians when they stop over on Titan: that is, Jack and Jill. It will be cool to see their native home!

* Remember: in this book, show the power of light over the forces of darkness. Here the Starmen meet pure raw evil and overcome it by the forces of light and courage!

* Have Gene Newman reoccur in this book? Or maybe at least mentioned.

* Throughout this book fear and courage are powerful themes: the Starmen never give in to their fears, but show astounding courage that eventually wins the day.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When the six pirates with Zimbardo left Tharsos, they left for the 10th planet because Z. knew the Xenobots were based there and wanted to have a talk with them to get the resources he needed to rebuild. However, he left behind a loosely organized spy network and gave them orders to watch out and discourage any attempts at finding him. His spies have a lot of faith in him – or maybe they’re looking out for themselves – but they follow his orders. When they catch wind of someone looking for another planet, they try to smash the expedition. Their most powerful tool is Dr. Beowulf Denn, a trusted employee of NME²⁴. Dr. Denn plants several people in the crew to try to destroy the expedition, and once it’s on its way they try to stage a mutiny. Of course, no one discovers that Dr. Denn is behind it all until book #7. In this book the Starmen do not distrust him (the reader, having read the prelude to this book, already knows full well that he’s bad news).

²⁴ Of all those who read the Starman series, only one person pointed out that the initials of Nolan Mining Enterprise, NME, sounded out as “enemy”. This was our subtle hint that Denn was a traitor.

CHAPTER 1

The scene is the Moon: SE, NME and space command have been busy trying to hunt out who the spy is in their organization. They found a few spies but missed the top person: Dr. Denn. During their counterspy efforts they heard rumours of a 10th planet. After doing some more investigation and getting some figures through their counterspy efforts they got astronomical, visual evidence of the 10th planet.

This planet, named Nyx, orbits two stars; right now the planet is swinging around our sun, and it will be around it for another 500 years before it swings back around the other star.

Of course, there is excitement. The news breaks to the public at large, and SE and NME decide to team together to send an expedition to this new planet. [Not only that, but they think Zimbaro might be there and they REALLY want to capture him and bring him back to Earth for trial.] The drive they decide to use is a hybrid fusion/fission drive [see the scientific reference]. They would use antimatter, but it isn't quite ready: their supply isn't very large and they still don't know what caused the Spud Peeler to go out of control. Right now the fastest drive on the market is this new fusion/fission drive, which was developed jointly by SE and NME. It's not as fast as antimatter, but it's quite fast: using the slingshot effect around the sun, the ship can get to this planet 10 billion miles out within 31 days. Because the slingshot will draw the ship quite close to the sun, the ship is being coated with several layers of an expensive, rare highly reflective coating that can reflect a wide variety of radiation. Enough of this material is put on the ship to have it survive two close encounters with the sun: one when it accelerates outward to Nyx and one when it

uses the sun to slow back down.

The end of this chapter discusses the expedition. The Starmen have been picked to go; it's seen as an honor for their services rendered in TRA and AOM. The expedition is explained; SE and NME are teaming up to build the ship; it's being constructed on the moon in a large SE plant. The length of the expedition is explained, along with its purpose (deploy probes, get data – just a scouting mission, no permanent base). It's explained that Dr. Denn is picking half of the crew; the other half is manned by trusted experts hand-picked by NME and SE. [The crew is roughly 15 to 20 people.]

The chapter ends with excitement as the ship is being constructed and the expedition is ready to be launched. Given SE's vast and efficient network, the teamwork with NME, and the fact that the design work was already done and the ship only needed overhauling, it shouldn't take more than a few weeks to get it all ready to go.

[The mission is to simply explore the planet – map it, take samples and readings, set up a few robotic monitoring stations, etc. No base is to be built: that will come after SE has an idea of what the planet is like.]

CHAPTER 2

The Starmen, waiting for the ship to be finished, are relaxing with their families [here is where we can introduce the families of the Starmen. I think they all live on the Moon; might need to check the files to get the various names]. They reminisce, relax, and enjoy good fellowship. While they are there Robert Nolan visits them from time to time; he's a good friend of Richard Starlight and is currently on the moon to help logistics for constructing the

new spaceship.

One day while he's over Dr. Denn calls the Starmen and asks them to go over to the power plant section of the SE compound [here is where we can show the difference between Tharsos' awesome plant and the 'little' SE jobs]. Robert Nolan volunteers to go with them, and so they drive over and enter the plant, a little puzzled at why they would be wanted there.

The Starmen enter the plant itself (the area where all the huge turbines are) and then the lights suddenly go out. The Starmen then find themselves targets: someone on the upper girders starts shooting at them with a laser pistol [i.e. their opponent is wearing night vision goggles]. Soon there are several men targeting them and the Starmen scramble for cover.

The Starmen were not expecting to be targeted, and none of them had any weapons [a serious oversight, Zip realized, and a violation of his basic training: after this he was never out of reach of his laser.] Robert, however, did have a laser and took it out and was about to use it when they all realized something: the air was becoming sour. Mark realized that someone was putting carbon monoxide into the air: they were being poisoned! The laser shots were simply to keep the Starmen pinned down.

At this the Starmen and Robert got together and formed a plan: Robert (who knew little about how this plant operated and who had the weapon) would try to draw the attention of the snipers while the Starmen tried to make it to the controls where they could get some fresh air and radio for help.

So the battle began: Robert started moving in one direction, firing at the snipers. He got a bright idea and lasered the girder they were standing on, causing it to

collapse and taking several snipers out of action (but not killing anyone). Robert was in grave danger: he could only see things dimly by the light of sparks, laser fire, and emergency lights – the snipers could see things just fine. Of course, Robert was in the dark, and he hit quite a few pieces of equipment (accidentally): after a while there were some fires raging that helped him see better.

The Starmen, meanwhile, worked their way to the exit – which, of course, was quite locked. Joe tried to do some computer hacking, all the while the air was getting thicker and harder to breathe...

At last Joe did get one of the access doors open, and raced out to call for help. Help arrived quickly, and soon the snipers were rounded up. Robert's wounds were bandaged, and repair work began on the power plant (which had, of course, been put out of action and caused power to fail for half the city; power had been diverted from another plant, but there was quite a strain.)

The men explained that they would have come at once, but someone had hacked into their computer systems, and as far as they knew everything was just fine. They didn't know how the snipers had gotten into the plant, or where the call from Dr. Denn came from (he denied all knowledge of it); the snipers refused to talk and were hauled away.

Of course, I'm sure this made the news...

[The purpose of this scene, as discussed earlier, is to give some personality to Robert and show what he was like before he fell.]

CHAPTER 3

A few days later: the crew of about 15 or 20 board the ship. At the precise time they leave SE's base on the moon

with great fanfare and head toward the sun at full speed. Some days later they then slingshot around the sun and open their throttle all the way and begin blasting into deep space. The Starmen are off on their mission!

At first their mission goes fine. The Starmen notice some rumours are spreading about the planet they're going to: the rumour is that it's a dark, sinister place that isn't friendly to human life. The Starmen can't imagine where the rumours came from, and dismiss it for the time being.

While they are between Jupiter and Saturn, the ship suddenly has a catastrophic failure: the radiation shield failed. One of the key components of this ship was an electromagnetic 'active shielding' field that shielded the atomic pile and kept the radiation from radiating the crew. The field was a big breakthrough, because before ships had to have thick walls of lead that added a great deal to the weight of the ship and cut down on the cargo they could carry. However, SE and NME made a mistake in the design, and when the radiation fluctuated in a certain way it burned out the shield and the shield went dead. [Later SE and NME get into LOTS of trouble for this.]

When the field failed, warning sirens went off all over the ship for a split second, and then were quiet. What had happened was that the siren originally went off, but then the burst of radiation from the pile fried some wiring and silenced the siren. The Starmen and crew heard the warning siren, but weren't sure why it had only gone off for a split second.

The crew dismissed it (they said it was a false alarm; a glitch in the system) but the Starmen did not. [NOTE: Remember, the crew was hand-picked by Dr. Denn; some are good but some aren't, and the bad ones have infected the good ones. What I am trying to do is present a clear

contrast: the bright Starmen and Captain, the dull crew, the evil Xenobots – and show how the Starmen, the lights in this book, overcome in the end. Hopefully the Starmen will be seen as the cool characters in this book!]

The Starmen went to the computer and examined the readouts; nothing seemed abnormal. They then went and stared examining the actual hardware, and nothing seemed wrong until they entered the atomic pile. There they saw, to their absolute horror, that the radiation shield had been turned into a mass of molten metal: not only was it beyond repair, but it had been down for several hours.

The Starmen immediately rang the alarm – and then found out that the alarm was saturated with radiation and was not working [this is why it only rang once and then stopped]. So they rang another alarm on the intercom and announced what had happened. Their radiation detectors (Geiger counters) showed that the plant was pouring out a lot of hard radiation, and the amount was increasing by the minute: it was pouring out so much that if the crew stayed on board the ship another couple hours they would all be dead.

The Captain immediately ordered that everyone abandon the ship. The men climbed in the small fleet (5-6 small 3-man ships) of scouting vehicles (which were all radiation shielded and thus safe – remember the coating!) and abandoned the ship – but not before sending a desperate plea for help to both Earth and Saturn. The plea was urgent: all their supplies, by some monstrous oversight, were located near the reactor and had been severely radiated. All the men had was what was stored on board their small ships, and that would only last them 48 hours). On top of this, the ships weren't built for interstellar travel: they didn't have near the fuel to make it to Saturn (it would

take weeks of drifting).

CHAPTER 4

On Saturn, a number of ships lift off at once. Some of the ships head toward the now-unmanned mothership, and the rest head toward the smaller ships that now held the crew and Starmen. It took them only a couple hours to get to the ships – by which time the Starmen were starting to show signs of radiation sickness.

The Starmen were brought back to Saturn and nursed back to health over the course of about 2 weeks. The ship was brought back, refueled, and repaired (this time with the ordinary thick lead shielding).

Needless to say, both SE and NME were severely criticized. Congressmen demanded that SE and NME be investigated: what gross negligence allowed the field to fail without setting off a single alarm? If it hadn't been for the Starmen, all the crew would have been roasted. In the papers, SE and NME were mud: they were criticized and their reputations were severely damaged. Richard tried his best and took it fairly well, but Robert was deeply hurt – extremely deeply hurt.

While recovering on Titan, the Starmen pick up legends of the Nemesis: that its planet was colonized by the 'Lost Race' (no clue as to what race), that they mined some substance. Hints that the Lost Race had contact with Titan and built their huge heated caverns and energy source. Also hints that the Lost Race was involved in a huge project on the planet. [This is where we insert the 'legend of the Titanians', and have the Explorers view the huge heated caverns under the surface. They find the logo again – the same one that was on the NPACs. They find this curious.

We can also sow seeds of misinformation: lead the Starmen to think that the ‘Lost Race’ was extrasolar and came here from some other star system.]

So armed with these legends, a now-healthy crew, and a repaired ship with new supplies they head back into space.

CHAPTER 5

Morale on the ship is at rock-bottom. The crew is discouraged; they won’t get to the planet for another 31 days, they are unhappy with being on the same ship that almost killed them, they are disgruntled, and they are still muttering about the legends [which the bad guys had planted]. Of course, not all of the crew was like this: the loyal faction still was fairly cheerful, but the Dr. Denn faction was dragging things down. They say that the legends foretell that the Nemesis is evil and they will all die if they continue on. They travel on but there is nervousness.

Shortly thereafter they pass the orbit of Pluto and become the people to travel the most distance from Earth [or so they think – Zimbardo has beaten them to the punch]. Still they travel on into the deep darkness of space.

Something is eating the crew; they are nervous and irritable. Eventually the crew mutinies. At this point the NME Captain rallies to their aid and puts the mutiny down, arresting the few lead troublemakers. [The forces of light wins!] The ship goes on, plowing ahead into the darkness of space.

[Zimbardo’s agents, strategically placed by Dr. Beowulf Denn, are among the crew spreading fear and rumours. Fear is an important theme in this book; see notes at the end.]

CHAPTER 6

The ship at last arrives at the planet and enters orbit. The planet is forboding: it is dark, very cold, and has no atmosphere [what atmosphere it has is frozen on the surface of the planet]. It is a planet of eternal night; of eternal twilight, of dark valleys and dark mountains, of deep caves and deep blackness. It takes the spirit out of a man just to look at it. Who would ever want to come here? The Starmen themselves are depressed at the sight. [I'm thinking here of the land of Mordor – of eternal darkness. The Starmen would be the trusty Hobbits, making their way into the Xenobot's realm to cause their downfall!]

The ship orbits it, scans it and makes maps. Some probes are released and robotic surveys are done. All the while the crew is murmuring; they don't like it out here.

The probes bring back word of a ruined alien city. The Starmen are excited and go off to explore it in a small shuttlecraft. [Reason: they have the training, and also they're the only ones not afraid to actually go out and explore Nyx. The crew, meanwhile, starts scanning and mapping the planet, maybe releasing a few robotic probes as well. Also, no one else had the courage to join the Starmen! The Starmen weren't happy but they didn't give in to their fears.]

CHAPTER 7

The Starmen arrive at the ruined city and explore it. The city looks like it has been abandoned for ages – but it was a mining city. They find the Martian logo/symbol on it: the Lost Race! The Titanian legends had some truth to it. But what were they mining? [Turns out to be helium-3]

They decide to go inside and investigate. But the place

has a very dark, ugly air. The rusted machinery, the darkness, the deep night...

Above them, there is another mutiny. This time the mutineers win. The Captain and the loyal crew are furious but they can't do anything.

The 'friend' radios down on the planet, giving wide berth to the city (which they think is dangerous and maybe even haunted). They are trying to find Zimbardo and his pals (they got word through the spy ring he was out here) but they can't find him anywhere. Eventually, they do find something – but it wasn't exactly what they expected to find! A horde of angry Xenobot warships comes off the surface of the planet to meet them; they radio and in a harsh voice tell them to surrender or immediately be blown out of the sky. The mutineers, scared to death, immediately surrender. The Xenobots then take the captured ship to their base, and lock up the crew on their extensive base. Their ship they place in the hangar of their base.

All the humans were put together in the same cell – and there they find Zimbardo and his 6 pals. Zimbardo, nearly insane, isn't talking, but the rest of the pirates tell them that when they got to the planet and contacted the Superiors they locked them all up and they have been imprisoned ever since. Zimbardo is basically 'remains' at this point – there's not much left of him since the Xenobots locked him up.

There is no hope, they tell them – no hope of escape at all... they are prisoners of the Xenobots.

CHAPTER 8

The Starmen explore the city and eventually figure out that they were mining Helium-3. They became excited; the planet had huge deposits of it – clearly more than the solar system could use in millennia. [H3, remember, is what Earth/Mars/Moon uses to produce electrical power: it's clean, there's no radiation given off from the reaction, it's powerful, and there's no danger of a meltdown. It powers the power plants.] They also find signs that the Lost Race had some other project going on besides just mining but they can't figure out what it is. [The project was simply an interstellar stopover point – Nyx was one of their gateways to the stars.]

They go back outside, climb into their ship – and find that their mothership is gone. It disappeared... The Starmen fear a mutiny. They are in a bad position: they have very few supplies and are stranded 10 billion miles away from home.

But they are prepared. They thought something like this might happen; not a mutiny, but with a ship so far from home anything could happen, so they thought it wise to take some extra precautions. The Starmen had planned ahead and secreted along in the ship some extra food, oxygen, and other survival supplies on board their little ship. If necessary, they can radio and wait for a rescue mission.

The Starmen, then, are concerned but not overly so. They decide to search the planet awhile to find some trace of the ship.

CHAPTER 9

Back at the Xenobot base, things are humming. The Xenos are at home in the deep darkness: being evil, they glory in the cold blackness. There is Helium-3 here in abundance. They are mining it (with robots) in huge quantities, and hope to bring it home for their own use. The prisoners are not the least bit happy; they're kept in their dark prison cell in miserable conditions. Their spirits fail them: it looks like all is lost.

The Captain and Z. [who is a shining light - he's been on the Starmen's side in the mutinys] is taken up to see the key bad guy: the Xenobot warlord that is overseeing the 3He mining operation. The ruthless warlord gloats over him, and really gives Z. a dressing down – for failing to conquer Earth and Mars. He doesn't listen to Z's pleas at all for help – the warlord says they have better things to do than to conquer the two-bit planet Earth. They've decimated thousands of races; they'll get to Earth presently, when they have time. Their race is centuries old, he tells Z: their Empire spans thousands of stars in the heart of the galaxy. Why should they waste time on Earth? They're looking for something else – their ancient enemy that defeated them long, long ago. They are looking for revenge: they already destroyed their planet once, but the race survived and lived to defeat them. This time, the Xenos are back with a vengeance and are looking to kill. They will get to Earth later.

Zimbardo, who is really 'remains' at this point, is taken back to his cell. The warlord has the Captain stay; he wants to talk with him.

Far away, the Starmen are scanning the planet with the equipment on board their shuttlecraft. They analyzed the data, and at last found what could be evidence of activity

and a large base! They head to it. When they arrive, they find ships – but they are Xeno ships! And they are very angry Xeno ships...

Ships come out in hordes, attacking the Starmen's shuttlecraft. [Perhaps Mark, with a startled exclamation, recognizes the design of some of the ships: they match the diagram he saw on Tharsos!]

CHAPTER 10

The Starmen realize they have made a mistake and make a desperate rush to leave. A fierce conflict ensues, in which the Starmen desperately try to find a place to hide from the horde that is after them.

The only bright point in the conflict is that their ship was outfitted with a special kind of shield to help protect against the fierce cold, as mentioned in Chapter 1. It managed to block and ward off a lot of the blasts by the energy weapons of the Xenos; without it they would have been all blown out of the sky in minutes. But the shields took a lot of beating and they couldn't hold up forever.

[Think of this coating on SE ships as something similar to a laser shield, but it works for a broader spectrum of radiation. The energy beams do some damage, but it mostly just splashes and is reflected.]

Far away, the Xenobot warlord in his chamber is amused: he shows the Captain the shuttlecraft that is trying to escape his men. The Captain realizes that the craft is the Starmen: their last hope. He realized that unless the warlord did something stupid, the Starmen would probably be captured as easily as they were. So, hoping to arouse the Xeno's anger, The Captain tells the warlord that he has met his match: those Starmen were the same people that

defeated the Martian invasion and escaped his clutches, and he is sure the warlord can't touch them. Why, look: their warships are pouring out energy upon the shuttlecraft and yet they can't touch it. The warlord is annoyed; he flicks a switch and tells them to do an all-out hunt to find and bring those Starmen to him right away.

CHAPTER 11

The Starmen see that the fight is desperate and they're not sure what to do. They at last come up with a plan. Joe rigged up a way to control the ship via remote control; Mark rigs it up so that the reactor starts to overheat and will detonate within 15 minutes. They then lure the Xenos near the alien city, where they bail out of the ship.

Joe then remotely flies the ship into the heart of the Xeno squad and detonates it. The ship causes a lot of damage and disperses the alien fleet temporarily, giving the Earth ships a chance to run and hide. By the time the Xenos regroup they can find no one.

But now the Starmen are truly stranded. They have no supplies, for all that was blown up with the ship, along with the equipment to administer it – but even if they did have it, it's clear they can't stay on this planet long with the Xenos here. They would find them, and quickly. The Starmen make it inside the base, but their air supply is depleting rapidly. What are they to do? Life is growing desperate.

Far away, the warlord is angry: the Starmen have temporarily disappeared. The Captain is gloating: he goads the warlord with the fact that the Starmen managed to get away. The warlord, in his great anger, orders all his men to scour the planet until they can find those miserable

Starmen!

CHAPTER 12

The Starmen decide that the first order of business is to get a good air supply. They worked their way back to the atmosphere department and went to work: they managed to get it working again. In a couple hours they managed to reseal a large portion of the base and got the old machines to produce a breathable atmosphere. To do this they had to reseal the air locks, revitalize the computers, restart the power plant, etc. [Here the Starmen's experience with that Martian ship in TRA comes in handy. They already know quite a bit about working with Martian computers, etc. and so aren't completely lost.]

The work actually wasn't that hard: some of it was in disrepair, but all they really had to do was flip a lot of switches and bypass some systems that weren't working. Eventually they got it to work, and they then moved on to their next task: what are they going to do about the Xenobots?

The Starmen don't know what happened to the crew, but they think that the Xenobots have them: either they're prisoners of the Xenobots or they are working with the Xenos – but at any rate, the loyal faction of the crew and the Captain are probably prisoners of the Xenos. They need to find a way to rescue them – but how? If only they had some weapons to fight with!

CHAPTER 13

While searching through the base, the Starmen found a scientific lab, a supply room, and some other equipment. As Zip stared at it, an idea slowly formed in his mind. He remembered, back in his Academy days, creating a little plane the size of a dragonfly as a science experiment. Zip remembered how he built it – and looking over the tools, he thinks he has the parts he needs to build it.

Zip comes up with a plan. The long-range scanners on the base show where the Xenobot base is. What Zip wants to do is build a little probe, in the shape of a dragonfly, attach to it a miniature camera and feedback unit, and release it in the Xenobot base to get information. They can't get in, but their little probe could – it could act as a miniature remote-control spyplane!

Of course, there are all sorts of problems: even assuming they have the parts to build it, would the Xenos notice the dragonfly? How would they release it into the compound? They just don't know – but they don't have a lot of options, so they decide to go ahead and build it. It's better than doing nothing, at any rate.

So the Starmen sit down and get to work.

Far above their heads, a fleet of Xenobot ships is scanning the planet in minute detail, searching for some Starmen...

CHAPTER 14

After several hours' intense work, the Starmen are done: they have their dragonfly. The dragonfly is painted jet black, and is just a little over three inches long, with a wingspan of nearly the same. It wouldn't fool anyone at close range, but the Starmen were hoping to keep it in the

shadows where no one would see it.

Its radio, since they had limited power, was very short-range: the operator would have to stay close to the Xenobot base while flying the dragonfly. Mark managed to rig up an encryption device to help hide the radio broadcast, but they all knew that it would only be a matter of time before the Xenos found the dragonfly, tracked the signals to their operator, and cooked their goose. Still, what other choice did they have?

The Starmen then debated who should go to the base to fly it. In the end Zip was chosen: Mark was needed to nurse the reactor, and since the creation was Zip's, he would be able to fly it best. While exploring the base the Starmen had found a land crawler: it wasn't very dignified and it wasn't very fast, but it would get them there. The base wasn't very far away; it would take several hours to get there but it could be done.

So Zip set out with his creation toward the Xenobot base. Mark and Joe knew that it would be eight hours before they heard from him again – assuming the Xenobots didn't find him first!

Three hours later, Zip finally brought the ancient land crawler to a halt. The land crawler was something like a 4-wheeler: it wasn't an enclosed vehicle (Zip was depending on his oxygen packs he brought with him for air). Zip looked over the Xenobot base: man, was it huge! and Xenobots were everywhere. However, the base was pretty dark: it looked like it would be easy to stick to the shadows. His dragonfly was small, and it didn't give off very much heat: with luck it wouldn't be seen.

Zip cautiously released the dragonfly and flew it into the base. He kept it close to the ground in the shadows, and monitored the video feed from the small camera it carried.

Without any trouble Zip managed to fly it up to the airlock, and when a lumbering Xenobot opened the door to get in, Zip flew the fly in with it. First step, accomplished! The next problem was to find all the prisoners.

CHAPTER 15

Joe and Mark, not having anything else to do, tinkered around with some of the equipment at the Martian base. In the storage area they found some of the Martian holographic equipment – used, for example, to make the Chamber. The equipment was pretty good: to their surprise, it could make -solid- holograms with textures! (Think the tree in the Chamber.) Mark immediately got an idea: there were a number of machines in this room, and it looked like they could produce pretty realistic holograms. With some effort, they might be able to use them to ward off the Xenobots. Mark explained his plan to Joe, and he liked it. They immediately set about tinkering with the equipment, trying to figure out how it worked. With luck, it just might work!

But there is tension: Mark told Joe that the reactor was starting to give out. It will hold up for another 9 hours but it is gradually becoming unstable. It is old; it needs to be replaced and there aren't any parts for billions of miles. Yet another concern... once the reactor goes their base and air supply will go as well.

Above, the Xenobots have scoured the planet and found nothing. The warlord is furious: the Captain is gloating. The Captain has hopes in the Starmen: they might find a way to defeat them yet. The warlord is so angry at being thwarted that he gets on the hyperwave frequency and calls for some big, heavy equipment – equipment that could find

a single living gnat buried underneath ten thousand miles of solid steel. Moreover, he wants more warships: he called in some galaxy-class battleships – ships thousands of feet long capable of turning planets into dust.

The Captain pales as he realizes what he is up against: that wasn't exactly the reaction he was hoping to get. It just doesn't look good for the Starmen...

CHAPTER 16

Meanwhile, Zip has maneuvered the dragonfly to the lowest reaches of the base. He managed to find the prisoners: he had to consult some maps and do a lot of searching, but he found them. He briefly contacted the Captain (he had put a small speaker on the fly and talked to him that way) and told him that he was there trying to help. Zip told him that he couldn't find a way to open the doors; it looked like they were controlled by a central computer. Zip told the Captain to keep his chin up, then he flew back in through the air duct from which he had came.

As Zip was flying his dragonfly through the air duct, desperately wracking his brains to think of a way to open the doors, Zip saw a fleet of *huge* starships wink out of hyperspace and hover over the base. Light blazed down from the ships onto the base, and a host of soldiers descended out of the ship. Zip took up his binoculars and looked at the soldiers: at the head of them was a very important-looking person. It looked like the big shots were coming to Nyx! But why?

Then, all at once, Zip got his idea. He couldn't go into the base himself to free the Captain and crew – the area was far too heavily guarded. The dragonfly itself didn't have enough mass to work the computers. But there was another

option! Hurriedly Zip checked the crude map he had made of the Xenobot base, and slowly a smile appeared on his face. It would work!

Inside the Xenobot base, the supreme commander of the Xenobot forces was talking with the Xenobot warlord, and was not happy. He demanded to know why the warlord had diverted so much heavy equipment away from the battlefield to this cold, miserable, worthless planet. The warlord was upset: he told him that there were three Starmen here he wanted to get rid of. At this the Xenobot commander exploded: he diverted enough equipment to vaporize half the galaxy just to get rid of THREE STARMEN? He asked the warlord why he was so incapable of defeating three puny humans with the equipment he already had: how incapable was this warlord?

As they were arguing, the Captain watching intently, suddenly a voice filled the chamber. 'Xenobots!' it called. Immediately there was silence.

CHAPTER 17

The voice spoke. 'Xenobots! This is Starman David Foster speaking.' The Xenobots whirled around; there was no Starman in the chamber. They didn't understand where the voice was coming from; it resonated throughout the room without a clear source.

The voice began talking to them. It told them that he, David Foster, had broken into their base. He had seen that they had taken prisoners of his friends, and he was not happy. He further saw that they had invaded his star system, and he was not happy about that either. When the Xenobot commander tried to speak up, David silenced him: in a voice edged with steel he told the commander that he

was the one in control here, and he would do the talking.

The voice went on to demand the immediate release of their prisoners, the return of their ship, and the immediate evacuation of the planet. The voice warned them that if his demands were not immediately met, there would be consequences – enormous consequences. Then with that, the voice went silent.

Far away, David leaned back on his chair and relaxed. If only it would work! He had maneuvered the dragonfly to the intercom system, and had broadcast the message over all the Xenobot frequencies – hence, the voice seemed to come from everywhere all at once, and what’s more, every Xenobot in the base had heard it. He was hoping against hope the Xenos would get frightened and leave immediately: judging from the size of those ships, he didn’t stand a chance of hiding much longer.

Back at the ancient Martian base, things were going badly. The Xenobot scouting ships noted that the old abandoned city was showing power: they surmised that the Starmen were hiding out in that base. They brought their forces around it and prepared to invade. They fire their lasers upon the city; a shield generated by the Starmen holds up for a while and kept them off but soon it collapsed. The door is melted by Xenobots; Xenos come rushing in.

CHAPTER 18

When the Xenos rush into the base they find it dark and deserted. Deep shadows loom everywhere; the base has an uneasy and eerie air. Cautiously the Xenos start to prowl inside, looking for evidence for the humans.

Their uneasiness grows even more when strange things

start to happen. Doors close and open on their own; things move around without anything to move them. They will see a person standing in the room – and then he will turn around, see them, and vanish. They see some ghostly figures, taunting them...

The Xenobots begin to get uneasy. Their uneasiness grows when a report from outside hysterically screams that huge monsters are attacking them.

Amid this general demoralization the Xenos start to get attacked: and with some measures of success. The Xenos are frightened; they begin to evacuate amid general concern. They can't find any humans and they don't like the planet... and the eerie noises and wails bother them.

Inside, the Starmen watch the Xenos leave with glee. They used holograms for their special effects – intending to scare them off. They had managed to figure out how the Martian equipment worked, and used it to create these imaginary monsters. Their only concern is that the reactor is becoming more and more unstable; they need a source of power to generate the holograms. They hope it will hold up for long enough...

CHAPTER 19

Armed with this machinery, the two Starmen created holograms of HUGE starships – much bigger than anything the Xenobots had. They also generated fake bombs and lasers, and while they didn't harm the ships, the lasers that the Starmen fired from the base sure did. Plus, since the holograms are solid thanks to the energy field generator, when the Starmen ram their ships into the Xenobot ships, they can inflict some heavy damage. The Xenobots, on their part, can't get a single shot to hit these alien ships:

whenever they fire missiles the Starmen's ship simply vanishes – only to reappear somewhere else. At times the ships suddenly mutate into a completely different kind of ship; the number of ships grows then decreases.

On top of all this, sometimes the Starmen's ships mutate until they look exactly like Xenobot ships! The Xenos then start fighting each other; they can't tell friend from foe. The Xenobots became extremely demoralized; they break formation and begin to scatter. They just can't handle all the frustration.

However, all of this imagery and power output really strained the reactor. With a final groan, the power plant went dead: in an instant all the holograms vanished.

CHAPTER 20

Zip had been watching the whole fight, and he surmised that the two Starmen were behind the warships that suddenly appeared out of nowhere – and the powerful, biting lasers that were coming from the old Lost City. He knew the reactor was unstable before he left; he guessed that it had finally gone dead. Zip clutched his hands into a tight fist, then released them. He knew what he had to do.

Zip activated his dragonfly again, put it to the Xenos' intercom system, and broadcast his message. Zip told them that they had made a valiant effort to defend themselves, but that their efforts are useless. He's called off his forces for a moment to give them time to retreat; they can either retreat now or be destroyed. It's bluff, 100% pure bluff – but it works! The Xenobots hurriedly release the prisoners, almost throw their ship out of their hangar, load up into ships and streak off into the sky. Soon they disappear into hyperspace and are gone. The Xenobot commander is

furious at being defeated: he's not about to forget the name David Foster anytime soon. [Guess who goes to the star Polaris in book #22 when he learns that David Foster is stranded there! and guess who makes it his life mission to get rid of this Starman!]

CHAPTER 21

The Earth forces then regroup. The pirate base is destroyed, and the Lost City base is no longer inhabitable, so they can't stay on the planet. Zip loads everyone into ships; they won't all fit in the mothership so they are loaded onto several vehicles (i.e. the pirate ships). Zimbardo is taken into custody.

All of the pirates will be tried back on Earth; some, though, will probably be treated much harsher than others (i.e. the unrepentant, vicious Zimbardo).

So, fully loaded, Zip and the fleet head home, with hopes to return someday to this desolate planet. They depart for Earth on board their mothership that brought them to Nyx.

[Note: perhaps Zip brings with him lots of valuable data concerning the planet: maps, info the pirates gathered, stuff he managed to get from the Martian computers, etc. Maybe have him stay a while after the fight and accomplish the mission he was sent to Nyx to do?]

The Summary of the First Four Books

The fifth book, *The Lost Race of Mars*, was the climactic volume to the ongoing story that had been building for more than two years in the previous books. It was also our most attractive book with a stunning full-wrap illustration for the cover; it was beautifully printed by our new Canadian publisher, Friesens. Friesens had been recommended by Canadian Starman fan Neil Lindholm.

The Starman Team anticipated that we might have opportunities to offer the saga to prospective commercial publishers or even movie makers; several of these had already expressed interest, thanks to the hearty recommendation of fans that had contacts in these fields.

Because we thought that *Assault On Mars* (later *Mutiny On Mars*) was our most amateurish story, we preferred to give prospective publishers our best book rather than our first book. However, that book was the fifth in an ongoing saga. To orient anyone who might want to read the fifth book without seeing the story that preceded it, we prepared the following summary, which was printed at the beginning of *The Lost Race of Mars*.

What Has Happened Before

At the end of the 20th century, the world economy was booming. Within two decades, however, most multinational corporations had overreached themselves and a severe, global depression set in, unprecedented in scope. All efforts to counter it failed. Governments fell and the infrastructure of the planet decayed, initiating the worst period in human history. The age became known as the Collapse, and was characterized by worldwide violence, terrorism, and unrestrained criminal

opportunism.

But the century ended with a glimmer of hope. The concepts of stewardship, accountability, and mutual responsibility revived. Thomas Starlight founded Starlight Enterprise in 2089, committed to rebuilding the Earth and its culture. Originally a company dedicated to finding new sources of energy, it quickly became known for high ideals, philanthropy, and interplanetary ventures.

In the early 22nd century, Starlight Enterprise produced its first Starmen. The Starmen were the gifted and highly trained venturers of Starlight Enterprise. With their exploits, a new age of exploration and discovery began. Earth had not seen such a time for more than six centuries, when Columbus, Magellan, Drake, and others had set sail to discover new worlds.

The Starman series chronicles the adventures of Starmen David Foster, Joe Taylor, and Mark Seaton. When the series opens with *Assault On Mars*, new Starman David “Zip” Foster is on Mars for his first assignment. Pirates from the Asteroid Belt, in a sudden attack, take control of the Martian settlements.

New Starmen Joseph Taylor and Mark Seaton are called on to make a secret entry into Mars and team up with David Foster. Equipped with a new, experimental, and top secret antimatter drive, the two Starmen and their freewheeling partner, Steve Cliff, enter Martian airspace disguised in *The Spud Peeler*, a decrepit cargo ship. Their assignment is to prevent the pirates from lifting off from Mars and to sabotage their defense operations. Without compromising their primary assignment, Joe and Mark also hope to find David Foster and join forces with him. The success of the Starmen will allow the forces of Earth to land safely and free Mars from the assault by the pirates.

In the second book, *The Runaway Asteroid*, a number of pirates barely manage to escape the three Starmen as they abandon Mars and high-tail it back to their base in the Asteroid Belt. Their leader, Lurton Zimbardo, can sheathe objects and make them invisible to radar. With this technology Zimbardo launches a storm of small, cloaked asteroids at Mars that wipe

out its atmospheric generators. Zimbardo then gives Earth his threat: either turn over the reins of power, or get hit with an invisible asteroid forty-five miles wide!

The story continues in *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. Lurton Zimbardo, foiled in his monstrous extortion attempt, has fled beyond the orbit of Pluto. An astronomer on staff with Starlight Enterprise, the unusual Dr. O, has discovered that there is a planet that lies beyond Pluto! Starlight Enterprise decided to send an expedition to explore the planet Nyx, and the Starmen are going along with the purpose of locating and apprehending Lurton Zimbardo and his last cronies. Trouble begins almost at once: the ship jointly built by Nolan Mining Enterprises and Starlight Enterprises experiences near-catastrophic failure midway to the planet.

As the crew stops for repairs on Titan, a moon of Saturn where there is a small base, the Starmen learn that a beneficent alien race had visited the Solar System many centuries before. The visitors left several signs of their presence, but they themselves are nowhere to be found.

When the ship lands on the Planet of Darkness, events soon throw the Starmen into a desperate conflict with formidably powerful alien foes called the Xenobots. Most alarming of all, the Starmen learn that this violent race is searching for its “ancient enemy”—the Benefactors—and will demolish Earth if necessary to further the search.

In *Descent Into Europa*, Zip Foster organizes a desperate search for the Benefactors. Without their help, Earth stands no chance against the technologically superior Xenobots. With impeccable logic, the Starman leader has determined that if the Benefactors had a central base in the Solar System, it had to be on Europa, a watery moon of Jupiter with a crust of ice several miles thick.

The Starmen launch an expedition to Europa, and soon find themselves trying to find a way through Europa’s icy crust. Once underneath the thick barrier of frozen water, the Starmen enter an ocean ten miles deep. At its bottom, after passing through several

perils, they do indeed discover a city built by the Benefactors, but learn that it had been quickly abandoned centuries earlier. The native population of Europa, octopoid intelligences that have never seen the sun, reveal that the name of the Benefactors' home planet was "Ahmanya."

At the end of this book, Starman Zip Foster reported that "The mission to Europa has not achieved all that I had hoped. We did not encounter any members of the race of the Benefactors. The evidence of their presence we have discovered on Mars, Titan, Nyx, and now Europa is all very old. ...

"Question: We now know that there are, or have been, four intelligent races in our Solar System: the primitive race of Mars, few in number and which disappeared suddenly, perhaps after contact with the Benefactors; the Europeans; the extrasolar people the Benefactors brought from a distant star system to Titan approximately 12,000 years ago; and we of Earth. We also know now that the Benefactors had dealings with the other three races. Why did they not make contact with us?"

In the fifth Starman book, *The Lost Race of Mars*, the answer is found.

The Lost Race of Mars was released in October 2002 at the series book convention in Charlottesville, Virginia, organized by series book enthusiast and Starman fan Mark Johnson. Jon, Mike, and David, who had met for the first time in person the previous year, came together for their second—and last—meeting in person, along with artist Bill Baumann to make a presentation at the convention. A couple of dozen Starman fans were present, and received their copies of *The Lost Race of Mars* at that time. The volume had been long awaited by readers since it promised to reveal the answer to a number of mysteries that had been left intriguingly unanswered in the previous books. For most readers of the Starman saga, *The Lost Race of Mars* is their favorite book in the series.

The Dedications and Introductions to the First Editions

Each book took roughly nine months to produce, from outlining to writing to editing, to printing. Each of the first editions had a dedication, and some had an introduction. When the saga was completed, the books were gathered into a trilogy of thick volumes for publication through Lulu. At that time, the dedications to each book were removed, as well as the introductions that some of them had. Yet this material was an important part of the labor; it is therefore reproduced on the following pages.

ASSAULT ON MARS

(later MUTINY ON MARS)

Gratefully dedicated
to the memory of

Joseph L. Greene
creator of Dig Allen
(August 1, 1914-July 5, 1990)

Joseph Greene was born in Fedosia, Russia and immigrated to the United States at the age of 10. From his high school days he loved the smell of newsprint as much as he loved reading and books. Throughout his life, he built up an enormous personal library. His wife Bella recalled that they needed two trucks whenever they moved—one for furniture and another for books.

In his twenties he worked as a merchant seaman. In addition to writing the six Dig Allen books (published by Golden Press 1959-1962), Joe Greene also worked as a writer of Superman comics in the 1940s and was a creator of the Tom Corbett television show “Space Cadets” in the early 1950s. He also wrote professionally in a number of other fields. For a decade he served as managing editor for Grosset & Dunlap. It wasn’t until the 1960s that he received his bachelor’s degree when his own children were in college.

Joseph and Bella Greene had three children, Ellen, Robert, and Paul. The Starman Team is grateful to Paul Greene for his support of our efforts to continue his father’s legacy through our writing, and for providing the biographical information for this dedication.

THE CHARACTER OF JOGREN IN THIS BOOK
was created as a tribute to
Joseph L. Greene.

THE RUNAWAY ASTEROID

is dedicated to

Fred Woodworth

a rare and gifted individual who practices
 generosity in a world of acquisitiveness,
 courage in a world of indifference,
 honesty in a world of opportunism, and
 personal responsibility in a world of buck-passing;
 an artist and craftsman
 few in this era know how to appreciate;
 who has done as much as any and more than most to
 advance the cause of series books;
 and whose genius has abundantly proven that the
 books deplored by librarians of a previous age
 are treasures that shaped several generations and
 made their readers better people.

To Fred Woodworth of Tucson, Arizona,
 the series book world owes a debt
 that can never be paid.

Introduction

The Starman Team dedicated its first book, *Assault On Mars*, to Joseph Greene, the late author of the Dig Allen series which was the inspiration for the Starman series. A complimentary copy was sent to his son Paul, who was moved by the tribute. We then asked Paul to write an introduction to *The Runaway Asteroid*. The following is his response—surely one of the most unusual introductions in any book anywhere, and one we are privileged to share with our readers.

Dear Dad,

A most remarkable invention is weaving the world together in a way we never anticipated while you were on Earth, and it netted your writing. Fans of your books for juveniles, The Digby Allen series, were able to connect to each other, share their enthusiasm for your novels, and were inspired to continue the voyage. Led by Jonathan Cooper, the intrepid mastermind of the creative crew, they made a commitment to write their own vision of the future. Thoughtfully, they credit you as having shoulders broad enough for them to stand on and see the centuries beyond. The invention that has made this possible is called the internet. There seems no need to explain what it is here, but part of its magic is that it can permit people to connect to each other independently of time and space.

The themes of Dig Allen from the 1960's have worked like the internet in that they functioned independently of time and space, only much more slowly. You presented your ideas in books as ideas are posted on the internet. The authors of Starman were drawn to the themes in your books and then each other in cyberspace, which acts as both the bookshelf and café for today's ideas and authors. The creators of Starman saw value in your stories and tried to get the publisher to renew the series. Sadly, your old publisher ignored them and blocked the revival, as though they were so much space junk.

No one owns a theme. But the creators of Starman have shown that they share some of the beliefs that you express in your subjects. Their young men of the stars prove that they too are brave, adventurous and willing to sacrifice for

freedom and justice. With a loyalty toward each other that would create envy in every generation, they test themselves against cunning scoundrels. As they conquer villains, they, and we along with them, learn whether they measure up. Will they prove themselves worthy as young people have done for all time? Young readers can have a chance to preview something about their own lives and the world they will live in. And just as you believed, somehow the human race survives. If the world of *Starman* is an accurate guess on the future, then the good guys, the ones in the white spacesuits, will continue to prevail and produce more young people to keep the dream alive. I hope that some of the next generation of courageous young people will read this series.

Your fans don't know that you started writing seriously relatively early in life, in the 1920's and '30's, first as a teen for your personal pleasure and then on your school newspaper at New Utrecht High School in Brooklyn, New York. Did having to learn the English language after speaking Russian until the age of seven help you become a better writer? Were your poems and letters to Mom valuable both to her and to your professional development? Did the comic books you authored during the Golden Age of comics give you a better sense of story-telling and dialogue or did it degrade your love of language? I know that writing television scripts and other creative projects supported the family during the difficult years of the 1950's, but how did it affect your later work with Digby Allen? So many of your themes are repeated and reworked in several of your creations right through to the late 1980's. Who would guess that you once wrote a paper on the use of the raven in several of Shakespeare's plays? Or that you

wrote biology text to accompany a new medium, slides made from strips of 35-mm film? Would admirers realize that you were most interested in world events, but read the sports section of the New York Times first, everyday? I'm certain your fans wouldn't have read the American Elsewhen Almanac, a compilation of bits of Americana and commentary that you published in the 1980's.

I want to thank the authors of Starman for giving me the opportunity to write the introduction to their second novel. If there is a way to communicate to you across the veil between our dimensional world and the one in which you now reside, then it must be through the pages of a book. After the love of family, I don't believe anything was more precious to you than books, so maybe this letter will be able to cross the divide. Just as I proofread the drafts of Digby Allen before you sent them to the publisher, your granddaughter and grandson proofread this. Perhaps that will act like a mystical booster rocket to get these pages to you.

And to future space pioneers, may the solar winds be at your back.

Love,
Paul

October 20, 2000

JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET

The Starman Team dedicates this book
to three special people:

Jon Cooper dedicates this book to

Clyde Tombaugh

(February 4, 1906 - January 17, 1997)

an avid amateur astronomer who discovered the ninth planet at the age of 24 while working at Lowell Observatory in Arizona. The discovery came on February 18, 1930, during an exhaustive search that involved tracing the movements of some 90 million points of light, one by one.

Tombaugh was a farm boy who built his first telescope in 1928 with parts of discarded farm machinery and a shaft from his father's 1910 Buick. He ground the mirrors himself. When he was retired, the Smithsonian Institute asked if it could have the telescope for its museum. He told them he was still using it.

Mike Dodd dedicates this book to

Cynthia

David Baumann dedicates this book to

Nancy J. Doman

After I told you that I regretted giving away all the series books I enjoyed in my youth, you gave me the original text version of *The Phantom Freighter* for my 40th birthday, thereby renewing my interest in series books. You can see what it has led to!

DESCENT INTO EUROPA

The Starman Team
gratefully dedicates this book
to

Harold Leland Goodwin
(1914-1990)

author of the Rick Brant series
(1947-1968, 1989)

*(The first three Rick Brant titles were written in partnership
with Peter Harkins.)*

The titles of every chapter in *Descent Into Europa* is also the title of a book written by Hal Goodwin. Permission for this tribute was given to the Starman Team by Chris Goodwin, son of the late author, and the manager of the Rick Brant Trust.

THE LOST RACE OF MARS

The Starman Team
dedicates this book to

Mr. Bobby Shawn Janoe

One of the themes in this book is how government officials can become corrupt and persecute innocent persons for personal advantage rather than uphold justice. Bob Janoe is a member of David Baumann's church who was arrested for murder in January 1992. He was tried twice since the first trial ended in a hung jury. At the second trial he was convicted and sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole. Briefly, there is evidence that Bob's defense attorney cooperated with the prosecutor. At one point, he told Bob he thought he was guilty, and he lost the defense evidence on his way to the courthouse. One witness for the prosecution lied on the stand, vindictively hoping to put Bob into prison. Bob later proved in court that the testimony was perjury and that the prosecutor knew it at the time. The witness later recanted and filed a statement indicating that she had lied. A prison chaplain, a newspaper columnist, attorneys, and others have reviewed Bob's case over the years and unanimously agree that he didn't get a fair trial and that the evidence of his innocence is overwhelming. He's now acting as his own attorney and is gradually winning one small victory after another, but not enough yet to gain either his freedom or a new trial. The dialogue at the [bottom of page 277 and the top of page 278 in *The Search for the Benefactors*] is adapted slightly from actual exchanges in court between the prosecutor and David when he was testifying on Bob's behalf.

[Note: as of this writing in February 2017, Bob is still in prison, now in his 26th year in custody. During 2016, the District Attorney's Office admitted that there was reason to review Bob's case, but to date has not followed up. David was told more than twenty years ago by experts that convicted prisoners who are innocent are rarely paid attention to unless they have a powerful attorney or a celebrity to publicize their case, thereby making it more advantageous to the prison system to grant justice to such persons than to ignore them when they are powerless.]

DOOMSDAY HORIZON

The Starman Team
dedicates this book to
the memory of

Wilbur and Orville Wright

who achieved humankind's
first sustained mechanical flight
with a heavier than air vehicle
precisely one hundred years
before the first publication of this volume.

Their success freed humankind from the Earth,
and prepared the way
for the future exploration of the planets and stars.

THE HEART OF DANGER

Since this book recounts
the new beginnings of
The Xenobot War,
the Starman Team dedicates this book to
the veterans of our Armed Forces,
especially those who
lost their lives in conflicts.

In particular,

David Baumann dedicates this book to
the grandfather he never knew,
Benjamin Franklin Baumann,
who was frequently ill after being gassed
in World War I,
and who finally died on January 21, 1934.

Jon Cooper dedicates this book to his grandfather
Earle Kinder,
who served in World War II
as an airplane mechanic in England.

Mike Dodd dedicates this book to his grandfather,
Charles Ancell,
propeller specialist for the Spitfires and
ambulance driver during the blitz in Coventry;
and his grandmother,
Mary Lockerbie Ancell,
first female lorry driver for the Royal Air Force to cross the Irish
Sea to deliver parts to the Yanks stationed there in Ireland during
World War II.

THE LAST COMMAND

The Starman Team dedicates this book to
the following persons:

Mike Dodd dedicates it to
Tina, Justin, and Ethan.

David Baumann dedicates it to his wife
Sherri
who watched him work on the Starman series
for seven years.

Jon Cooper dedicates it to his parents

PREFACE

By Dr. Michael Allison

... μειζονα ταυτης 'αγαπην ουδεις 'εχει, 'ιν
α τις την ψυχην 'αυτου θη 'υπερ των φιλων α
υτου.

I discovered the Starman books, as I suppose many others have, by a fluke of associated browsing on the world wide web. A few years ago, having retrieved from my parents' home my boyhood collection of some eighteen books from the Tom Swift Jr. series, I decided it would be fun to read them to my young son Caleb. (For any readers of this volume unaware of this among other antecedents to the Starman series, Tom Swift Jr. was a brilliant eighteen year-old inventor of nuclear-powered jets, submarines, spacecraft, and other vehicles of one after another far-flung adventure shared with his chum Bud Barclay and a

supportive scientist-father, set in the 1950s and '60s in which they were written.) One evening I decided to look for the Tom Swift series on the world wide web, and after a quick search found the site maintained there by Jon Cooper, this with a link to the Starman series. And soon I was hooked on a wonderful reprise of "The Future – The Way It Used to Be," as rendered by Jon and his associates David Baumann and Mike Dodd (aka Michael D. Cooper).

Growing up among the "Sputnik generation," then coming to adolescence within the first triumphant decade of NASA's human spaceflight program, I experienced Tom Swift and other adolescent science/space-fiction books, including those by Robert A. Heinlein and Madeleine L'Engle, as one of many anticipations of what I hoped would be a bright and not-too-distant spacefaring future. Today I work as a NASA scientist at the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York. Serving as a team member aboard the *Cassini/Huygens* mission to Saturn and Titan, I've been privileged to participate firsthand in the preliminary reconnaissance of the Solar System. I've witnessed three interplanetary launches from Cape Canaveral, and count myself lucky to have been born near the first moment when we could begin to send ships to other worlds.

And yet . . . *something* has been missing for me and, whether they know it or not, I think missing also for all the children and all told the more than half the human population living today born sometime *after* the last human flight to the Moon, now over three decades ago. Yes, "we" landed on the (be it noted very windy!) moon Titan hardly more than half a year ago now, "seeing" from the *Huygens* camera icy-orange vistas of what seem to be methane flow channels. (*cf.* Vol. 3 of the Starman series – *Journey to the Tenth Planet*, for a pre-Huygens view of Titan's likely episodic methane rain!) Yes, we are flying (via robotic spacecraft) through Saturn's rings, crashing a comet, and roving the dusty hills of Mars. And yes, we are this month (July 2005) anxiously awaiting the "Return to Flight" of NASA's brave astronauts aboard the space shuttle *Discovery*. And I for

one am cheering all the way for these.

Still *something* has been missing from all this for many years now. What should I call it? How about . . . *Destiny*? Too antiquated a word for postmodern ears? I suppose *Providence* would be even worse? Well how about *a light shining in the darkness*? Those who can remember the first human circumnavigation of the Moon, on Christmas Eve way back in 1968, can scarcely forget how three star-following wise men literally read to the whole world from there that night the first chapter of *Torah*.

Do I wax elliptically? Then enter the Starmen: David, Joe, and Mark . . . of Starlight Enterprise . . . and their service to *The Last Command*. Many if not most readers of this volume will have followed their adventures for some fifteen hundred pages now and will know at least that they are in for a ride.

SO – who ARE these guys!? I suppose that in the superficially different genre of Arthurian legend they would be the knights of the round table. Or perhaps in the lore of the American West, the Texas Rangers. And like these (in a way Tom Swift’s writers would never dare) they make mistakes. Sometimes they get discouraged. They *change*. And occasionally they cry. But I am only begging questions that the reader will find answered by the end of this book. Here’s a bit of my own experience of the way to its hearing . . .

Responding to a notice on their web page of a “major Starman conference” to be convened last May, I found myself invited to David Baumann’s reading of the final chapters . . . out under the stars of California’s Anza-Borrego Desert! I did not know what I had let myself in for that day . . . climbing the rock-strewn trail of an 800 ft. mountain in bake-oven heat, squeezing by flashlight through the very mud-cave tunnels we read about in *Assault on Mars*, I think I may have qualified for astronaut training. I was privileged to meet, among the other impressive members of this august desert company, a young college student represented in

the books by Commander Pleera of the Starship *Ossëan*²⁵. I did my best to keep up with her as we *charged* a towering hill of slippery granulated mud at about a 70° incline, wondering that I didn't fall and break my fool neck, this to witness the coming desert sunset against the caves. That night, enjoying our fire-roasted wieners and a katabatic rush of refreshing desert wind, we gazed upward at a waxing gibbous Moon high overhead, paired on that date with bright Jupiter no more than 4° away, then gathered round a kerosene lamp in rapt attention to David's reading of the last four chapters of the book you hold in your hands. It is of course not for me to spoil it. But let me assure you that the characters, the ideas, the integrities, and the steadfast hope you'll be reading in this book are as real as those possessed by the writers and their interwoven community . . .

Reading between the cosmic "quantum froth," the "hypertubes" and the Johannine iconography . . . Light and Darkness. Friend and Foe. Courage and Fear. Life and Death. Healing and Suffering. You'll find it all here. And I look forward to reading it again to my son.

One of the most provoking narrative backdrops to the Starman story is the presumption of a great "Collapse" of civilization in the mid-twenty-first century, triggered by the thermonuclear terrorist destruction of New York City in 2049. I happened to receive my first order of the first two volumes of the Starman series, along with a handwritten note from Jon, just a few days after September 11, 2001. Temporarily away from my family on a short-duty assignment at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution on Cape Cod, I had no television, and could only listen to the surreal report of tragic events over the crackling static of a New York radio station. It was odd to read of evenings that month the tale of hope in the midst of interplanetary terrorism, as recounted in *The Runaway Asteroid*. But as 9/11 and now 7/7 have reminded us, the best and the worst often

²⁵ Jon Cooper's sister April: April—plirA—Pleera.

come together.

Although most new books soon fall out of print and many are largely forgotten, every book, printed or electronic, has a chance of being carried into the future as a kind of message in a bottle. Despite the very limited printing and distribution so far enjoyed by the Starman books, I imagine that their subject and character may lend them to a valued preservation through the hands of a small number of today's children and the generation to come.

If you are along with me among those living into the first decade of the twenty-first century, then I implore you to do everything you can to keep this book's story and any others you may find like it alive as a gift to the future. We must try to remember as a cautionary tale Mark Seaton's musings over the lost Lucian culture: *At one time this race loved exploration. I wonder what happened? What made them turn?*

No one can say for sure whether or not it is already too late to avoid a coming great collapse by any number of the ongoing material and spiritual erosions to our society and culture. It has happened before. But if we should turn out to be the modern counterpart to fifth century Rome, I would like to suggest that we may yet not be without some reason for a well-kept merriment. We hold many treasures of reclaimable knowledge and experience (from astronavigation to organic agriculture) that will very likely survive in one form or another in at least a few corners of the world. And we have in our midst, however small in number, perhaps among those now counted as "the foolish and the weak," those sorts of greathearted human beings who can live forward on hope unseen. (I've known a few of them myself.) And you never know who may want to be a Starman from the stories people tell.

After many years there is at last a New Vision for Exploration now guiding America's space program and an equally important, growing cadre of Alternate Space pioneers such as Burt Rutan, working to open the frontier for everyone. I believe these efforts deserve the support of everyone reading this book. Today's children may be the first space citizens.

But if you who hold this book in your hands now, or see it scanned on some screen, should happen to be living into the long decades of a future earthbound era, please know that whatever your immediate circumstances may be, the road to the stars can be recovered. You can't build a kilogram of antimatter in a day. You may have to work back up through coal to methane to fusion or through something else we of my time cannot anticipate. But as for Richard Starlight, there will be a way upward for you or your descendants. Please know with Mark that home is a much bigger place than wherever you happen to be. And the most important resource will be something else entirely, as kept in *The Last Command*. I am quite certain of this conviction, as borne by a cloud of witnesses for more than two thousand years.

—Michael Allison
July 16, 2005

MASTER OF SHADOWS

The Starman Team
dedicates this book to our readers,
with thanksgiving for their
loyalty and encouragement
throughout the years of our project.

We are especially grateful to
those who gave much personal time and expertise
in many ways to help us create our stories:

in particular,
Fred Woodworth,
Valerie Kramer,
Mark McSherry,
Michael Allison,
Dafydd Neal Dyar,
Charlie Campbell,
and Jim Towey;

our artists
Bill Baumann,
Nick Baumann,
Mark Montgomery,
Baron Mrkva,
Kevin Anetsberger,
Josh Kenfield,
and Allison Oh;

and those who served at one time or another
in our Reading Group:

Mary Doman,
Mark and Benjamin Bennett,
Leslie Owens,
Laurel Barber Yoshimoto,
and Joi Weaver.

Early Artwork

Finding artists for the books was not as difficult as one might think. For one thing, both Mike and David had experience working with oils and acrylics, and David had done pen and ink work. Jon was very skilled in producing computer artwork. In addition, we knew several artists in various media who were willing to do some work for us, and a couple of fans also volunteered their skills with computer generated imagery.

Altogether, in addition to the Starman Team, we were assisted by David's father and son, Bill and Nick Baumann; Baron Mrkva, Creative Director at Patriot Video Productions in Fullerton, California; Kevin Anetsberger, a fan of the Starman series; Mark Montgomery, a long-time friend of David; and Josh Kenfield and Allison Oh, both of whom were members of David's church.

Bill painted the cover and drew the internal illustrations for *Assault On Mars*. When it was rewritten and reissued as *Mutiny On Mars*, Mike painted a new cover for it.

Nick painted the cover and drew the single internal illustration for *The Runaway Asteroid*.

Mike painted the cover and drew the single internal illustration for *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. Baron boosted Mike's painting into the master print for the cover.

Kevin did the cover and he and Mike did the internal illustrations for *Descent Into Europa*.

Bill painted the cover and David drew the internal illustrations for *The Lost Race of Mars*.

David painted the cover and drew the internal illustrations for *Doomsday Horizon*.

Mark painted the cover and Josh did the internal illustrations for *The Heart of Danger*.

Bill painted the cover and Josh did the internal illustrations for *The Last Command*.

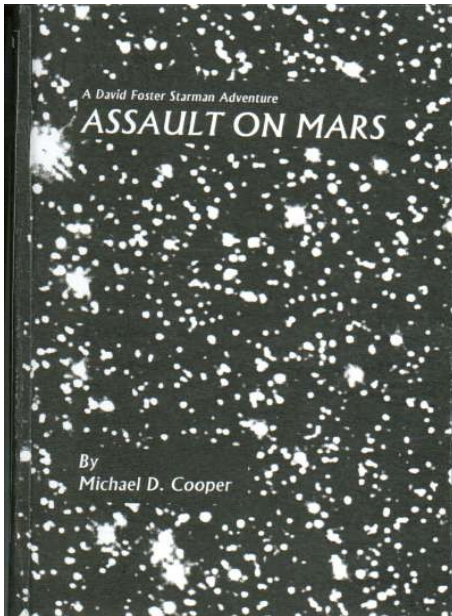
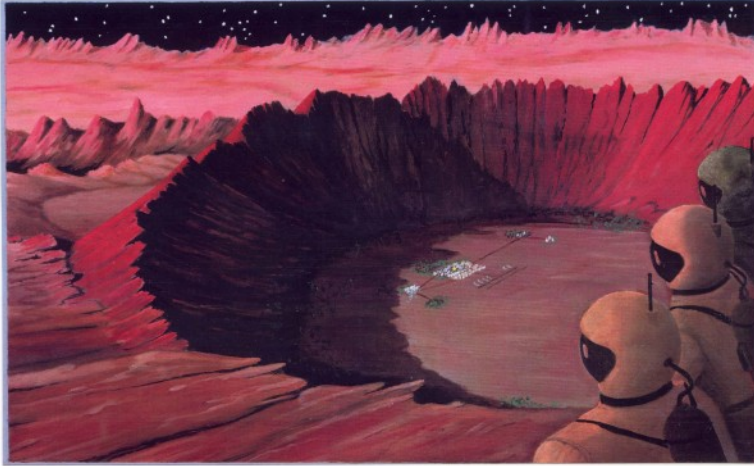
David drew the internal illustrations for *Paradox Lost*; since it was never issued as a separate novel, it never had a cover illustration.

Allison did the cover and internal illustrations for *Master of Shadows*.

For fun, Jon also produced a number of covers which were never considered for use on the first editions since we already had artwork for them. However, for the reissue of the Starman saga in 2016, we drew upon his previous work and some new work to create entirely new covers.

The Starman Team preferred what we called “full wrap” dust jackets, meaning that the cover illustration wrapped all the way around the book from front to back. The images were also designed to be used in the casewrap editions in which only the front cover is illustrated.

On the next page is a scan of the first painting, rendered by Bill Baumann, for the first book, *Assault on Mars*, early in its development. Note the air tanks (instead of NPACs) on the back of the Starmen!

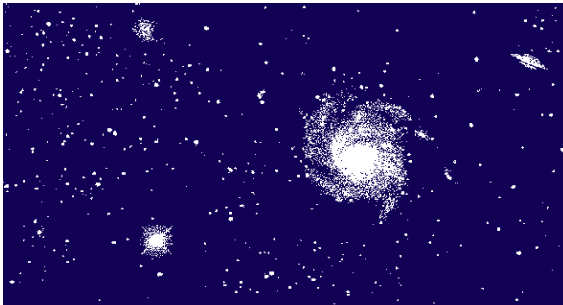


Here is a cover scan of the author's copy of *Assault on Mars*. Only three of these were made, one for each of the Starman Team, and each of them was personalized with the owner's name printed inside the book. Similar editions were prepared for the Starman Team for the next two books as well. Each of these was handmade.

While writing the first book, David was introduced by a friend to an amateur astronomer named Tom Narwid. David spent an entire evening at Tom's house in the desert of northern Arizona, looking through his telescope and discussing the stars with him. Tom volunteered to take a photograph through his telescope, which he later provided for our use. It was comprised of several thousand distinct colors, but we reduced that number to two and turned it into the first version of the endpapers for the Starman books.



The galactic photo Tom Narwid provided

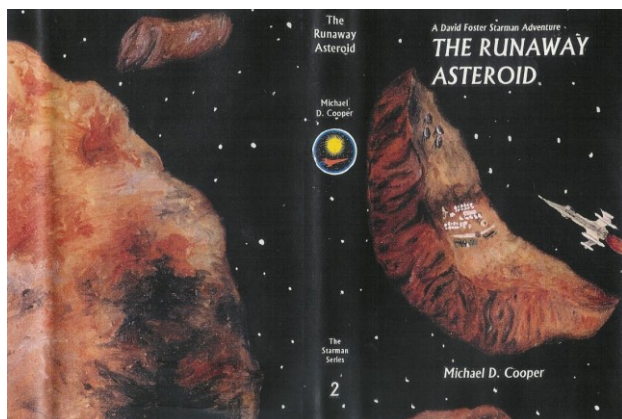


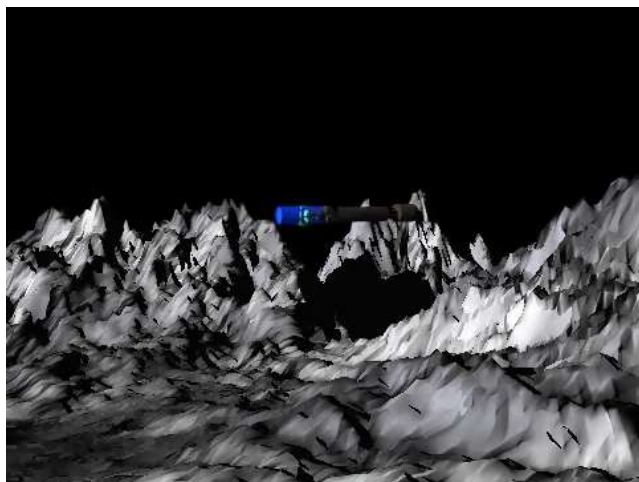
Tom's photo, converted to two-colors for use as endpapers. This image was used in the first editions of Starman books 2, 3 and 4.



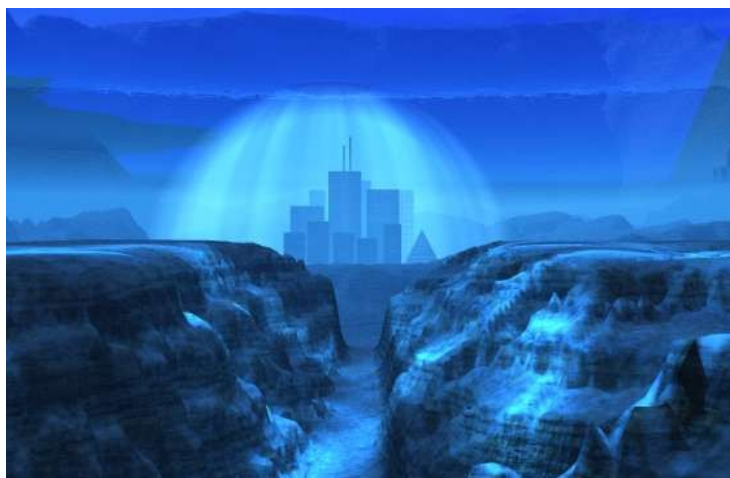
Jon's 3D mockup of the cover art for
The Runaway Asteroid

Here is the cover we finally used,
painted by David's son Nick.





This is a 3D Bryce mockup Jon did when we were trying to decide whether to use a space scene or a planet scene for the cover of *Journey to the Tenth Planet*.

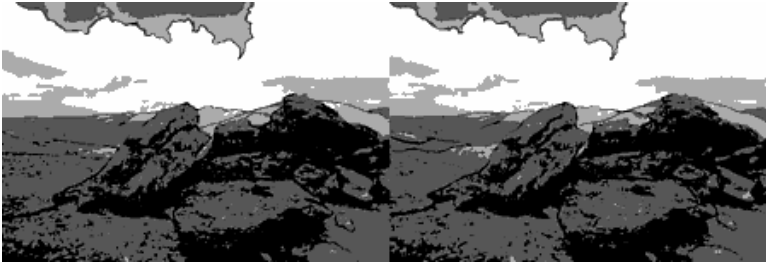


Jon's original 3D rendering for *Descent Into Europa*.

Starman fan Kevin Anetsberger, who was to create artwork for several Starman books and short stories, offered to provide a “cross-eye stereogram” for our endpapers. When we asked for an explanation, he said that a cross-eye stereogram presents two nearly identical photographs side-by-side. The viewer crosses his eyes while looking at a space between the two likenesses until a third image appears between them. This image will be three-dimensional.

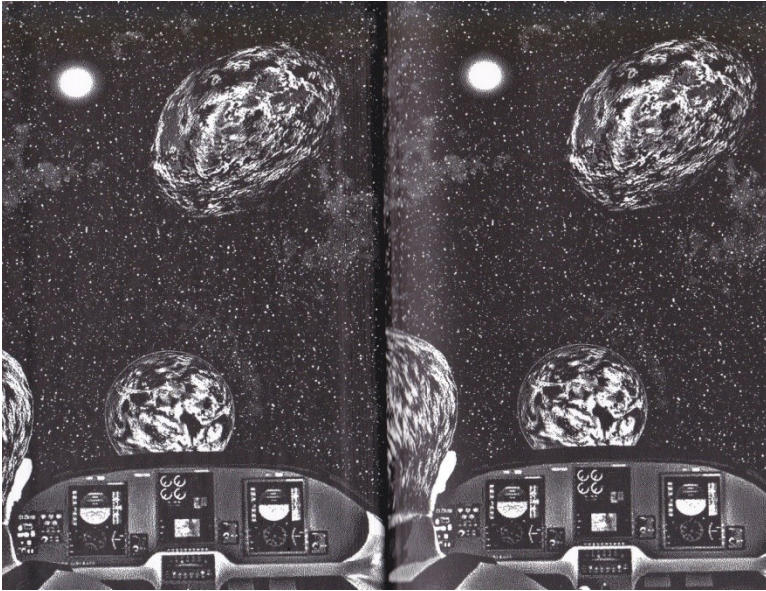
Kevin sent us an example in midsummer 2001. In his own words, “This is called a cross-eyed stereogram. Basically, you look at the image and cross your eyes until you see a single image in the center. Give your eyes a few seconds to focus and voila!” Here is the image he sent us.





Kevin's "Mars" stereogram, sent later.

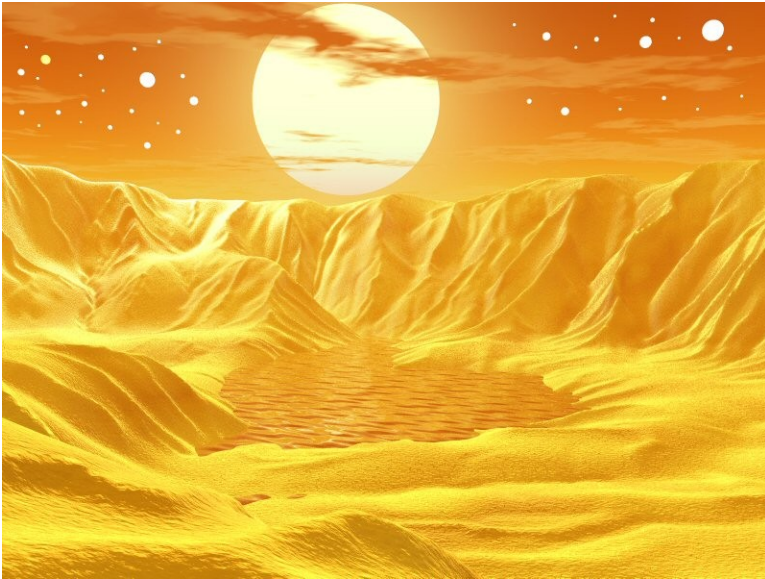
Of course we accepted Kevin's offer, and he produced the following.



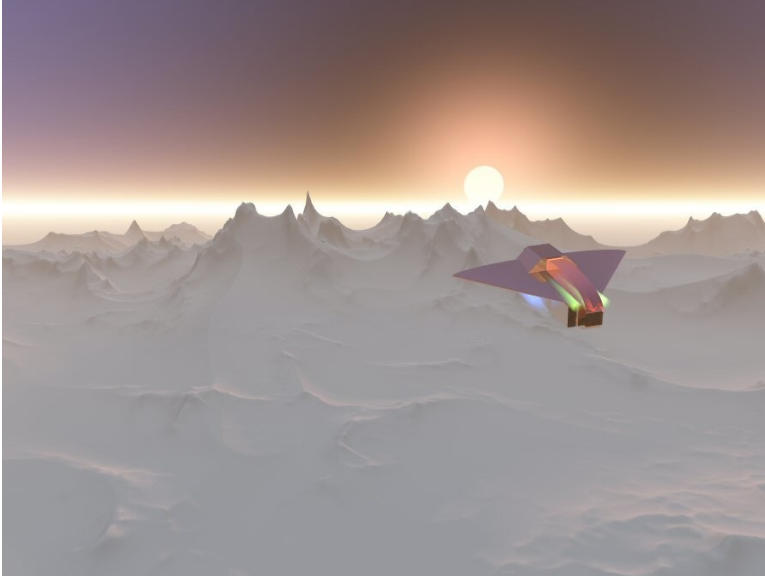
Jon noted, "We weren't able to use this idea in *Descent Into Europa*, but we did use it for the endpapers of the first edition of *The Lost Race of Mars*. The funny thing is that

not a single one of our readers have been able to get the stereogram to work! David, Mike and I (as well as Kevin, the artist) can make it work just fine, but we seem to be the only ones who can. The good thing is that the endpapers for that book are still nice, even if you can't make the stereogram to work – that's one of their big advantages over the 'Magic Eye'-type 3D images."

Here is a rendering Jon Cooper produced for Aden, the Janitor's home planet. It was first done while *The Last Command* was being written. Aden became an important site in *Master of Shadows*.



Here is a draft cover that Jon created when we were working on the short story, “The Caves of Mercury”. It shows the scene when the first Starman, Ezra Hill, was preparing to land on the first planet.



Likenesses of Some of the Characters

Writers must depend on each reader contributing his or her imagination to the story to fill out what people and places look like and what voices sound like. Sometimes it is helpful to have illustrations or photographs. As I was writing the Starman stories, once in a while I'd run across someone who looked like the character as I imagined him or her. I took photographs whenever I could to assist our artists. Here are some of them.



This is Dan Peckham, our model for Zip Foster.



This is Bill Rowley, our model for Joe Taylor.



This is Micah
Snell, our model
for Mark Seaton.



This is Jeff Wilson, our
model for Steve Cliff.



This is Father Richard and Marjorie Avery. They are the models for Richard and Margie Prester.

This Father Marion Petrescu, our model for Lurton Zimbardo.



This is Mr. Bedard,
our model for Richard
Starlight.

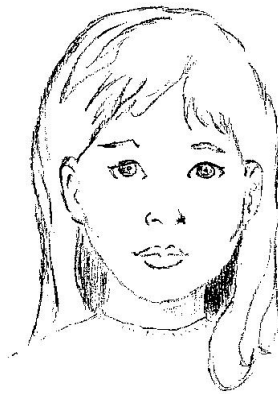


This is Mr. Peckham, in real
life the father of Dan
Peckham, or model for Zip.
Mr. Peckham is our model
for Robert Nolan.

This is Alex Parfitt at age eight. She was our model for eight-year-old Kathy Foster. Alex eventually became a black belt in David's karate school; she is now in her mid-twenties and married.



This is the illustration of young Kathy Foster that Mike did.



This is Ashley Romero Mangino. She is our model for the adult Kathy Foster.



This is Argo Silvestri, who also became a black belt in David's karate school. He is our model for Yancy Dufaure.

This is Tia Alexander, our model for Stenafi. The story behind her photograph is interesting. She was the greeter at a restaurant I walked into one day. After I sat down with my wife, I remarked that the greeter looked remarkably like what I had imagined for Stenafi; I never expected to find anyone with the striking likeness that I had imagined, so with my wife's cooperation I approached the greeter and said, "First, that's my wife over there [she turned and looked and my wife waved], so I don't want you to think that I'm some creep." Then I told her about the Starman books and so forth, and asked if I might take a couple of photographs of her for our artist to use as a likeness for Stenafi. She agreed, came to our table, and told me that she was a professional model. I told



her that all I could offer her in payment was a copy of the book, and she smiled and said “Okay.” I said I could send it to her at the restaurant, but she said that she might not be working there long and gave me her home address. I appreciated the trust she placed in me. I asked her what her ethnic heritage was, and she said, “Black and Native American.” I smiled, nodded, and responded, “Two venerable heritages.” I remember the date well, because she said it was her birthday—October 13, 2004. When *The Last Command* was finished the following summer I sent her a copy. Sadly, the photos I took of her in the restaurant didn’t come out very well, but fortunately there are now many photos of her available online, and the above is one of those.



This is one of the photographs I took in the restaurant.

Below is the illustration our artist created from the photo I provided him.



The Anza-Borrego Desert: Twenty-Second Century Mars

We have often said that the Anza-Borrego Desert in southern California provided the real-life setting for twenty-second Mars. It is here that the actual mud caves, introduced in the eleventh chapter of *Mutiny On Mars*, are found in a place called Tapiado Canyon. Friends of mine, Father Richard and Marge Avery who are the models for Richard and Marjie Prester, took me here in the spring of 2000. They had lived in the area fifty years earlier and knew it well. As soon as I saw the entrance to the great mud cave, I knew that it had to become part of the story that I just started writing. This is a photograph of the entrance, followed by the illustration drawn by artist Bill Baumann for that chapter.



The passage in *Mutiny On Mars* is found on page 107 of *The Dawn of the Starmen*:

Mark dropped his jaw, breathed a silent, "Wow!" and then just stared. A huge opening had appeared before the travelers, shaped with graceful curves, swirling sharply off to the right with an entrance at ground level about eight feet across, widening at the middle, and then narrowing into closure at the top about forty feet above them.

Mark's reaction on seeing the entrance to the mud cave was precisely my own when I first saw it.



There are more than a dozen mud caves in the area. Here is a photograph of me inside one of the caves, taken in March 2012, showing an opening to the sky.

The description of the mud caves in the text of the story is accurate to the reality in the Anza-Borrego:

The company moved into the shadows of the entrance. The sun was still on the far side of the palisade, and the cave mouth was dim. After they had entered and their eyes had become accustomed to the dimness, Mark spoke up.

"Look at the layers of sediment here. This was the bottom of a sea a long time ago." He pointed to the walls of the cave where there were subtle gradations of chalk, tan, ochre, brown, sienna, and loam shades in the light of the distant opening.

The dry climate of Mars kept the earth hard, but the occasional heavy rain created rapid floods that shot through washes and narrow defiles. There were many caves in the palisade, winding, overhung, patterned, and excoriated with signs of urgent water flow, yet dusty and (in places) crumbly to the touch. Only the one cave was large and accessible.

Most were not really caves, since they were open to the sky and illuminated with shafts of light, yet there were places where the overhang was severe, creating places of dim shadows. The mud caves were dusty, waterless places except in the times



of flood, when surging waters whirled through the defiles, eroding the sides and carving out smooth, curved places under the mud cliffs.

No part of the path was straight for more than twenty or thirty feet; it was bewilderingly circuitous, yet led inexorably to the southeast, toward the plain before the Martian Sea. Eagle Crater lay beyond the sea.

Steve said, "Doesn't rain in the desert too often, but I'll bet it usually falls hard when it comes. The water gushes swiftly and finds the path of least resistance. The hard-packed earth of the palisade, baked for millennia in the sun, is easy to carve, lots easier than stone. Over the decades since terraformation began and water was released back into the ecosystem, hard rain has shaped the palisade and produced many caves."

The company had been hiking for about two hours when Jogren called a halt for a meal and a time of rest. Though there were passages where they walked through a true tunnel, most of the time they were trekking through an extremely narrow canyon. The opening to the sky was narrower than the level on which they were walking, and was rarely straight overhead.

They set down their packs and tried to find a spot to stretch out. Wan sunlight slanted in from above like a sunbeam through an attic window. Jack and Jill jumped to the earth and began to explore.

The lonely beauty around them was

profoundly impressive. The water had carved the passages with perfectly natural curves and swirls. The Starmen had never seen anything like the mud caves. They could only be produced on a dry planet, sun-baked for millennia, which suddenly began to experience heavy rains repeatedly for the first time in centuries.

Between 2000 and 2012 I made many expeditions to this area with large and small groups, including several Starman fans. It was a three-hour drive from my home, so more often than not we camped overnight. Here is a view of the Milky Way from the place we usually chose for our campsite. The photo is not one of my own, but one I found online.



The trails to some of the mud caves are actually very narrow arroyos or canyons. They are called “slot trails” or “slot canyons”. Here is a photograph of one of them:



One can drive quite far into the area where the mud caves are found, even without four-wheel drive. The road looks like this:



At the top of the palisade, it is easier to see how the caves were formed by heavy rains over thousands of years on a very thick sediment of what had once been the bottom of an ocean.



In the fifth novel, now called *The Treasures of Darkness*, the Starmen Zip and Mark are guided by Jogren away from the concealed outside entrance to an access point to *Imlah Taltahni*. This is the passage, found on page 368 of *The Search for the Benefactors*:

"I show you," repeated Jogren, "Come."
He followed a narrow path along the top of a ridge with a precipitous drop down on both sides. It followed the natural curve of the lines of the mountain in a gradual descent, turning from side to

side, dropping steeply for a short distance then rising again.

After a walk of about half a mile, Jogren stopped. The path had turned sharply to the right and its continuance could be seen without obstruction for at least another half mile; then it became lost in the bewildering turns of the sharp foothills.

This is what they saw:



And another view:



At sunrise, it looks like this:



It was in our usual camping spot that a select group of ten people first heard me read aloud the conclusion to *The Last Command*. An account is given beginning on page 656.

The Audiobooks—Americana and Roy Trumbull

In the fall of 2002, Starman fan Mark McSherry sent the first three Starman books to *Analog* magazine for review. To our surprise and pleasure, not only did a review appear in the November 2002 issue, but the review was positive. I wrote a letter to the reviewer and said, in part,

Thank you for your review of the first three books in the Starman series that appeared in the November issue of “Analog.” My partners in the project, Jon Cooper and Mike Dodd, and I were pleased not only that you accepted the books for review, but that your comments were positive and encouraging.

Enclosed you will find books four and five. With them, the first segment of the saga of the Starmen is complete. In a way, the first four stories lead up to book five, which is our long-awaited culmination to the first part of our story. If you see fit to prepare a follow-up review for “Analog”, we’ll be delighted, but if not, we still want you to have these books so that you will at least have the complete story.

The reviewer read books four and five and the following summer *Analog* published a second, positive review. I sent the reviewer a second letter, and said, in part,

You may want to know that, as a result of this second item, an agent for Americana Publishing, Inc. referred to our website, downloaded our free book, and “was hooked,” to use his words. Americana has bought the audio rights to our six published books and a novelette that appeared in serial format in our newsletter. These seven books will be produced as “books on tape,” and will be available in the

middle of next year.

Americana Publishing was based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They wanted our books to be abridged to no more than 33,000 words, which meant cutting them down to almost half. I was able to do that without too much trouble. They wanted to publish *The Lost Race of Mars* unabridged, however, in three separate productions.

We signed a contract to provide typescripts of the Starman books through *Doomsday Horizon*, which was as far as we had written at the time. Since I had to abridge *Assault on Mars* anyway, I took the opportunity to rewrite it before abridging it. What we had written first just for fun had become a far more serious project with much greater popularity than we had ever anticipated. That being the case, we had always been a little uncomfortable that our first book wasn't at quite the same level as the others. The rewrite was given our original working title, *Mutiny on Mars*, and it fit much better into the subsequent story.

According to our contract, we were to receive two author's copies each, plus about ten cents for every book sold. They were distributed in truck stops across the nation. I still remember the pleasure I felt when I pulled into a truck stop nearly a thousand miles from home and finding Starman audiobooks on sale.

The reader was an actor named Carol Eason. He did a superb job of reading, creating accents and personality styles with his voice.

At first the books were sold on audiocassettes, and Americana told us that if they sold well enough, they'd reissue them on CDs. Apparently they did sell to Americana's satisfaction, for all of the books came out later

as CDs.

Regrettably, Americana was not the most reputable company to work for. Even getting our author's copies was not easy, and I had to request them more than once with nearly every production. And getting the royalties finally took a threat. After well over a year of receiving no royalties at all in spite of numerous requests and then demands, I wrote to every Episopal church in Albuquerque asking the pastor if he had an attorney in his congregation, and briefly explained our situation. One attorney did contact us and eventually sent a stern letter to Americana. As a result we received a royalty check for a little more than \$2,500—which told us that more than 25,000 copies of the Starman audiobooks had been sold.

Americana went out of business shortly afterwards, and the audiobooks were no longer produced or distributed. Once we had written *The Heart of Danger* and *The Last Command*, we tried to find Carol to record them for us, but were not successful. Years later I found him on Facebook, thanked him for his work for us, and sent him a complimentary copy of an entire set of first editions.

In the meantime, however, we had the first seven books recorded, but not the last two. Then out of the blue a hobbyist named Roy Trumbull wrote to ask if he could record our books. He was a retired man in northern California who liked to record books for one or two online groups that made audiobooks produced by volunteers. Roy recorded *The Runaway Asteroid* (unabridged), and then recorded *The Heart of Danger*, *The Last Command*, and eventually *Master of Shadows*.

Except for the short stories, the entire Starman series is now available as audiobooks (some of them abridged).

What We Were Trying to Do

When the Starman books were being published, the Starman Series Yahoo Group was quite active. Readers posted many comments and asked questions, which the Starman Team responded to. Some of the questions inspired some lengthy essays. Here are some of them, selected to show just what it was that the Starman Team was trying to do.

Is There a Religious Message in the Starman Series?

Yes.

It is not the authors' first intention to make the series a subtle tool for "preaching." Rather it is first of all that the books be enjoyable to people across the spectrum of belief, but we do have something to share. We're taking a little-traveled road in the series book field by putting philosophical and religious matters into the books, but even this has some precedents in the series book world. Putting these issues in our stories rather than ignoring them makes the stories closer to reality. After all, no matter what any given reader's personal convictions may be, everyone does have some kind of philosophy of life, and each person's philosophy is refined by encountering others' philosophies. The authors believe that ignoring that fact of life in a series book would keep it at a shallow level, and we don't find that satisfying either to read or to write. The creators of the Starman series are well aware that we are building upon a venerable history and are dependent upon the giants who have preceded us; at the same time, we do not hesitate to break new ground or set new precedents.

It has been made clear from the first advertisements for the Starman series that the writer, David Baumann, is an Episcopal

priest. Jon Cooper and Mike Dodd are also Christians. It should not be a surprise that there are some Christian images in the books, but they haven't been placed furtively to sneak Christianity into the story. They're there because, as any author should who cares about producing a good book, the writer draws upon what he knows best and uses the images and symbols with which he is most familiar. If he wrote about something of which he was ignorant, the book wouldn't be realistic or convincing.

Like Hal Goodwin (who wrote the Rick Brant series) and Sam Epstein (who wrote the Ken Holt series), David draws upon his own skills and experiences to produce the Starman books in a conscious choice to aim for good quality. Although his work as a priest and pastor is definitely done in a Christian milieu, it also involves just a lot of experience with people in the various crises of their lives and how they relate to one another, solve problems, reason, and feel. The images are there for the same reason that Hal wrote about New Caledonia and Sam wrote about journalism: writing is at its best when the author writes about what he knows.

Long experience has helped David to gain insight into how people reason, feel, and act in times of struggle, challenge, depression, anger, etc. These are the things the reader will find in the Starman series—in *Assault On Mars*, there are flippant but dependable and courageous Steve, analytical and occasionally depressed Zip, Joe who uses humor to hide uncertainty, open-minded Mark leaning toward credulity. In *The Runaway Asteroid*, there are treacherous Zimbardo, fearful Gene, simple but good-hearted St. George, independent and principled Vly. In *Journey to the Tenth Planet*, there is the brilliant but unbalanced O. The ways in which these persons handle life is not solely a religious matter, but because of David's profession he discerns and understands them in people, and describes them in the terms most familiar to him.

Overall, the Starman series is about personalities, relationships, and choices that are developed through the telling of an adventure story. The subtlety of the religious side is not out of duplicity but because it is natural to the writer's imagery—as Hal Goodwin wrote of science and travel, and Fran Striker wrote of respect for primitive peoples. David uses images and symbols. Some of the villainous names in *Runaway Asteroid* are obviously symbolic: Slant, Gebbeth, Withers, *Tartarus*, Crass, etc. The name O in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* symbolizes a person who is both complete and empty. We think such use of symbolism adds to the tale rather than distracts from it.

In more than a few cases, the characters in the books are based on real people. Many of the places are real places. Hal Goodwin used the same techniques and it brought terrific verisimilitude to the Rick Brants. In Starman, there are insights into people's way of thinking and feeling. In *The Runaway Asteroid*, there is a minor character named Jesus. It should be obvious that the name is to be pronounced Hay-soos, and he is also based on a real person—a guileless and confident individual. At one level in the story, he is a Christ-figure, but we think not in any way that would interrupt the story, offend the unbeliever, or make the unwary feel that he has been waylaid.

The broad-stroke message in the Starman books is that light will always conquer darkness, good will conquer evil. The message is stated several times in different ways in each of the books. It is a message common to all people of good will. The fine-stroke theme of the books is to extol basic virtue—true pleasure, honor, integrity, loyalty, patience, respect, endurance, resourcefulness, etc. We express these things in Christian terms because that's how we know them best, but these virtues are common to good people of various faiths or none.

After reading *Assault On Mars*, one correspondent shared with us his reaction to the religious issues:

“The writers, clearly alive to potential controversy, have gone out of their way to address this issue with care and sensitivity. None of the religious allusions that I found affected the plot in any way, and they were sufficiently infrequent as to pose no more than an occasional minor annoyance to one who might find such an agenda distasteful. And although I most definitely count myself among the latter audience, I feel compelled to applaud the writers’ approach, which took such pains to emphasize the STORY, and which never, not even once, ever compromised the plot in order to point a moral.”

Introduction to the Starman Series

I have forgotten the details of the following entry, but I do remember that there was someone who was interested in the series and wanted to know more about it. So I wrote the following and called it “Introduction to the Starman Series prepared for Claire Wong”.

THE ORIGIN AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE SERIES

In the summer of 1998, a team of three fans of the classic children’s series books of the 1950s made contact with one another through a web site dedicated to the Tom Swift Jr. series. The three of us—Jon Cooper, Mike Dodd, and David Baumann—found that we had not only a common interest in such books, but a combination of skills that had the potential to produce a similar series in our own day. We began a collaboration that eventually created a new series for readers in the twenty-first century, books in the genre of Tom Swift Jr., Tom Corbett, Dig Allen, Rick Brant, Ken Holt, and other juvenile series that were popular fifty years earlier.

We refer to ourselves as the Starman Team, and write under the pseudonym “Michael D. Cooper”—a combination of our three names. The Team is well aware that the golden age of series

books ended in the late 1960s. Nevertheless, perhaps against the odds, the Team wanted to create a series of stories both reminiscent of that age and appealing to contemporary readers. Like the classic books, there is no foul language and no extreme violence in the Starman series. Although the series is painstakingly up to the minute with scientific facts, discoveries, and theories, it is not merely “science fiction.” It is designed to encourage the human mind and spirit and extol the virtues of courage, honesty, and good-heartedness. The lead characters follow a philosophy that life is good, the creation is exciting as well as beautiful, hope is reasonable and worthwhile, and the spirit of adventure is worth pursuing.

WHO IS THE SERIES FOR?

Our readers include older children, from about the age of ten and into the teen years. However, most of our readers are adults, including a Ph.D. level chemist and retired NASA scientist. The books are written at an advanced juvenile level. Children who are good readers, or those who wish to become good readers, as well as adults enjoy the stories.

CHRISTIANITY UNDERGIRDS THE STORIES

The three members of the Starman Team found early in our friendship that all of us are Christians. We determined that, although it is not our first intention to make the series a subtle tool for “preaching,” the books we produced would be undergirded by a strong commitment to Christian orthodoxy. As we write, we are guided primarily by John 1:5—“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Our first intention is that the books be enjoyable to people across the spectrum of belief, but we do have something to share. We’re taking a little-traveled road in the series book field by putting philosophical and religious matters into the books, but even this has some precedents in the series book world. Putting these issues in our stories rather than ignoring them makes the stories

closer to reality. After all, no matter what any given reader's personal convictions may be, everyone does have some kind of philosophy of life, and each person's philosophy is refined by encountering others' philosophies. The authors believe that ignoring that fact of life in a series book would keep it at a shallow level, and we don't find that satisfying either to read or to write. The creators of the Starman series are well aware that we are building upon a venerable history and are dependent upon the giants who have preceded us; at the same time, we do not hesitate to break new ground or set new precedents.

We have made it clear from the first advertisements for the Starman series that the writer, David Baumann, is an Episcopal priest, and that Jon Cooper and Mike Dodd are also Christians. It should not be a surprise that there are some Christian images in the books. The broad-stroke message in the Starman books is that light will always conquer darkness, good will conquer evil. The message is stated several times in different ways in each of the books. It is a message common to all people of good will. The fine-stroke theme of the books is to extol basic virtue—true pleasure, honor, integrity, loyalty, patience, respect, endurance, resourcefulness, etc. We express these things in Christian terms because that's how we know them best, but these virtues are common to good people of various faiths or none.

But we ourselves are convinced, without apology, that Christianity is true and that any other philosophy or religion falls short of the truth as it is in Jesus. The basic and essential beliefs of the Christian faith are at the heart of the saga: the fall, the pervasiveness of sin, fear and love, forgiveness, mercy, sacrifice, redemption, resurrection, judgment, and salvation.

THE BACKGROUND TO THE SAGA

Though the series is intended to fit into the genre of the classic series books, from the beginning the Starman series was not

envisioned as a sequence of unrelated adventures like those of the classic era; rather, the Starman Team first roughed out an epic spanning a period from the moment of creation to the distant future. The Starman series, though made up of a set of separate adventures, actually tells one long story that continues from book to book. The saga takes place during the 2150s, a short but intense span of time that sees a host of momentous events in the epic.

During these years, the people of Earth gradually learn the true history of the Solar System and take their part in the second defense of the Solar System against its ancient enemy. This defense begins in *Assault On Mars* and continues on an expanding scale in the subsequent books. The real enemy is not even identified and encountered until the third book. Although there are many clues in the first four books, the full history of the Solar System is not revealed until the fifth book, the gripping conclusion to the first segment in the Starman saga.

We created a plausible history before the first book opens in the mid-21st century. We hypothesize that at the end of the 20th century, the world economy was booming. Within two decades, however, most multinational corporations had overreached themselves and a severe, global depression set in, unprecedented in scope. All efforts to counter it failed. Governments fell and the infrastructure of the planet decayed, initiating the worst period in human history. The age became known as the Collapse, and was characterized by worldwide violence, terrorism, and unrestrained criminal opportunism.

But the 21st century ended with a glimmer of hope. The concepts of stewardship, accountability, and mutual responsibility revived. Thomas Starlight founded Starlight Enterprise in 2089, committed to rebuilding the Earth and its culture. Initially a company dedicated to finding new sources of energy, it quickly became known for high ideals, philanthropy, and interplanetary

ventures.

In the early 22nd century, Starlight Enterprise produced its first Starmen. The Starmen were the gifted and highly trained venturers of Starlight Enterprise. With their exploits, a new age of exploration and discovery began. Earth had not seen such a time for more than six centuries, when Columbus, Magellan, Drake, and others had set sail to discover new worlds.

The Starman Series chronicles the adventures of three Starmen: David “Zip” Foster, Joe Taylor, and Mark Seaton. These three are not overt Christian believers, but are rather presented as good and heroic young men who, in the course of their ventures, are inquirers and searchers for truth. As the saga unfolds and the climactic confrontation between good and evil approaches, so do the young Starmen come to discern the true purpose and meaning of life.

The consummation of the series will take place in the last volume, *The Last Command*, which will chronicle the vast interstellar war that pits Earth and her allies against a monstrous tyrannical alien force. All other entries in the series lead up to this climactic story.

Another Reflection

[This reflection appeared in the Inter*Stellars, the fanzines for the Starman series mentioned later in this book, but seems best suited for inclusion in this book at this point.](#)

The Starman series has many, many small tributes in it. For example, in *Descent Into Europa* there is a line that reads, “the darkness enveloped them like an invisible enemy.” This, as I hope is obvious [to collectors of classic series books], is a tribute to Ken Holt (see book 14). Some tributes are blatant, others very

subtle. We do this with our corporate tongue somewhat in cheek to have fun, but mostly to show that we know that the Starman series rests on the strengths of its predecessors.

At the same time, the Starman Team does not hesitate to break new ground when it wants to do so. There are many things we have done for the first time, to the best of our knowledge, in the series book genre.

The recent excellent exchanges over science, etc. have been most helpful and enlightening. The Team was not aware of all of the scientific inaccuracies, implausibilities, and impossibilities, but we were aware of many of them. We are trying, deliberately, to walk the line between scientific accuracy and telling a story—and not just telling any story, but telling a story *THE WAY STORIES FELT IN THE 1950s*. We WANT the stories to feel like the fifties, but with the science of the early 21st century. This means on the one hand a ridiculously-heavily packed asteroid belt, but also computer technology to traverse it. We take the science seriously, but do not feel bound by strict accuracy; our errors will sometimes be deliberate and sometimes not, but we try to make sure that they will never be the result of stupidity or carelessness.

Our philosophy of writing and our methodology are really rather complex, now that I think about it, and consistent. After having set that as our background, we really do, as one fan wrote, just press the accelerator into the carburetor!

We also hypothesized the Collapse in the mid-21st century to serve several purposes: one purpose was to provide us with a kind of “escape hatch” from having to satisfy a lot of assumptions of our own time. We could just assume, when we wanted to, that 22nd society had changed enormously because of the Collapse. That frees us from having to use the current terminology for designating asteroids, for example, or following the projected train of discovery of Martian probes.

We accept the recent hypothesis that there is water on Mars in the northern hemisphere just under the surface, but add to that the preposterous notion that there was a primitive people who lived there. We suggest the completely implausible notion of a solid hologram, but leave that to “future science.” We try really hard to avoid the scenario of “science explains all via a *deus ex machine*,” but also leave just enough mystery of what a very advanced race like the Benefactors could do.

Personally, I think that our scientific foundation and plausibility are just below the standard set in Rick Brant—whose science was one generation ahead of its time and not a century and a half, and whose author (unlike the Starman Team) was a NASA scientist. I am eager to be corrected, but I think we are more realistic than Tom Corbett (in many ways, not least because we are fifty years later than he in the amount of scientific knowledge we have to draw from), Dig Allen, and certainly Tom Swift Jr.

If we put TOO much attention to scientific accuracy, we will not have enough mystery left to work with if we want to write an exciting story. The scientific commentary in the past day or two, had we known about all the issues that have been raised, would certainly have changed the way we wrote the existing books. (For example, one fan, Dan Henton, is a Ph.D. chemist, who provided for us the vision of methane rain and snow on Titan; without his input the scene would have been very different and less convincing.) We learn as we write. Mike Dodd, who is our science advisor as well as plot-twister, is an amateur—yet extremely knowledgeable in the fields upon which we draw.

In short, when we create our stories we draw on three tools: the anchor of realistic science, the sail of imagination, and the rudder of our message. If any one of these takes over or gets out of balance, the ship won’t “go.”

OVERALL, all our readers should know that we are NOT really writing a science-based series. The science is often left deliberately nebulous (for example, what we are doing with artificial gravity) so that we don't get too anchored with scientific detail. The series is really about RELATIONSHIPS and CHOICES in the context of the eternal, mythic battle between LIGHT AND DARKNESS. The images, the characters, the plots, the unfolding of each volume and the gradual revelation of the entire saga are all under THAT top priority, in which the Xenobots and Benefactors are the background combatants.

This theme or message was focused, for example, in Lurton Zimbaro who always chose darkness; in his five underlings in Journey to the Tenth Planet who chose darkness until the last minute; and in Gene Newman, who chose light after darkness (his name is "Eugene"—Latin for "new beginning"—and whose last name "Newman"—New Man—was not revealed until his encounter with the good guys). The theme is now unfolding in the narrative of Robert Nolan—watch what happens to him! —for he is a "sleeper" whose tale (envisioned by the Team three books ago) suddenly becomes dramatically critical in *Descent Into Europa*!

I hope that I will be able to finish writing the first draft of *Descent Into Europa* by the end of the year. It is about two-thirds finished now. Then it will have to be read by others and then rewritten. Then it will go to the publisher. As soon as the manuscript leaves my hands, others will take over the production of the book and I will begin writing the fifth book. (There are, in fact, several scenes already written—parts of this book are a year and a half old.) Jon Cooper's summary alone is half as long as Assault On Mars. THIS BOOK CARRIES OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE AND EXCITEMENT! We have been waiting TWO YEARS to put this one together. It will tie up all loose ends, resolve all sub-plots, and solve all mysteries. We consider the first five books the real Introduction to the Starman series.

Once the Starman pentology has been produced, the REAL heart of the series can get launched.

The Inter*Stellars

The popularity of the Starman books led to Jon Cooper's creating a yahoo board where fans and the authors could interact with comments, reviews, and questions. The board was quite active during the intense years when the books were being written and published as fast as we could get them out. It was Mike Dodd who suggested that we create a fanzine that could ride on the energy of these exchanges, and also suggested that the name of the fanzine be The Inter*Stellar. Eventually five of these were produced—written, printed, assembled, and mailed out by David Baumann. About fifty people were on the mailing list, each with a paid subscription. The subscriptions helped us fund the printing of the books.

The Inter*Stellars included letters from readers, news from the Starman Team, trivia, and advance notice of upcoming stories. It was in the fanzine that some of the Starman short stories first saw print.

Here are some of the highlights of the five issues.

Inter*Stellar

A fanzine dedicated to the Starman Series

Issue Number One

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February 2001

Introducing the Inter*Stellars

Thank you for your interest in the first issue of The Inter*Stellar, the fanzine for the Starman series. The Starman team decided to produce a Starman fanzine for several reasons. One is that readers of the Starman books have asked a number of questions about the series that are best answered in this format. Another is that there is an enormous body of material that is part of the Starman world but is not likely ever to appear in any of the books, yet which forms an important part of the project; the Inter*Stellars will make it possible for us to share some of this material. And finally, and maybe most importantly, as a way to raise funds for the Starman Project.

The Starman Message

Should series books have a “message”? Of the dozens of well-known and collectible series of the 20th century, probably the chief purpose of them all was to entertain to their readers. In a few cases, there was a message, but it was always secondary to the story. In his Scouting books, Percy Keese Fitzhugh, on behalf of the Scouting movement delivered the message that the Boy Scouts were a wonderful organization which all red-blooded,

wide-awake boys should join. Hal Goodwin reflected on the meaning of life in his last book, *The Magic Talisman*, and commented on institutional care. The Tom Quests made positive comments about what today we would call racism.

But apart from these incidental and occasional “messages,” series books did have something to say. The good guys always won, the bad guys always lost. Frank and Joe Hardy always caught the criminals; Ken and Sandy always out-reasoned their opponents, escaped their captors, and saw the ne’er do wells carted off to jail; Tom Swift Jr. always outwitted the Brungarians.

In many ways, Western culture has changed a lot since the days when radio or black and white television were the common means of entertainment in the home, when gas cost 30 cents a gallon, and most children had both a father and mother under one roof. In spite of these changes, and in many ways because of them, the Starman series delivers the same message: good conquers evil, virtue is its own reward, and a good heart is the ultimate pre-condition of joy.

Using the symbol of light in darkness, our message is that light will always conquer darkness. The message is stated several times in different ways in each of the Starman books. The first time it was stated unambiguously was when Richard Starlight explained it to new Starmen Joe and Mark in Chapter 4 of *Assault On Mars*. The message was so important that we quoted him in the front endpaper of that book:

“... my father ... took a name to signify light in the great darkness, as stars are points of light in the darkness of space. Maybe overwhelming darkness, but still characterized by light, the inspiring light of beauty and adventure, which the darkness cannot overcome.”

The Starman team did not set out to deliver a “message”; we set out to write a good series of adventure stories—and that itself is the “message.” Our models are Harold Goodwin (“John Blaine,” author of the Rick Brant series, 1947-1968, 1989) and Sam Epstein (“Bruce Campbell,” author of the Ken Holt series, 1949-1964). In our opinion, these two authors take top honors in the field of series book writing. They were intentional about making their series the best they could, and we have made the same commitment.

Hal was a NASA scientist. His knowledge of science appeared in the Rick Brant books. He himself noted in the mid-1980’s that every invention he’d written about except one had come to exist. The “mind-reader” is the only exception. He traveled widely in the south Pacific and other parts of the world. His knowledge of people, places, and culture appeared also in the Rick Brants. This approach to writing lent verisimilitude to the stories.

Sam was a journalist and photographer. His Ken Holt books were about a journalist and a photographer. He traveled in Mexico and knew New England well. These provide many convincing settings for the Ken Holt series.

Like these two masters of the series book genre, the members of the Starman team draw upon their own skills and experiences to produce the Starman books. Jon’s experience in world travel, computer science, and communications are part of his contribution to the stories. Mike’s ability to create small, functioning machines, his remarkable memory, and ability to come up with highly imaginative ideas are part of his contribution. David’s knowledge of martial arts, Latin, and years of experience dealing with people in crisis or other of life’s great moments are part of his contributions to the writing.

In addition, all three team members are active Christians. While it is not the intention of the Starman team to make the series a

subtle tool for “preaching,” we write of what we know. C. S. Lewis’ *Chronicles of Narnia* are enjoyed by an enormous number of people, though the seven books are a skillfully-told recounting of Christian beliefs. Those who do not share the Christian beliefs or do not discern them in the stories are still able to enjoy them.

The *Starman* books contain a number of subtle Christian references and images. We are not sneaking these images into the reader as a manipulative way to “get to” people. Rather it is our intention first of all that the books be enjoyable to people of different faiths or none. The images are there for the same reason that Hal Goodwin wrote about New Caledonia or Sam Epstein wrote about journalism: writing is at its best when the author writes about what he knows.

The three *Starman* are flawed characters. They occasionally make bad decisions, use faulty judgment, get discouraged, even argue among themselves. They do not overtly practice any particular religion, but they are good people. Mark especially is “searching” for something.

Our message and intention was expressed in the Afterword to *Assault On Mars*:

We intend to produce a series of stories which encourage the human mind and spirit; extol the virtues of courage, honesty, and good-heartedness; and whose characters follow a philosophy that life is good, the creation is exciting as well as beautiful, hope is reasonable and worthwhile, and the spirit of adventure is worth pursuing.

We are inspired by Hal Goodwin and Sam Epstein, who said that they wrote because it was fun, to give their readers pleasure, and to express virtues which are common to all people: honor, honesty, generosity, service to others, heroism, patience. The best of the classic series books extolled these virtues as well, and this

is what made them great books. It will be up to the readers of the Starman series to decide what place our series deserves.

Some figures on the Starman series.

The Starman team has worked with determined attention to detail so that the books would look like the classic series books. This means that each has a frontispiece, each is a hardback with a dust jacket. They are cut to the same size as the classic books and the appearance of the pages fits right into the genre.

Although the books are typed on a computer, the font and format are chosen so that they will look as much as possible like the classic books. This adds to our labor and greatly increases the cost of producing the books, but it is important to us to maintain these standards. We want the books of the Starman series to sit on a shelf next to the Rick Brants, Ken Holts, and Tom Swift, Jr.'s, and look as if they fit right in.

The comment of one of our first customers confirms that we have attained this goal: *"The Starman book arrived today. It looks like it just came out of a time vault, like those other Dig Allen and Tom Swift books! You certainly captured the look and feel of an old-time series."* (from Greg Sisk)

We have avoided the temptation to issue the books in paperback or with larger pages and smaller type size—all of which would reduce the cost dramatically. We are not interested in making these "ebooks."

Assault On Mars was produced with a *lot* of labor—A LOT! Two years of research went into setting the stage for the series, and many hours were spent in writing, editing, and revising the story. However, *Assault On Mars* could not have been produced without the complete support of Fred Woodworth in Tucson, Arizona. Fred printed the pages and hand-bound most volumes. David Baumann bound a few of them as well, working on his

dining table at home with material that Fred sent. It probably takes at least one full hour *per book* if you count it all up. In Fred's words, "High quality equals severe drudgery."

These parameters have made the books expensive to produce, but we think it is worth it.

The members of the Starman team cover out-of-pocket costs for materials, printing, and postage, but take no remuneration for their labors. If Fred Woodworth had not donated his labor—a matter of several hundred hours and still mounting as copies of *Assault On Mars* are bound today—the Starman series could not have gotten off the ground.

Because of the lack of availability of supplies necessary for Fred's antique machinery, he was able to print and bind only one book. For subsequent volumes in the Starman series, we have to use a professional printer and bindery. We researched several possibilities and selected Sheridan Books for the second book. Sheridan appeared to have the best combination of good quality work, reasonable cost, and helpful and supportive staff. Sheridan, however, is NOT donating its labor. At the end, our experience with Sheridan Books was mixed, but we are generally pleased with the appearance and quality of *The Runaway Asteroid*.

Total cost for printing and binding 500 copies of *The Runaway Asteroid*, producing the dust jacket for the initial 200 copies, and mailing to our first 100 customers will be about \$3,700. Profits from *Assault On Mars* and advance orders of *The Runaway Asteroid* made possible for us almost to meet this cost. However, unless we have a sudden surge of phenomenal sales of both these books, we are unlikely to have enough to cover the initial production costs of the third Starman story, *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. Initial deposit for printing a book is about \$1,400, and total cost will be about \$3,000. At the moment, we have \$203.06

in the bank.

Your purchase of the first Inter*Stellar will help us raise the \$2,800 necessary in the next six months if Michael D. Cooper is to be able to produce *Journey to the Tenth Planet* in the style to which you have become accustomed.

Starman Numbers

Of the initial print run of 500 copies of *Assault On Mars*, as of this writing we have distributed 215 copies. The hand-binding of these volumes is highly labor-intensive and is done by people who must do the work in spare time. Except for one brief period in the fall of 2000, we have always been a few weeks behind in filling orders.

We asked Sheridan Books to produce 500 copies of *The Runaway Asteroid*, but they delivered 548. The extra amount was to guarantee that at least 500 would be produced. To date, we have distributed 125 copies. Orders for both books continue to come in.

Where do our customers live? They are spread across the country. There are large numbers in California and West Virginia, the home states of two members of the Starman team, so obviously our family and friends are doing their part to support the project. In addition to sales in these states, there are customers in 26 other states, each with one to seven readers. We have also sent books to customers in the Netherlands, Guatemala, Australia, and Canada. The Starman team has sent one set, free of charge, to an inmate in a state prison.

How the Starman team Writes the Books

The Starman team has assembled a good number of large files with background material on the series. The files contain plans, plotlines, and research items for 23 books. The 23 books tell one story, intended to take place in a span of about seven years. Our

working title for these files is “The Starman Appendix.” There is an excerpt later in this fanzine.

The process of collecting these files is ongoing. As the books are written, the background changes here and there as the story grows. Usually, but not always, we conform the story to the background material. For example, in the original files, the population of Mars was large. However, as David was writing the actual text of *Assault On Mars*, he realized that having a sizable population on Mars was not consistent with the story as it was developing, so we changed the background material to make the Terran population on Mars much smaller from our first vision.

The way we work is that whenever a member of the team proposes something for the Starman world, the other two get a copy of it to mull over and respond to. Many things change and develop through the mulling process. Then they go into the files when we are all agreed. Even then, as the books grow, we are constantly revising.

When the Starman team writes a book, we follow the rules that were used in the age of the classic series books. There will be no foul language, no extreme violence, no sexual references or subtleties of any kind. In the fight scenes, there will be no blood spilled. Only very, very rarely will anyone ever get killed. And no one will go to the bathroom. Of course, all of these things happen in real life, but with only a few exceptions the classic books followed these same rules. We agree with these standards and will follow them.

The Starman team believes that a good story will have five ingredients:

THE PLOT—the story line must be exciting and challenging
 THE WRITING—the words must be poetic, the spelling and grammar correct, the flow keep the readers’ interest

ACCURACY AND PLAUSIBILITY—the science and the course of events must be either true-to-life or exceedingly believable
 CHARACTERIZATION—the characters must be distinct; consistently portrayed; and act, react, and relate in engaging and believable ways
 THEME—the overall message and any submessages should be positive and encouraging to all readers

The three members of the Starman team always work together to produce a book. For example, *Journey to the Tenth Planet* began in the summer of 1998. David woke up in the middle of the night with an idea and wrote down a couple of pages about how the heroes discovered and traveled to a tenth planet. The idea was filed away, along with many other plot ideas and research items. At that time, there was no Lurton Zimbardo, and the plot for *Assault On Mars* was still very rudimentary.

Later, as the team was sketching the overall Starman saga which stretches across the 23 planned books, Jon took the germ of a journey to a tenth planet and worked it into the tale of the pirates who had tried to take over Mars. The few pirates who escaped at the end of *The Runaway Asteroid* would take refuge there.

Mike, the team's source of great ideas and plot twists, suggested that the tenth planet actually follow a figure-eight orbit around our own sun and a brown dwarf star.

With ideas such as these roughed out, Jon plots the story in a summary format. The summary is shared with Mike and David for comments. When it is in a form all three members like, David begins to write the story from the summary. It is sent chapter by chapter to the other two team members. Changes are made as a result of this sharing. The plot continues to deepen as details develop in the writing. Scientific problems are solved by Mike. Major plot ramifications are continually developed by Jon. Minor plot developments emerge as David writes and are worked

into the story with Jon's and Mike's input.

After a certain point in the work, David reads the story aloud, three chapters at a time, to a group of four people, one of whom is a ten-year-old boy. This audience makes suggestions for improvements in anything from terminology (e.g., "You should use the term 'encryption' rather than 'scrambling.'") and catches glitches in the plot. Reading aloud also makes the flow of the writing much smoother.

After the first draft is completed, several other people read it and make comments for improvements. The three members of the Starman team then produce the final draft which no one but they will see until the book is published. For one book, from first concept to final draft, the entire process takes about six months. Eventually, the only REALLY AUTHORITATIVE material will be what is published. Even then we make changes when necessary. Each published book is revised in anticipation of a second edition in which corrections and new insights will find expression. For example, in *Assault On Mars*, there were references to pets called "golliwogs." After publication, we learned that "golliwog" is a racial epithet used in England, so in *The Runaway Asteroid* and in the second edition of *Assault On Mars*, we changed the term to "koalang"—a term obviously based on "koala bear."

Too Many Characters?

A few readers observed that there are too many characters in *Assault On Mars*. If AOM were a single story, these readers would be correct, and *The Runaway Asteroid* will not alleviate the problem. But other readers have noted that, due to the scope of the Starman saga, a large number of characters have to be introduced early in the series. Readers should keep in mind that we are really writing a story not about 48,000 words long (average length of a single book), but a saga of well over a million words—one story in 23 volumes. That will need a lot of

characters, and most of them will be introduced in the first few volumes.

The characters are at three levels of importance. Our heroes, of course, are at the top level. Secondary characters are those who will play an essential role in the series. Some of these will appear more frequently than others, but nearly all will be “standard.” These include:

Introduced in *Assault On Mars*

Steve Cliff

Jogren

Jack and Jill

John Rwakatare

The President (who will never be given a name)

The Tunnel People

The Wind People

Introduced in *The Runaway Asteroid*

Montezuma Vly

George St. George

Robert Nolan

Beowulf Denn

Jesus Madera-Cruz

Oritz Konig

Introduced in *Journey to the Tenth Planet*

O

Derf Bors

Dennis Bronk

Tertiary characters will appear only once or twice, or play minor roles as the books are written.

We expect that by the time we get into the third book, most of the major personalities will have been introduced, and the problem of “too many characters” will have resolved itself. In the meantime, please be patient.

Stardust

Tidbits of information we hope will be of interest to fans and customers of the Starman series.

The midnight blue ink used in the endpapers for *Assault On Mars* came from a can which had been in storage since 1965.

The *Star Ranger*, the Starmen's space craft initially issued to David Foster, was designed by Bill Baumann, the artist for *Assault On Mars*. Bill spent a career working in the Advanced Design Department of Rockwell International. His team designed aircraft and spacecraft for production up to twenty years in the future.

The artists for the first six books have been lined up. Team member Mike Dodd will produce the artwork for *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. Reader Kevin Anetsberger will produce the artwork for *Descent Into Europa*. Bill Baumann, artist for *Assault On Mars*, will return for *The Lost Race of Mars*. Nick Baumann, artist for *The Runaway Asteroid*, will produce the art for *Operation Luna*.

Remember this scene from Chapter 4 of *Assault On Mars*, "Starlight in the Darkness"?

The two men were just inside. Their utter surprise showed on their features as both turned toward David and reached for the laser pistols by their sides.

"Hey! What are you—" shouted one. David never stopped his stride. Moving quickly toward both, he punched one powerfully in the solar plexus. A satisfying "whoosh!" came from the man's mouth as the air was knocked completely out of his lungs, and he flew backwards, skidding across the concrete floor with his legs flailing.

The other had his laser pistol out of its holster and

was frantically trying to point it toward David, his eyes and mouth wide open in wild panic. Before he could aim the weapon, David gripped the man's wrist and pulled toward him, turning the wrist as he did so. The gun dropped to the floor. Still holding the man's wrist with his left hand, David pulled it down. Then he took the man's chin in his open right hand, lifted him bodily upward and then slammed him onto his back. He hit the ground hard.

David calmly picked up both weapons. Both men were moaning, badly dazed but still conscious. He went to each one and removed their communicators.

The fight scenes in the Starman series are acted out before they are put into final form in the book. David Baumann is a third degree black belt who teaches a martial arts class twice a week. The class has more than 40 students. When a fight scene is called for in the Starman series, David works with several martial arts students in his class to choreograph the scene before it is put into final form in the book.

Remember this scene from Chapter 9 of *Assault On Mars*, "The Field of Snow"?

Then Jogren opened one of the packages he had brought out. Within moments he had assembled a small, two-seater vehicle with sails and skis, with an adjustment that could allow wheels to take the place of skis. The sail was rolled up at the bottom of a crossbar just above head height when the passengers were seated.

"It's a land-sailer!" exclaimed Mark. "This is great! In this wind we ought to cover the territory at a good clip!" He opened the second package and began to assemble the second two-seater. Jogren came over to help, but Mark waved him off. Their host watched Mark work. When the second land-sailer was completed, Jogren said

"Good!" Mark indicated that Joe should sit in the front seat. Steve took the back, and Mark sat behind Jogren as he took the lead position in the first vehicle.

Jogren turned to Joe to make sure he was watching, and pulled a switch that was connected to a bottle of some kind. There was a hiss of air and the sail rapidly lifted up and caught the breeze. In seconds, the first land-sailer was fifty yards away and moving fast.

Joe pulled the switch on the second land-sailer, and he and Steve took off.

Mike Dodd has built a land-sailer and produced a videotape of himself sailing at a great clip across a huge parking lot. The land-sailer in *Assault On Mars* is a faithful description of Mike's project. We know that it works, the speed it can achieve, how to steer it, and what it feels like to travel in it. The description in AOM is true to life.

From the Starman Appendix

excerpts from Michael D. Cooper's working files

The Starman team has assembled a large number of files with notes and ideas that may—or may not—appear in the Starman series. If they appear, it is likely that they will be transformed before being put into the stories. Here is an excerpt from what we call "The Starman Appendix." As the series continues, the Starman Appendix continues to grow. At some point, it may be published as a separate volume.

BUILDING MATERIAL ON MARS

In the 22nd century, most buildings on Mars are made out of—brick! In the 20th century scientists discovered that the most practical and feasible building material for settlements on Mars is brick. Bricks are easy to make, for the building material is scattered all over the Martian surface in the form of Mars'

famous red dust. To build bricks out of Martian dust, all you need to do is take finely ground soil, wet it, put it in a mold under mild compression, dry it, and then bake at 300-900 degrees Celsius. Usually scrap material is added to the bricks for cohesion, and the bricks are dried at 200 C before baking to recover the water put into the bricks. Bricks are a high quality yet very cheap building material: just what Mars needed.

For mortar, simply take the red dust of Mars, wet it and then dry it, and—without having to do anything else—you have a material half as strong as Earth concrete. Even roofs can be built out of bricks, so long as the bricks are kept under tension.

Eagle City, then (along with the other cities of Mars) are cities of brick: vast red cities sitting on a vast red plain. The older, more rundown section of the city is built of crumbling brick buildings, covered with red brick dust and the red dust of Mars.

StellarGrams *Letters We've Received*

The following letters have either been posted on the Starman Message Board or sent to a Starman team member by email or by the U. S. Postal Service. Some of them have been edited for brevity. Unless information is provided to the contrary, the Starman team will consider all communications as suitable for sharing, and reserves the right to edit by shortening any submission.

From Jacques LesStrang, July 8, 2000:

Since Barbara passed along to me your new book, “Assault On Mars,” I thought it appropriate to respond on this letterhead...[note: CUFOS—Center for UFO Studies]

I visited your web site some time ago, and have been looking forward to seeing how you started this series. Looks like a hit in the making! Congratulations. It's interesting to note that, within the CUFOS circle of astrophysicists with whom I have contact,

... a percentage of them do feel that evidence may well exist for a 10th planet, the subject of your third in the series.

Good luck with the other 22 books!

From Mike Pahlow, September 22, 2000:

Well I finished the book. It is really very good!! I'm impressed with the story line and the characters enough to want to continue with each new proposed edition!! It does indeed remind me of the Tom Corbett and Rick Brant series books. The pictures are good also!

I have recommended the book to everyone in my "brown bag" science fiction club at work. (We meet once a month during lunchtime to talk about SF books, movies, tv, and comics.) Hopefully you'll get more orders for this book and the ones to come.

Looking forward to the next Zip Foster adventure, *The Runaway Asteroid!!*

Cosmic luck to you and your crew!!

From Jim Gaudet, November 22, 2000:

True confession time: my step-daughters' dad loaned me one of his two copies of "Assault on Mars" and I read it last week. Wow! I am way past being impressed. This book is professionally written but true to the spirit of all those great series books of my youth. Congratulations! I definitely want my own copy of this book, and look forward to the success of your plans for the whole series.

Steve Servello, December 9, 2000:

I really think the concept of a three author team is truly a giant leap forward in maintaining consistent quality, continuity, and educational tid bits. The Afterword (among other things) describes how Jon is the primary plotter, Mike the science adviser, and David the writer. Naturally there is a blending of responsibilities but the concept works wondrously ! ...

[T]he three (known collectively as Michael. D. Cooper) have

utilized a plot device that is lacking in most series but very prevalent in other series (Dray Prescott and The Survivalist) which are my absolute favorites in all of literature, though not juvenile in nature. This device is to plant seeds (or mysteries) that will be eventually revealed as the series progresses and with new ones being dispersed throughout the balance of the books. This forms a great feeling of continuity, not usually seen in the genre, though Bomba Series seems to have understood the value of such plot devices.

My thoughts on the enjoyment factor (the most important) while reading "Assault?" A superb adventure that held my interest throughout.

From Jake Alleman (age 10), November 22:

Thank-you very much for the *Assault On Mars* book. I really enjoyed it and I stayed up late into the night reading it. My favorite part in this book is the part where the Starmen and the Tunnel People are fighting to retake Eagle City. I look forward to reading the next!

Sincerely, Jake Alleman.

P. S. I hope the next ones are as good as the first!

Inter*Stellar

A fanzine dedicated to the Starman Series

Issue Number Two

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July 2001

THE FUTURE—THE WAY IT USED TO BE

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Starlight

A word from Michael D. Cooper

THE FUTURE—THE WAY IT USED TO BE

This is the Starman series' new slogan, coined by Mike Dodd.
Thank you, Mike! It captures our goal precisely!

Starman science

In the Starman stories, we do not use science as the answer to everything. The stories are really adventure tales in which the characters must use their wits, not futuristic inventions, to solve their problems. Technology is not the answer in every predicament. The Starman series is intentionally not a series

about “magic with machines.” In real life, technology is frequently undependable, often causing as many problems as it is reputed to solve.

We also want the stories to have the ambiance of the classic books and our own familiar culture. Even though the series is set 150 years from now, we retain eyeglasses, matches, and books with paper pages. We use miles rather than kilometers and Fahrenheit rather than Centigrade. We believe that if there are too many machines or new inventions, the story can quickly become silly. We also believe that if we change too many familiar things, it becomes unnecessarily difficult for readers to feel at home in the story.

We are therefore trying to do three things at once: set the stories 150 years in the future and make that setting plausible; make the “furniture” of the stories comfortably familiar for contemporary readers; and provide the ambiance of a book nearly 50 years old.

It’s a hard balancing act!

The Starfolk Series?

If the Starman Series intended to be politically correct, it would be called the Starperson or Starfolk Series. We chose not to use either term. However, we have received a couple of letters on the subject:

From one reader: Why are there so few women in the stories? And the only ones that appear are tokens or stereotypes.

From another reader: Mary Marks-Owens. Her character is an intrusion. If you are really trying to recreate the feel of series books from the 40s-50s-60s, then don’t drag in obligatory female characters. Books with females fully integrated into the story line are a dime a dozen. If that

is the way you want to go that is your choice but by doing so you stray from what I think many are looking for.

Well, actually before the members of the Starman team got too far along in the project, we discussed this matter and the wider issue of “inclusivity” at length. We’re trying to make our stories fit into the genre of the classic books. The mold is basically the era of the 1950s-1960s. The Rick Brant series had 23 books which were published 1947-1968. Then in 1989 a 24th book appeared, in which the author provided closure to the series for the fans. Only 500 of these were printed. The book altered the “boy-girl” tradition and made the major characters (two boys and two girls—all about age 17) equal partners in the adventures. Although it worked and was a good story, it was decidedly different from the genre. Comments from some of the most “equality-minded” readers, including women, noted the difference and were somewhat disappointed. So for that reason, we are retaining the flavor and feel of the 1950s series by using the term “Starman” rather than “Starfolk” or something similar, and the heroes are boys.

However, we are also deliberately choosing to present a world in which the issues of inclusivity have *already been addressed in a positive fashion* and are no longer “issues.” We do this by selecting names for our secondary heroes which are very identifiable as those of “minorities.” John Rwakatare is obviously African; the first man on Mars is Lee High Eagle, clearly a native American; the famous scientist in *The Runaway Asteroid* is Stephen Hoshino, an Asian; etc.

We put Kathryn Mullaney in *TRA* as a Starman to make it clear that she is not only a Starman, but a year ahead of and therefore senior to the heroes. The space captain who has authority over the asteroid once the Earth forces take it over, is a woman: Captain Mary Marks-Owens. We don’t explain that so-and-so is “the first woman to command a ship,” etc.—we present the situation as if this is a reality, long taken for granted, in the

22nd century.

What we're assuming, then, in the course of events, is that today's issues of inclusivity have been dealt with successfully by the 22nd century and are no longer relevant—just as no one would take slavery seriously today. So in the books, we don't defend inclusivity or even explain it—we just DO it without making a point of it.

But it's another hard balancing act: to present the inclusion without bearing too far off the track of the 1950s style.

Images, Methods, and Themes: Have You Noticed?

The primary image in the Starman series is that of light versus darkness. The image appears in many ways, literal and symbolic. The theme is manifested in actual illumination such as dark tunnels contrasted with sunlight, or in symbols such as gardens versus desolation and destruction versus re-creation.

For example, in *The Runaway Asteroid*, the holographic image at the end of chapter one shows dusk (page 23), but the one toward the end of the book shows dawn (page 206). The action therefore takes place symbolically “at night” or “in darkness” until the dawn of victory comes up.

Furthermore, most of the bad guys have only partial names to indicate that they are “faulty” humans; most of the good guys have complete names. There are exceptions, to show that in real life there are shades of gray.

Additionally, the good guys eat tasty food and enjoy their meals; the bad guys are rarely shown eating, and when they are it is usually not a communal experience.

The good guys describe space as being “full of light, stars, and beauty”; the bad guys see space as “void.” The bad guys are formal in their address to show lack of intimacy and friendship; the good guys share a lot of banter and affection.

Dig Allen and the Starman Series

The Starman series was inspired by the Dig Allen series, six books written by Joseph Greene and issued by Golden Press 1959-1962. There are many deliberate similarities between the two series.

Both feature a team of three young men. The leader of both teams is a redhead. Both series have a “maverick” type of person: Dorkas in the Dig Allens and Steve Cliff in the Starman series. Both feature a race of tiny people whose home is in the Solar System: the Mercurians in Dig Allen and the Titanians in the Starman series. Both feature a hollow asteroid which is the product of an advanced alien culture: Eros in the Dig Allens and the pirates’ asteroid in the Starman series. The Dig Allen series has Space Research; the Starmen have Starlight Enterprise and Space Command. The Dig Allens have the Graveyard of Space on the Moon; the Starmen have the Field of Obsolescence. There are other parallels, but these are some of the major ones.

Yet the series are distinctively different. The Starman series is not an extension or a take-off of the Dig Allens. Rather, it is intended to stand independently as a contribution to the genre of space series books.

Starman team member Jon Cooper has written the following article on the issue:

“A Comparison of the Dig Allen series
and the Starman series”
by Jon Cooper

The other day I reread two Dig Allen books: *The Forgotten Star* and *Journey to Jupiter*. I was surprised at some of the things I found, and thought I would make a couple comments.

There’s no doubt that the writing styles between the Starman books and the Dig Allen books are totally different. This is probably a good thing: I don’t think anyone can accuse us of “copying” them since the books are so different. It’s hard to tell which books are better: I think that in some areas we are better,

and in other areas Joseph Greene is better.

Secondly, what caught my attention was how different the Space Explorers are from the Starmen. The Space Explorers have a number of characteristics that I had totally forgotten about. First, Space Explorers are (as they put it in the first Dig Allen book) “sensitives.” Space Explorers have a sixth sense: they get a feeling about a mystery or a place to explore, and they go off and explore it and find something. They sort of have a nose for the mysterious or strange: an “inner sense” draws them to anything out of the ordinary or unique, and off they go. That is how Boyd Allen found Eros: he had this sense that something was amiss about Eros, and off he went to explore it. True Space Explorers, then, had this sort of mystical quality about them.

Further, Space Explorers are not really interested in the answers to mysteries: they search for mysteries, but once they find one they leave it for Space Research to unravel and they go off in search of more mysteries. This is highlighted in *The Forgotten Star*, where one character says pretty much exactly that: now that they found the civilization of Eros, they would leave it to Space Research to understand it and head back out into space. That’s exactly what they did: once Boyd Allen was rescued from Eros, he didn’t stick around and try to understand it—instead, he went off to explore Ganymede, and after that he headed off to the Rings of Saturn. What drives Space Explorers is the urge to explore: they want to find new things, and uncover new mysteries.

Thirdly, nobody—and I mean nobody—gives Space Explorers orders. They cannot be brought to court. They cannot be court-martialed. They cannot be given missions. They can break all the ordinary rules (e.g. in *The Forgotten Star*, it was against the rules to bring children along on spaceships, but Boyd Allen, Space Explorer, did it anyway and brought Dig everywhere he went). They don’t have to listen to a thing the military or anyone else says. Above all, you don’t ask Space Explorers to go do something: they are not the crack force of the World Council.

You would not, say, ask a Space Explorer to test a new Real Time Transmission system on Mars, or dispatch them to free Mars from pirates, or send them off to explore the asteroid belt in search of a pirate hideout. These men are not troops: you don't order them around. They do their own thing. Space Explorers don't even work together: they are loners. The 3 man Dig Allen team was the first such team in history, and attracted a LOT of attention because Space Explorers just didn't do that.

As you can see, our Starmen are vastly different from Space Explorers. The Starmen are more like elite astronauts, or special forces: they are highly trained men that Starlight Enterprise sends off to do their missions. At times they may act independently, but they don't have anywhere near the freedom of Space Explorers. Space Explorers have a strange sixth sense, and Starmen do not: they are just highly trained individuals. Space Explorers, in fact, don't have to be trained at all: Ken and Jim never went to school to study to be Space Explorers—they just studied tapes in between missions or while on space flights.

I would say that our Starmen are much more like mini versions of the Tom Corbett Space Cadets than the Dig Allen Space Explorers!

The next two Starman books

Assault On Mars is 47,908 words long. *The Runaway Asteroid* is 59,077 words long. (Its length caused us not to use internal illustrations and to reduce the font size from 11 to 10.5.) *Journey to the Tenth Planet* is 51,507 words long.

The fourth Starman book, *Descent Into Europa*, will probably be shorter than the first three books. It is a simpler story and will serve as a transition to the fifth book, *The Lost Race of Mars*. We hope to send *DIE* to the printer by mid-October and have it available around Thanksgiving.

The fifth book will be a doozy. It will probably approach 350-400 pages in length. It is intended to tie up all the loose ends and

resolve the subplots in the first books, which many readers have both enjoyed and found frustrating! The story in this book will conclude the first major installment in the Starman saga, and open up the deeper adventures which will begin with book six, *Operation Luna*.

Look for *The Lost Race of Mars* in about May or June 2002. In the meantime, read the short story in this issue of the Inter*Stellar. It sets the stage for the fifth book in the Starman saga.

Stardust

Tidbits of information we hope will be of interest to fans and customers of the Starman series

The artist for the fourth Starman book, *Descent Into Europa*, is Kevin Anetsberger. Here's a little "bio" that he provided:

I'm a 39 year old husband and father of three. I have a boy (8) and two girls (7 & 2). My wife, Nancy, and I live in the Chicago suburbs. I own two businesses, Midwest Tungsten Service, a manufacturing company, and Spire Development, a fine homebuilding company. I am just about to start a third company which owns commercial real estate.

The artist for the *Assault On Mars*, Bill Baumann, volunteered to paint the dust jacket for the fifth Starman book, *The Lost Race of Mars*. He completed the artwork in one day! When Starman Team member Mike Dodd saw a scan of it, he wrote: "Wow! The cover is supernice! It really is a perfect cover. It just exudes ancient glory, a sense of forever, an exotic timelessness, and a call to adventure!"

We've all seen laser beams in movies like those of the Star Wars saga. They are usually red beams. In the first edition of *Assault On Mars*, we faithfully described the laser beams as we had seen them in the movies.

When *The Runaway Asteroid* was in production, Starman Team member Mike Dodd realized that this description was not scientifically accurate! Light is invisible. He researched what a laser weapon would probably really look like in action. The descriptions in *TRA* match the results of his research. The fruit of Mike's study first appears in chapter 5, "The Destruction of Z25."

Joe looked out the window again and saw that laser cannons had begun to destroy the ships. Through the horrifying, rapidly expanding concentric vapor shells, he saw the *Vigilant Warrior* crumpling into a heap. The other ships were either completely destroyed or well on the way.

The reflection of the beams is described as "ruby red," since laser light, when used as a weapon, *is* red—but it is only visible when it passes through dust or other impurities in the air. Therefore, this description comes later in the book—Chapter 12, "First Impact":

"It's a laser, all right. This dial here changes the intensity of the beam from low to high, and this one—well, watch. There's a barrel of powder over here. Talcum or something." He reached in, took a handful of the dust, and dropped it back into the barrel. A cloud of dust rose up. He activated the laser through it. A bright blue beam appeared. He turned a dial and the beam became a brilliant green.

The color of paint used to color the top of the pages on the first copies of *Assault On Mars* is called "sandstone," specially selected by Fred Woodworth to be a good color match and verbal match for the sands of Mars.

David puts many real people into the Starman series, either by describing an actual person he knows or using a form of someone's name. One character in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* is named Derf Bors—a name inspired by a colleague named Fred Borsch; it is “Fred” spelled backwards and a shortened version of the name “Borsch.” One can imagine David's reaction when he ran across a restaurant named “Derf's” in Santa Barbara, California, when *JTP* was close to completion.

How to Bind Books By Hand

Each copy of *Assault On Mars* is bound by hand. The process is time-consuming and exacting. Here's what it takes to get you your copy of the first Starman book.

Printing: The unbound pages are standard 8 1/2 x 11 inches, with two pages on each side, printed back-to-back in landscape format. Thus, on one half of the sheet you may have page 19 with page 20 on the back; on the other half, pages 173 and 174.

David Baumann formatted and printed the masters and sent them to Fred Woodworth. From the masters, Fred made printing plates and ran 500 copies. This took 25,000 sheets of paper and filled eight large boxes. Fred bound the first 100 copies of the book for immediate distribution, and the remaining unbound pages were delivered to David's house. There David, assisted occasionally by friends, binds the remaining books to meet demand as copies of *Assault On Mars* are sold.

First, the unbound pages have to be collated. This involves 50 sheets per book. These are then cut precisely down the middle, making stacks which are 5 1/2 x 8 1/2. To do this, David takes the stacks to a shop local to him for a professional cut. One stack will have the title page through page 100; the other stack will have 101 through 200. These two stacks are then laid on top of one another to make the entire book.

Binding: Then bookbinder's glue (which is special because it has a flexibility agent put in so that it will bend and not crack) is used to glue the pages together on one side. The glued portion is then glued into a strip of paper to keep it together. The glue is applied with a brush. While the glue is still wet, the bound pages are put under a stack of heavy books to keep the binding from warping as it dries. About 20 or 30 books are done at a time, taking about 3-4 hours.

After the bound pages are dry, the pages are taken back to the local shop where the pages are cut to the precise size they must be in the finished product. This means trimming the excess from the top, bottom, and unbound side—three more cuts. The result then looks like a paperback book without a cover.

At this stage, the tops of the pages are spray-painted lightly to give them the distinctive coloring. In the Starman series, only *Assault On Mars* has this feature, though most classic series books had it.

Cases: The cover is an oversize piece of paper with spine title and design for the front on it. On the inside of each sheet, ruled lines are drawn with a pencil to mark where the cover stock will be placed. The cover stock is thick pieces of cardboard cut to size, which are used to form the front and back of the book. They are glued with a roller and placed precisely onto the marked paper, then pressed with another roller to eliminate bubbles. The spine is reinforced with a small strip of paper. The corners of the large sheet are then clipped and the sides are folded over and glued to the boards. This produces what is called the “case”—the hardback book without the pages inside.

The bound pages are then glued into the case by the pictorial endpapers, using the rollers once again to apply the glue and then press out any bubbles. Then the book goes back under a stack of heavy books while it dries. The result is a copy of *Assault On Mars* without a dust jacket.

Dust Jackets: The cover painting is professionally photographed and a print is made to actual size. The lettering and spine logo are placed on the print either by transparent overlay or computer graphics, and the writing on the endflaps of the dust jacket is glued onto the ends. The result becomes the master from which the dust jackets are photocopied onto pieces of paper 11 x 17. The first print run is 200 copies.

The stack of covers is then taken back to the local shop where it is cut top and bottom to precisely a hair less than 7 ½ inches. Each dust jacket must then be wrapped around its book. This completes the process of making copies of *Assault On Mars*.

The best estimate we have so far is that it takes at least one hour to bind each book through the process of printing, collating, cutting, binding, cutting again, making the case, assembling the pages into the case, cutting the dust jacket, and wrapping the dust jacket around the book.

To date, of the 500 copies of *Assault On Mars* that were printed, about 285 have been bound and distributed. With the help of a small committee, David hopes to finish binding all the rest of the copies by the end of the summer, so that the Starman Team will not be behind in its orders for the first Starman book again.

From the Starman Appendix

Excerpts from Michael D. Cooper's working files

The Star Ranger

"That's your ship?" asked Joe. "Beautiful!"

"The *Star Ranger*," said Zip. "SE gave it to me for my first assignment. It's a beauty, all right. Wait'll you see the inside!" It was a dark red, almost brick-colored, ship, slender and graceful. It could land either horizontally or vertically. In Eagle City, Zip had landed it vertically.

From chapter 19 of *Assault On Mars*.

The Starmen's personal spacecraft, the *Star Ranger*, is the ship that was issued to David Foster before *Assault On Mars* began. So far, no illustration of this vehicle has appeared. It will, however, be shown on the dust jacket of *The Lost Race of Mars*.

Communication and Information

Nearly everyone in the 22nd century carries a compad: short for Communicator Pad. The item, about as common as watches are now, is a card about three by six inches and about one eighth to one fourth of an inch deep. It is patterned to the user and is normally voice-activated (hence no keyboard is needed), but it can also be activated by the user's fingerprint, DNA, or retinal pattern. Counterfeiting or unauthorized use is nearly impossible. The compad is the successor to the cellular telephone, ATM card, credit card, money, personal organizer, watch, and other elements of today's society.

On one side there is a small screen for images, and on the other is a set of operating and programming keys, and a small speaker. The compad is battery-operated, but if necessary may be plugged into any of several million ports throughout the Solar System, like an ATM today. Each of these ports has a keyboard if one is needed. The owner uses it for money (automatic additions and deductions), reference (encyclopedia, library, etc.), personal records (entire health charts, family history, educational records, correspondence, personal organizer and reminders, and other information), voice messages under certain conditions, translation of numerous languages, even entertainment. It is made of nearly indestructible material, and cannot be damaged short of major trauma. It also has a locator. People carry them as they do a wallet or purse today.

Compads first appear on page 20 of *Assault On Mars*, but are not referred to by name until page 26 of *Journey to the Tenth Planet*.

StellarGrams

Letters and other correspondence

From Dale Ames, February 16, 2001

Hi Jonathan: Just finished *The Runaway Asteroid* and it is better than the first book. In first book I found Jack and Jill too far out and was happy they were not in this book. The plot was “Super” and a lot like my favorite space show Bablyon 5 and the Shadow Wars—each show stood alone but had a underlying sub plot for the 5 year run. ... I found the story highly intelligent and liked the fact that the Starman didn’t save the world alone. Gene, Richard Starlight, Robert Nolan, Denn, Steve Cliff, Jesus Madera all played a role as big as the Starman played. The inside of Asteroid was great and who were the “Unknowns” on the Asteroid??? Plots, subplots, and sub-subplots were the best. I have read westerns, novels, mysteries and much more but these books are right up there in writing skills.

From Jim Adams, February 19, 2001

Hi Jonathan! I just finished reading “The Runaway Asteroid” last night, and I must say it was a blast! You have a general request out for comments on your books, so I thought I’d oblige. As we talked about before, I missed the pictures, and as you told me before, that was not your plan and you are taking steps to avoid similar problems in future volumes. ‘Nuff said!

Between reading “Assault on Mars” and “The Runaway Asteroid”, I reread the first five Dig Allen books. (Rereading the last one will probably be my next project.) I *really* like the way you have paid homage to the series, and in such a detailed and clever way. It seems like you worked every significant feature of the original six book series into just two of your own volumes. Well done!

This next point is, no doubt, by design on your part, but it still bugs me. :) The ending of “The Runaway Asteroid” left me feeling very frustrated by the number of unresolved issues and

subplot lines. I know you wish to entice sales of future volumes, but the Dig Allen series never really had such cliffhanger endings. Again, you may be smiling while reading this and saying this is exactly what you wanted to do. But I got to know what happens!! Write faster!!! (Big grin on my end.)... Please let me know when you start to accept orders for the next installment!

Thanks!

From Ed Pippin, February 20, 2001

Subject: Great job

Hi Jonathan,

When we returned from our vacation last week, I had a nice surprise - Starman #2 - The Runaway Asteroid. I'll add the information to the [Tom Corbett web] site as well as the next newsletter. I'll be sending in another order for issue #2 and the newsletter later this week. Let me know when I can order Starman #3.

In today's liberal climate, the only "special interest" group that is fair game for criticism and ridicule are Christians. Your answer was appropriate and true, you write what you know and reflect what you believe. I have always felt the early Space Opera shows of the 1950's were based on the belief that right will overcome wrong and good will prevail over evil. Even if the people who were involved with these shows led less than ideal lives, the basic principles of the shows were based on a tradition of Christian beliefs. I fear the loss of and the current bias against these principles have led us to a very serious condition in this country. Don't apologize for your beliefs, they are a refreshing alternative to the "enlightened" views we see in our society today. The positive note of the Starman series will encourage future generations, keep up the good work.

Till later, keep the faith :-)) and Spaceman's Luck

Ed

From Ed Haser, June 27, 2001

Hopefully [*Journey to the Tenth Planet*] will get back from the printer's before our end-of-August vacation; will be great to have along. Enjoyed the first two (guess I never wrote back on that). It is an interesting experience to read today, after 40 years of technological advance, books written with a mid-1900's view of technology and society. Darn amazed at how well you guys, especially you "youngsters", are able to re-create that experience in the books.

Thanks.

Starman Books in the Media

Hello [Jon]! Jeff Berkwits here! I hope that you are doing well! You may remember our interview from last year regarding the Starman Series that ran in *Cinescape* magazine. Well, I was recently offered the chance to use a few more of your quotes for another piece, which I thought you might like to see. This was just posted yesterday (Friday 5/11/01) on a science fiction site called SciFiNow.com. Here's a direct link:
<http://www.scifinow.com/content.asp?piece=429>

Here is the article Jeff is writing about:

Starman Books Celebrate The Future Through The Past

Although most science fiction narratives look to the future, many adult sci-fi fans often long for the past. Those folks seeking a nostalgic reading experience definitely will enjoy The Starman Series, a new line of juvenile novels that emulate classic space-opera adventure stories. "We'd like the books to be for kids, but we realize that most of the people who are buying them are adults who read Tom Swift or Dig Allen books when they were younger," explains Jon Cooper, who, along with

co-authors Mike Dodd and David Baumann, is self-publishing the 23-volume series. "We're definitely trying to make a book that will appeal to children aged 10 to 15 or so, but we also want a book that will appeal to adults. We want it to be something that you can read both when you're younger and when you're older." Writing under the pseudonym Michael D. Cooper, the trio already has issued the first two installments in the series—*Assault on Mars* and *The Runaway Asteroid*—with the third (*Journey to the Tenth Planet*) due out later this year. The high-energy tales chronicle the exploits of David Foster, a member of an elite team of young interplanetary explorers, in a "saga of the solar system" that begins in the year 2151. Yet, even though the stories all take place in the future, the authors are firmly committed to honoring the past in every way from the writing style to the physical layout of the hardbound books.

"The blue ink on the front and end papers [of the first volume] actually dates back to 1965," reveals Cooper, adding that each title—available exclusively through <http://www.starmanseries.com>—is limited to a print run of 500 copies. "[Our printer] had an old bottle that he thought would be appropriate to use in this old-style series book."

Thanks for the support and the exposure, Jeff!

Inter*Stellar

A fanzine dedicated to the Starman Series

Issue Number Three

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THE FUTURE—THE WAY IT USED TO BE

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Starlight

a word from Michael D. Cooper

**SURVIVAL OF STARMAN SERIES
IN DOUBT—NO MORE**

Dear friends and supporters of the Starman Series,

On February 28, Jon Cooper sent out an email to all customers of the Starman books, appealing for timely orders of *Descent Into Europa* and informing everyone that the paucity of orders of the newly-finished book as well as the drying up of orders of the first three since September 11, 2001 had brought the Starman

Team into a grave financial situation. We were several hundred dollars in the red and had no assurance that further orders would come in. Without new orders, not only would we be unable to cover the cost of printing *Descent Into Europa* but we would also not be able to pay the cost of printing the fifth book, *The Lost Race of Mars*.

The response to the message stunned us, to say the least. Over the next few days, Jon had to spend several hours a day processing orders. We were also overwhelmed by two large donations and a plethora of messages of support, as well as many thoughtful, constructive suggestions for improving our marketing and sales programs.

Here are samples of some of the messages we received:

From James Schenck in the Guatemalan jungle:

You will get an order from me. I've been in the jungle connecting via cellphone since the book was announced. I have no way to send the order until I am back in Guatemala City.

Enjoy books, would like to see series continue. Would say more but only have 4800 baud connection. Hope you get more responses.
Saludos

From Mark McSherry in the snows of Wisconsin:

I just got back from driving 6 miles in a snowstorm to mail the check. I'm glad to hear that Starman #5 may yet see the light of day. Please e-mail me when you receive both checks—I want to be sure that you DO get them.

And thanks for a great book series.

From Richard Baumann (David's brother):

Enclosed please find a donation from me to the support of the Starman series books. Your work

on these books has been a great source of pride and joy to me. Long live the Starman series!

Thank you, friends! Your support is more than welcome and we are immensely grateful. Above all, perhaps, it is the first real powerful outpouring of assurance that the work the Starman Team has done has made a difference in people's lives and that our labors have achieved what we hoped—and more!

THANKS TO OTHER FRIENDS AND HELPERS!

We've had a number of good things come our way by donation—Baron Mrkva's professional layout of the dust jacket for *Journey to the Tenth Planet*, Fred Woodworth's printing and bookbinding for *Assault On Mars*, Neil Lindholm's research on a Canadian printing company, Tom Ippolito's gratis advertising in his Tom Swift fanzine *Blueprint*, Dan Henton's detailed analysis of the appearance of methane rain, Kevin Anetsbergers's artwork, Mary Doman's contributions of applicable reports from Space.com, Mark Johnson's making a place for us at the convention he's planning for October 2002, and other marvelous contributions are deeply appreciated!

SHAPING THE STARMAN SERIES

in the Starman Team's own exchanges

As the books of the Starman series unfold, the Starman Team of Jon Cooper, David Baumann, and Mike Dodd are in daily contact over the development of characters, plotting, implications of scientific discoveries, and so forth. Further, individuals send us queries that we try to answer. Some of our answers appear on the Starman Message Board, but the majority of the exchanges takes place in private emails.

Some of the interactions may be interesting to readers of the Inter*Stellars. Here are excerpts from a few of these exchanges.

ONE COMPLEX STORY

by Jon Cooper to David and Mike

I think that having a big plot to tie everything together adds enormously to the series: it makes it far more interesting. We really do have something unique going. In the Inter*Stellars, we can throw in tidbits from the Appendix and have short stories that explain various finer points of our story. We can do this because we are telling one complex story, and there are many parts of it that we aren't delving into.

I don't think that you could have an Inter*Stellar for the Tom Swift series. The Tom Swift series just doesn't lend itself to little stories like that, or appendix entries, or things of that sort: you'd really have to stretch it. The same goes for Rick Brant and Ken Holt: sure, you could have mini-adventures, but they would be just that: they're not really necessary because you're not dealing with a history and you're not building up to anything. In the Starman series, there are all sorts of things to wonder about—and hence opportunities for articles in an I*S. In Tom Swift or Rick Brant, there's hardly anything, because they take place in the real world (sort of). Not that that's bad: it is just different.

Stardust

A NAME BY MISTAKE

The name of Starlight Enterprise's chief security officer is Oritz Konig. The surname "Konig" is German for crown, which Jon Cooper selected to indicate the officer's trustworthiness. The name "Oritz," however, came about as a mistake. David wanted to honor a friend of his whose name is George Ortiz-Guzman and suggested the first name "Ortiz." Somehow, in the communication between the Starman Team members when *Assault On Mars* was being developed, the first name turned into "Oritz." We decided to keep it as an unusual appellation.

ANOTHER REAL PLACE IN THE STARMAN WORLD

If you have read *Assault On Mars*, you know that the setting for 22nd century Mars is the Anza-Borrego Desert in southern California. If you have acquired a copy of *Descent Into Europa*, you will have noted that almost an entire chapter of the subsequent Starman book, *The Lost Race of Mars*, was included. Here is an excerpt from that teaser passage:

Zip leaped across the gap and upward to the top of the foundry enclosure. ... Frantic now almost to the point of recklessness, he scuttled across the roof like a crab until he found an iron ladder that dropped through an opening into the dark interior of the structure. ...

Gripping the outside of the framework with his hands and insoles, the fugitive slid down the ladder, plummeting thirty feet into a cavernous room, gutted of all machinery. He slammed into the ground and fell down hard. Immediately he leaped to his feet and looked around. The walls were made of poured concrete, long weathered. Huge empty windows on one side showed the broad streak of the river, its murky water reflecting

pinpoints of light that flickered in the smooth current. On the opposite side of the great empty shell were a window and a dark empty doorspace.

To his left were three huge round openings with iron doorways like hatches. The first two were shut tight, but in the last was a circular inner hatch about a foot and a half in diameter. Its cover was missing.

Here, thought the fleeing Starman. I'll squeeze through here and they'll assume I went through the doorway.

He jumped onto a narrow shelf in front of the opening, put his legs through first, and wriggled his way through. On the other side was a small concrete platform that faced an iron-lined pit about ten feet across. Through the fog in his helmet he could barely make out a twisted and broken rusted ladder that angled out of it. A dank tree grew in black, muddy soil next to the pit. Both tree and pit were at the bottom of a windowless concrete tower about twenty feet square. High above, the stars shone in their brilliance.

This scene is one of two that was devised by the Starman Team as they talked face-to-face. (The other was the scene in which Joe launched a water bomb at Zip in *Descent Into Europa*.) In October 2001, David attended a weeklong conference in Virginia. Taking advantage of the proximity of Jon and Mike to the site of his conference, he went back a week early and visited Jon in his family home in Hurricane, West Virginia. Then he and Jon drove to Richmond, Virginia where Mike's parents live. Mike drove in from Norfolk and the three members of the team met for the first time.

Jon, Mike, and David were together for nearly two days, spending most of that time talking about the series. On Friday, October 19, they spent about two hours in conference in the beautiful setting of Mike's parents' backyard and discussed the

unfolding details of the fourth and fifth books.

In the afternoon, Mike took Jon and David to Belle Isle, an island in the James River that runs through Richmond. The island had served as a prison for Union soldiers during the Civil War. The team members walked all around the island, with yellow leaves falling around them. When they came to the old abandoned iron foundry that dates back a century or more, the scene described above began to take shape in their minds.

The next day, Mike and David returned (Jon had to return home) and David took two dozen photographs of the island, focusing on the iron foundry. From these events the above scene was crafted. Some of the photographs of the iron foundry are posted on the Starman web site. The other photographs will be used as inspiration of other scenes on Mars that will appear in the fifth Starman book.

FIELD TRIP TO THE ANZA-BORREGO DESERT

On May 19, 2001, David Baumann took a group of eight Starman fans on a field trip to the mud caves in the Anza-Borrego Desert of Southern California. Five adults and four children drove in two four-wheel-drive vehicles south from the suburbs of Orange County, California through the rural districts and on into the setting for 22nd century Mars. By midday the group had arrived in the sandy wasteland and arroyos where the magnificent mud caves are located.

In the spring of 2002, there may be another field trip to Mars. If it takes place, David may make a videotape of the mud cave and its environs for showing at the series book conference in Charlotte, Virginia in October.

STARMAN VIDEOTAPE

If the videotape is made, it will include other Starman items, such as Mike Dodd's hand-made land-sailer in action, and the choreographed fight scenes that occur in *Assault On Mars*, *The Runaway Asteroid*, and which will appear also in *The Lost Race of Mars*.

MIKE DODD IN CALIFORNIA

Mike Dodd spent a few days in California in June 2001, visiting friends. He also traveled through the small desert towns on the western edge of Death Valley. He took a number of photographs of strange formations called “tufas” that occur in an ancient lake called Mono Lake. These became the setting for “The City of Dust,” the short story that appeared in the second Inter*Stellar and reprinted in *Descent Into Europa*.

ANTICIPATING THE GIANT STARMAN BOOK

The authors have long anticipated producing the fifth Starman book, *The Lost Race of Mars*. Jon Cooper spent about six months detailing the plot in a thorough summary that alone is about 20,000 words long. A large number of readers of the early books have informed the Team that they are moderately (at least) frustrated by several unresolved plots that continue from book to book. Michael D. Cooper promises that all subplots will be resolved in the fifth book.

Bill Baumann, the artist for the first Starman book, *Assault On Mars*, painted the artwork for the dust jacket for *The Lost Race of Mars* in June 2001. David began writing the first draft of the book in late January. The first Starman books have 19 chapters each (*The Runaway Asteroid* has 21). There are 33 chapters slated for the fifth book. Of these, seven are already written.

The Reading Group, used as a sounding board by David as he produces the text, met on February 23 to hear the first five chapters read. The readers were actually, literally sworn to secrecy. After the first chapters had been read aloud, David was deeply gratified that none of those present had anticipated in the slightest the twists in the plot with which the book began.

WHERE DID THE NAME MONTEZUMA VLY COME FROM?

One of the main roads in the Anza-Borrego Desert is Montezuma Valley Road. The street sign is abbreviated MONTEZUMA VLY. The instant David saw this sign, he said,

“That’s the name of the guy who lives in the Asteroid Belt!”

AUTHOR AND ARTIST

A number of authors of classical series books have complained about how the artists for their books just hadn’t taken the time to get the illustrations right. While much of that criticism is certainly valid, the recent productions of Starman books have shown how difficult it can be to blend the visions of two different creative processes.

Hal Goodwin (John Blaine, author of the Rick Brant series) has pointed out that the artist for the dust jacket of *Sea Gold* shows Rick trying to open a bolt with a pocketknife. Now that’s an error that’s due just to carelessness.

However, sometimes the author does not provide enough information for the artist to render an illustration accurately to what the author has imagined. For example, in the first draft of the description of the Xenobots in *Journey to the Tenth Planet*, David wrote something like, “they move with a fluid motion, making the legs hard to see—like heat waves over asphalt.” After he read that description, Mike Dodd, who illustrated the scene, shot an email to David and said, “How am I supposed to illustrate that?”

As helpfully as he could, David answered, “I don’t know.”

Mike then produced the drawing that appears on page 131 of that book. David said, “That’s it!” and altered the text to match the drawing.

When Kevin Anetsberger, artist for *Descent Into Europa* and the short story “The City of Dust” prepared the drawings for the story, he was merely provided with a rough description of what was wanted without having seen the text. That’s because David only had a rough idea of how he wanted the story to flow but hadn’t written it yet.

Fortunately, when artist and author work together closely, text and illustration can be brought to match. Sometimes, such as when deadlines approach, the final blending cannot happen as accurately as one would wish. Note, for example, in *Descent Into*

Europa in the chapter called “The Veiled Raiders,” that David describes the shot that destroyed the giant igloo as describing a parabola. Mike, however, drew the trajectory of the concussive bomb in a straight line. When Mike was drawing, the text hadn’t been put into final form. When we committed to the parabolic trajectory, Mike drew another image for the scene, but it was too faint to reproduce well. By that time the deadline for sending the finished product to the printers was coming close and we had to use the first illustration, which was dark and clear.

FIRST REAL STORE OFFERS STARMAN BOOKS TO PUBLIC

Nicholas Yutko, owner and manager of Dreamscape Comics, Inc. (610) 867-1178 at 310 West Broad Street in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018 is the first professional person to offer Starman books among his wares. Thank you, Mr. Yutko, for taking a chance on us.

NOW HERE’S SOMETHING YOU DON’T SEE EVERY DAY

Starman fan Jim Adams is an expert in origami, the ancient Japanese skill of creating artwork by folding paper. Jim folded models of the Starman’s ship, the *Star Ranger*, in red paper and sent them to the members of the Starman Team. He included models of two other spacecraft as well.

As a way of thanking him, the Team created the character of “Folding Jim” in *Descent Into Europa*.

From the Starman Appendix

The Inter-Planetary Network

In the mid 22nd century, communication between the planets is made possible via a complex interplanetary communications system (called the IPN—Inter-Planetary Network). Data is sent from the surface of the planet to satellites in orbit. These satellites then beam the information on a tight laser beam (called

a “commbeam”) into another satellite far away in space, which bounces it to another one until it has reached its destination. The whole system is synchronized via a complex computer network.

To give an example: say that you were on Earth and wanted to call someone on the Moon. Orbiting satellites overhead would pick up your call, relay it to equipment on the Moon, and in a matter of seconds you would be connected via a “relay” satellite in Earth orbit. There would be a few seconds time delay because of the distance of the Moon from the Earth, but communication would still be nearly real-time.

On the other hand, say you wanted to call Mars. Mars is too far away to allow real-time communication, so when you entered your party’s number, the computer network would ask you to record your message after the tone. Once your message was recorded, the computer network would determine the best possible route to send your message, and then would start sending it from one satellite to another. If Mars happened to be on the other side of the Sun, routing a path could be quite complicated. The system is referred to in the fifth Starman book, *The Lost Race of Mars*.

A similar system works in the Asteroid Belt: a network of small satellites receives incoming laser messages and then relays them, one satellite at a time, through the Belt to the destination.

The process is also similar on spaceships: when a person on a spaceship wants to send a message, computers on board the spaceship send the message to the nearest satellite, which then reroutes it and beams it to its intended party.

With the development of RealTime Transmission (RTT) via tachyons around 2150, however, this scene suddenly changed as real-time communication anywhere in the solar system was suddenly theoretically possible. By 2155 enough satellites had been converted to allow RTT to virtually any location in the solar system.

The Internal Timeline

As the Starman stories develop, the Starman Team keeps files of the details to ensure internal consistency. The files include a glossary of all characters, places, and other items created for the saga. They also include full timelines of the events. Below is a summary of the timelines for the first four books. Remember that in the 22nd century the Gregorian Calendar has been replaced by the World Calendar. The days of the year are arranged across the months as follows:

January 1-30	July 1-30
February 1-30	August 1-30
March 1-31	September 1-31
April 1-30	October 1-30
May 1-30	November 1-30
June 1-31	December 1-31
Leap Day (every four years)	World Peace Day

The Short Story

In some ways, the Starman short stories do not have a life of their own. It is not intended that they do. They are meant to be “glimpses through a window” into the larger landscape of the Starman series rather than self-contained stories.

Earlier in this issue of the Inter*Stellar, Jon Cooper wrote: *I don't think that you could have an Inter*Stellar for the Tom Swift series. Tom Swift just doesn't lend itself to little stories like that, or appendix entries, or things of that sort: you'd really have to stretch it. The same goes for Rick Brant and Ken Holt: sure, you could have mini-adventures, but they would be just that: they're not really necessary because you're not dealing with a history and you're not building up to anything. In the Starman series, there are all sorts of things to wonder about—and hence opportunities for articles in an I*S.*

This is the premise behind our short stories. Work on the Starman series began with almost an entire year of plotting, researching, outlining stories, and devising a plausible history as a way of getting from 1999 (the year the Starman Team began its work) to 2151 (the year the series opens). This was all done before the first chapter of *Assault On Mars* was written. To guarantee consistency, accuracy, and fidelity to our first concepts, we consult our original files dozens of times in the course of producing another book.

This means that one feature of the published books is that there are a number of references to events that happened in our invented history before the decade of David Foster, Mark Seaton, and Joe Taylor. The short stories are designed to provide some interesting background to the book-length stories, but are not vital to the main storyline.

The first short story, “The Flight of the *Olympia*,” was obviously loosely based on the true history of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. Its primary purpose, however, in the wider Starman saga, was to introduce the “two tall figures dressed in flowing, close cloaks” who were able to hide themselves in “bent light.” Thus concealed, they entered Dr. Kinley’s cabin and took certain items. By now, most readers will have identified these figures as the first appearance of the Benefactors in the history of the Starmen.

The second short story, “The City of Dust,” provided more information about the Wind People and introduced the community that eventually made its home in Final Ilfen. This settlement plays a pivotal role in *Descent Into Europa*, and will be mentioned again in *The Lost Race of Mars*.

The short story that follows [“The Orphans of Titan”] gives a vignette into an event mentioned in *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. You will find the reference on page 45 of the third Starman book.

The fourth short story, “Return to Europa,” will be written this summer for Inter*Stellar #4, which is scheduled to appear sometime in the fall. It will be a logical follow-up to the fourth Starman book, *Descent Into Europa*.

Inter*Stellar

A fanzine dedicated to the Starman Series

Issue Number Four * September 2002

THE FUTURE—THE WAY IT USED TO BE

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STARLIGHT

A WORD FROM MICHAEL D. COOPER

THOUGHTS: *THE LOST RACE OF MARS*~

From an email by Jon Cooper to Mike and David,

I have been thinking about LROM [*The Lost Race of Mars*] a lot recently. I know it has an awful lot of action, but lots of other things have a lot of action too (action doesn't necessarily make a good book/movie). What is interesting about LROM is how the action is responded to: we show the tremendous courage of the Starmen, (and yet human-ness; the Starmen are not men with nerves of steel who are totally unaffected) battling against enormous odds and—which is so different from Tom Corbett—actually aided by their friends (some seen, some unseen). This

book is really a war of sorts, between the Banjoman and the Starmen and Richard Starlight. Their leader doesn't abandon them, as happens in most other books, but he supports them and fights for them. The Starmen don't give up but press on and overcome. This is a tale of courage, of perseverance, and (in a way) of trust (some people believe the Starmen/Richard and support them, and others don't). It is much more than your normal violent action movie.

THE ANALOG REVIEW

Tom Easton writes a column in *Analog* magazine called "The Reference Library." He reviewed the first three books of the Starman series in the November issue (which appeared in September). He noted that, "one of their fans sent me the first three books in the series." (This was Mark McSherry.) Mr. Easton gave us a column and a third and concluded, "it's good quaint nostalgic fun and a labor of love to boot."

After seeing the article, Jon Cooper wrote, "I thought the article was very good! He seemed very fair, and considering the source of the review I thought he was very kind to us. Who knows: maybe the review will bring in an order or two!"

Analog is a prestigious and widely read classic Sci-Fi magazine with about seventy years of publication history. We are proud to be mentioned in it. To Mark McSherry who sent Mr. Easton the first three volumes, a big Thank You from the Starman Team. We resolved to send Mr. Easton copies of *Descent Into Europa* and *The Lost Race of Mars*. We hope that he will review us again after reading these two volumes.

THE FIRST STARMEN

by David Baumann

The Starman Series is not the first medium in which the term “Starman” has been used. There are several previous uses of the expression. One is the movie “The Starman” starring Jeff Bridges that appeared in 1984, which had a television spinoff. The movie will be reviewed in the next Inter*Stellar.

Another is a classic science fiction book called *The Starmen*. It was written by Leigh Brackett and was first published in 1952. I own a fine hardback copy in dust jacket printed in Great Britain in 1954. Different publishers reprinted the book several times in paperback in the late 1970s.

To the best of my knowledge, this book presents the first use of the term “Starman.” Readers of the Starman series are invited to inform the members of the Starman Team of any earlier uses of the word with which they may be familiar.

“Michael Trehearne was a changeling. Search for his past brought him to a hillside in Brittany, where he found himself a witness of strange rites, and there he found what he was seeking—found also his future: the beautiful and mysterious Shairn, and the faraway stars. Their meeting was the key. For Michael it unlocked the doorway to the stars and plunged him into breath-taking adventures towards an unknown fate—and face to face with the Law of the Vardda. This story of the Starmen is magnificent in its grandeur and excitement; but it is also a warm and very real tale of human emotion.”

So reads the blurb on the inside flap of the dust jacket of *The Starmen*. In a galaxy well populated with a variety of races, the Vardda are the only people who have achieved interstellar travel. Though humanoid, the Vardda feature a distinct racial appearance: an “arrogant bone structure” and “long yellow eyes, slightly tilted and flecked with sparks of greenish light.” And

there is a kind of pride in their difference, “worn like a banner.”

Earthman Michael Trehearne looks like them but for him the difference has made for a life of loneliness and exclusion. In a long search for his roots and family background, in Brittany he has a chance meeting with Kerrel, a stranger who is the only person he has ever met who resembles himself. Also noting the startling racial similarity, Kerrel speaks to Trehearne in an unguarded fashion, only too late realizing that Trehearne is an Earthman rather than a visiting Vardda like himself.

Startled and intrigued, Trehearne clandestinely follows Kerrel until he comes to a spaceship in the country, ready to launch. Discovered and captured, the Earthman is taken aboard—unknown to himself, it is a life-or-death test of his probable Vardda heritage, for only the Vardda can survive the acceleration needed for interstellar travel. Michael survives and eventually comes to the planet Vardda.

His appearance raises a serious, first-time question for the Council of the Vardda. Apparently, the Varddas’ ability to travel between the stars is not a matter inherent to their nature, but the result of a scientific discovery made long before by a member of their race named Orthis.

Once interstellar travel was established and the Vardda had come into contact with peoples on other planets, Orthis wanted to share his discovery with everyone. The Council of Vardda, however, forbade it. Long debate followed but Orthis was unable to persuade his fellows. Feeling that it was a matter of justice, Orthis fled with the intention of sharing his discovery with others against the will of his own people. Pursued, he disappeared and was never found or heard from.

Before long, the Vardda founded a lucrative interplanetary commerce, in which they themselves had a monopoly. With most planets they were direct with their existence, openly landing and trading. With Earth and a few other planets, they maintained secrecy. One Vardda, obviously, had stayed on Earth long enough to sire the halfling, Michael Trehearne.

The decision of the Council of the Vardda was that Michael was to be accepted as true Vardda. He comes to love the beautiful Shairn. Eventually he joins a crew of merchants and, with them, travels between stars and planets. The descriptions of the peoples Michael meets and the planets that are their homes are imaginative and wondrous.

Michael's newfound idyllic life does not last long. On Vardda there is a secret party called the Orthists. They desire to share the secret of interstellar travel with other races, but the Council and the majority of Vardda rigorously oppose them. They are considered traitors and their convictions worthy of punishment.

Michael, being a halfling, is contacted by the Orthists and becomes sympathetic to their cause. From them he learns the legend of the fate of Orthis—where he fled and presumably where he died. In his ship, could it be found, is the information needed to share the secret of surviving interstellar travel.

Bitterly opposed by most Varddans and most especially by Kerrel, Michael and a friend decide to search for the last resting place of Orthis. Once their intention and departure from Vardda become known, they are relentlessly pursued. The chase is described with fitting tension as it extends against a background of galactic splendor. The outcome is by no means certain, for the storyline could work both ways very plausibly. Only in the last few pages does the reader learn the outcome of Michael's mission.

The Starmen is a product of the science-fiction vogue of the mid-twentieth century, but is not overly welded to that time. It reads very well fifty years later, and used copies are readily available today in a variety of editions. Many are quite inexpensive, though early hardback editions in good condition can be pricey.

Those with an eye for detail will note that the leader of the traitors in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* was named Lee Kerrel—a tribute to Leigh Brackett, the author of *The Starmen* (assuming that "Leigh" is pronounced "Lee"), and the Vardda who made

first contact with Michael Trehearne—the first Earthman to become “a Starman.”

Stardust

DARJEELING TEA

The Starman Team has a strong commitment to accuracy in our work. After creating the characters of the Starmen we have developed the personality of each one. One of the traits of Joe Taylor is that he likes to drink Darjeeling tea. His first drink of this Indian beverage was imbibed in *Assault On Mars* as he, Mark, and Steve were flying to Mars on the *Spud Peeler*. In *Journey to the Tenth Planet*, Mark teased Joe about finding a cup inside the abandoned city on Nyx when they were trying to find a way inside. In *Descent Into Europa*, Richard Starlight serves it during his initial planning session with the Starmen to discuss the trip to Europa, and Joe makes it in the *Underbird* when the three Starman are inside their ship at the bottom of the sea. In *The Lost Race of Mars*, Joe pours it out of a thermos when he and his friends are camping, and later Zip and Mark joke about delivering a cup of the steaming beverage when Joe is being rescued from a tight place.

With so many references, the question arises: How is the word “Darjeeling” pronounced? One would assume that it is pronounced “dar-JEE-ling,” but David thought he remembered somewhere that it was actually pronounced “JAR-ling.” With that in mind, when David wrote the camping scene in *The Lost Race of Mars*, in the first draft Mark teased Joe about how to pronounce the word. Joe responded by singing, “Oh my darling Clementine” and substituting the word “jarling” for “darling.”

Then, having some doubts and wanting to make certain of the pronunciation, David set about to research just how the word really is pronounced. Eventually he found the web site of an Indian tea company in Australia and whipped an email off to the customer service department—never really expecting to get an answer. But within twelve hours, the following message

provided the response:

Dear David,

I am not sure of the "correct" pronunciation of "Darjeeling" though my father who is native to Darjeeling (and almost everybody I know) pronounces Darjeeling as with the word "eel" combined within it: Darj-eel-ing.

I hope this helps.

Regards,
Harold Pradhan, Proprietor

So there you have it: both assumed pronunciations were wrong. It's "darj" (presumably rhymes with "large")-eel-ing.
It's still Joe's favorite beverage.

BINDING BY ASSEMBLY LINE

The process of binding books was described in some detail in the second Inter*Stellar. As was related, it is an exacting, time-consuming process. To help speed matters along, eight college students at David's church volunteered to learn the process, then produce the books on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. With classical music blasting from a boom box, the workers rapidly pass brushes, glue, scissors, and rollers from hand to hand in an assembly line. At the end, copies of *Assault On Mars* pile up on a kitchen counter. The group can do between 60 and 70 books in two or three hours.

IS DAVID BAUMANN A NINEVITE?

Jonah 4:11a "Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left."

From Mark McSherry

Sent Wednesday, April 10, 2002~

Just a question about chapter three of DIE. On pages 35-36 it appears that the earth is spinning in the wrong direction—the sun rising in the west and setting in the east.

As *Star Ranger* enters earth orbit it is middle of night over Indian Ocean with day/night line over Atlantic. As *Star Ranger* makes orbit around earth it enters shadow of evening over Siberia (should be morning?) and passes over Europe as it greeted day (should be greeted night?) It appears that the earth is spinning east to west rather than west to east.

David answered,

Whoops, you're right!!!

The *Star Ranger* circles the globe in a short time. I didn't specify precisely how long it took, but I imagined that it took them about an hour. To the Starmen, then, the rotation of the Earth can be functionally ignored.

I actually got out a map when I wrote the scene but don't have it in front of me now; my intention was to have the *Star Ranger* touch down in Florida in mid-morning—which is how I wrote the conclusion of that scene. As the Starmen made their approach, it was midnight in India. Therefore evening is mid-Atlantic and morning is somewhere in the Pacific. When I wrote that Japan is entering evening, it should have been morning, and when I wrote that Europe is greeting the day it ought to have been entering the evening—therefore, for the Starmen to have touched down in mid-morning, I should have made it midnight in Hawaii. If that happens, it can be midday in India, evening in Siberia, and morning in Florida.

I think that's a pretty cool mistake to have made! Congratulations, Mark, for finding it!! I'll fix the text for the second edition.

Later, Mark wrote,

Probably the most famous example in science fiction is in Larry Niven's paperback first edition of *Ringworld* (1969). In the

first chapter the novel's protagonist (Louis Wu) is flitting around the globe from one New Year's Eve party to the next trying to avoid the New Year. Unfortunately Niven has him moving west to east. This was fixed in the next edition. Larry Niven is renowned for the hard-core science in his SF stories and *Ringworld* is his most famous award-winning science fiction novel. So the Starman Team is in very good company.

JON COOPER'S "STARMAN'S VACATION"

July 18-25, 2002, Jon Cooper visited David in California for a week's vacation, which turned out to be a week of almost constant Starman labor. We even decided not to take a planned overnight to a lovely seaside resort and instead put together the final text of *The Lost Race of Mars* for Friesens Printers.

We also took the opportunity to do some videotaping of the choreographed fight scenes in the Starman books.

Further, six people took part in a long afternoon of book binding and put together about 60 copies of *Assault On Mars*. After two years of such occasional gatherings such as the one described above, the end is at last in sight: there are only 24 copies to be completed. The cover sheets are all gone so these last copies will be picture covers.

A CANADIAN CONNECTION

In April, David was in British Columbia for a business trip. During this time, he took several photographs of places he visited for later use in illustrating *The Lost Race of Mars*. (One of these can be found on the Starman web site—the valley with the fallen trees across the ravine.)

He also arranged to have lunch with Starman supporter Neil Lindholm, who lives in Victoria, at the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The visit, which included Richard and Marge Avery, the models for Tunnel People Richard and Marjie Prester, took place in a Victoria pub called "Elephant and Castle."

The visit with Neil led to an exchange with Jon Cooper that may give a little more insight into how the Starman books can be written so smoothly with a team of three people. Here are excerpts from that exchange:

Neil

Well, I had lunch with David last week and it was quite enjoyable. We talked for a few hours. I was amazed by his involvement in the whole world of series books. He was telling me how he helped in tracking down Capwell Wyckoff's daughter and how he has met with Chris Goodwin and their plans together. Amazing...

I don't know if I ever mentioned this before but I have tried my hand in writing in the past and plan on getting back into it this summer, as I have lots of time.

Jon

That's fantastic! I do remember your mentioning this before and I think it's a great thing.

Neil

I was wondering if you could send me some information about how you set up the "Starman" books. What do you send David to work with? How much detail do you go into? Are the stories plotted out chapter by chapter or in an overall sense? What kind of word count do you use?

Jon

That would make for a terrific Inter*Stellar article! I bet a lot of people would be interested in that. (Come to think of it, I'll copy this e-mail to the rest of the team so it can be on hand to be put in I*S #4.) Here is how the process works:

In 1998, the three of us sat down and designed every nook and cranny of the Starman world. We defined the characters, the technology, the planets, the problems, the shortcomings, the successes, and everything else that we would need to know about the world of the 2150s in order to write books with depth. Once we had the context in mind (something absolutely critical to writing the books, for we couldn't even draft the stories without knowing the context they were placed in), we then designed the overall storyline. At that stage, the summary for *Descent Into Europa* consisted of this:

4. *Descent Into Europa*

A probe to Jupiter's moon Europa reveals that a substance found on Europa is useful for forming the hybrid multidimensional materials necessary to create the interstellar drive discovered on the Tenth Planet. Starlight Enterprise is very interested, and so dispatches an experimental high-tech spaceship, capable of acting as an undersea submarine to explore and perhaps colonize this dangerous underwater region. The three Starmen, accompanied by a small gathering of experts, explore the area and try to learn what happened to the vanished crewmembers of a prior expedition that landed many decades ago. They also try to get to the bottom of rumors that there is life on Europa, and none of it is hospitable...

We outlined every story so that we would know where the series was heading and would thus be able to properly lead up to events. If we had a climax in book five, we could carefully lead up to it in the first four books and thus achieve a better impact. If we had a multi-book

superplot we wanted to follow (such as the development of an FTL [*faster-than-light*] drive), we could stick pieces of it in each plot and thus easily see that it was worked in properly.

The plot for *Descent Into Europa* was left alone for a long time after 1998. It wasn't until we began writing *Journey to the Tenth Planet*, the third book in the series, that I began thinking about book four again. By this time we knew what the first three books were about and therefore we had what we needed to know in order to make the fourth book match seamlessly with the first three. The time to plot the fourth book was while the third book was being written: that way if something came up in book four that needed to be mentioned in the previous book we would still have time to do that.

It was my responsibility to turn the paragraph summary of DIE that I had written earlier into a full-fledged outline. The goal of the outline is to make writing the book easier by spelling out what needs to happen in each chapter. The action is divided up into chapters, and each chapter is balanced to help ensure that the action is paced evenly and the climaxes are in the right places. Chapterizing the paragraph summary is also an excellent way to find out if you really have a story or not: if you can take the paragraph and turn it into a summary with 20 chapters of 400 words each then you know the story well enough (and have enough story!) to begin writing it.

The summary for *Descent Into Europa* came out to 7,000 words. We had planned that book to be a rather short story. Some of the other summaries

were a good bit longer: the one for *Assault on Mars* was 11,000 words, and the summary for *The Lost Race of Mars* was 28,000 words. Summaries are simply as long as they need to be in order to give the full detail of what goes on. ...

The final product is a bit different from the summarized story [of *Descent Into Europa*]. This is because as we wrote the book we got ideas as to how to improve the story. Sometimes we spotted flaws in the summary and we then altered the plot to fix the flaws. Sometimes we came up with hot new ideas and worked those in. Sometimes we realized that we had pulled that trick before and therefore had to think of something different. All sorts of things can happen as a book starts being written. The summary isn't intended to be an ironclad blueprint: it's sort of a suggestion that is pushed and pulled and tweaked as the process goes on.

Even if the summary is extensively modified, it is still a lot easier to start with a summary and then go from there instead of starting from scratch! Once we have the summary in place, we then file it away until it is time to write that book. Between my writing the summary for the fourth book and the time when the writing of that book began, we had to finish writing the third book, proofread the third book, ship the third book off to Sheridan to be printed, take orders for and advertise the third book, distribute the third book, and get off an Inter*Stellar. We didn't get around to actually writing the fourth book until six months after the summary was finished, which isn't unusual.

David writes around one or two chapters a week. As he writes each chapter, he e-mails it to us

and we review it for overall flow and plot details. David also reads the book aloud to a select reading group, something that helps him ensure that the book flows well. The reading group is also very good at pointing out our plot holes! As far as word count goes, we don't have any strict rules here: while we aim for a 40,000 to 50,000 word story, we basically write until we have told the full story. If the story we need to tell is a long story (as it is in the fifth Starman book), we simply lengthen the book and write until the story is told. In the classic days of series books, stories had very specific word counts, but we feel that that sort of limitation hampers the story and can cripple a good adventure. Since we don't have a publisher breathing down our necks demanding stories of exactly 40,000 words, we have the luxury of writing until we're done.

And there you have it!

ZIP FOSTER'S DEBUT: IN THE 1920s!

As has been mentioned before, the name Zip Foster was coined by Jon Cooper as a tribute to Rick Brant author Hal Goodwin, who wrote *Rip Foster Rides the Gray Planet* in the early 1950s. At about the same time, a friend of David's who found out about his interest in series books, gave him one of his own childhood series book called *The Boy Ranchers in the Desert*.

The Boy Ranchers series is comprised of nine volumes that appeared 1921-1930, published by Cupples and Leon. *In the Desert* appeared in 1924. The author is Willard F. Baker, one of the pseudonyms of Howard Garis, prolific author for the Stratemeyer Syndicate, best known as the author of most of the original Tom Swift books and the originator of the Uncle Wiggily stories.

Much to David's surprise, when he read it he found a character named Zip Foster. Zip never appears in the story—he appears to be an eccentric character who is quoted with outlandish bits of homespun wisdom.

Wanting to know more about the original Zip Foster, David inquired of his friend and series book expert James Keeline, who checked with another series book expert, Bill Gowen. Bill said,

The Boy Ranchers research took me longer than I figured because the character Zip Foster never really appears in the series.

The name "Zip Foster" is used anecdotally by the character Bud at infrequent times when Bud becomes excited, sort of like Wakefield Damon "blessing" everything in sight. Zip is described (as an explanation) by Garis in the narrative of *The Boy Ranchers at Spur Creek* as "a sort of mythical patron saint whose identity he [Bud] jealously concealed from his cousins."

At the end of a couple of the books, Garis teases the readers with things like, "in the next volume of the series the Boy Ranchers will" etc. etc... "and maybe we'll find out more about Zip Foster."

Well, Zip never actually appears as far as I can tell (I didn't read the books page by page, but skimmed them fairly thoroughly).

FROM THE STARMAN APPENDIX

backdrop to creating the Starmen's world

Between producing books, crafting and developing plots and stories, and other matters, the Starman Team shoots ideas back and forth with each other. From many of these exchanges the

Starmen's World takes shape and comments and references in future books are taken. Here are excerpts from a few exchanges.

WHY "THE COLLAPSE"?

In email exchanges among the Starman Team members, Mike wondered whether there might be "fast food" in the world of the Starmen.

David responded

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 joints in Eagle City, even on the west side.

It's for that reason—putting in the slower, simpler world—that we have things in the series like Armstrong Forest, the small-town/farm culture in WV and Montana, etc. We've never described a huge city or major bureaucracy or anything like that. Our popular secondary characters are the counter-culture types like Montezuma Vly and St. George, the Wind People and the Tunnel People. Commander Gibson says it well in LROM [*The Lost Race of Mars*] when he talks to Dana, the reporter, and 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.

StellarGrams

More letters from our readers

The first review of *Descent Into Europa*
by Marge Avery

The rest of the evening I plan to spend on *Descent Into Europa*. So far I'm on page 94. You know I've been a fan of your writing, and I've loved the first three books of the Starman series. Book four is absolutely wonderful! It may be that it is the best. I am enjoying it so much and having a terrible time keeping myself from underlining the passages that I love the best. The writing is so beautiful, so appealing to the senses; I can see the things you are describing, can feel that I am there. You describe the fresh smell of the sea air, the texture of the skin of the mantaships, the marvelous colors of the sea, the glint of sunlight on water, the songs of the birds, the tender moment with Zip and his little sister. There's so much, so much more. You see beauty. That's so important. One of the things that I dearly love about Augustine is that his writing is so appealing to the senses, as is yours. What a compliment! Here I am comparing you to my favorite saint. How about that?

Marge Avery is the model for Marjie Prester, who appears in three of the five Starman books.

From Dafydd Neal Dyar

In Chapter 7 [of *Descent Into Europa*]: "The Scarlet Lake Mystery," LaGrange Point Five (L5) is described as "the place where the pull of Earth's gravity precisely cancels the pull of the

sun.” Actually, it’s the gravity of the Earth and Moon are at work here.

There are five LaGrange points. L1 is between the Earth and Moon and it’s here that the two gravitational pulls balance and cancel out. L2, out beyond the Moon, is where the two pulls combine and double up. L3 is a point on the Moon’s orbit directly opposite the Moon itself, a “hole” where another mass could balance the Moon’s pull.

L4 and L5 are the so-called “libration” points, 60° behind (west) and ahead of (east) of the Moon, respectively, in the same orbit. Both of these points are exactly the same distance from the center of mass of the Earth and the center of mass of the Moon as those two centers of mass are from each other. L5 is thus the third point of an equilateral triangle, in which the centers of the mass of the Earth and the Moon are the other two points.

L5 is therefore one of the two points, L4 being the other, where the gravitational pulls of the Earth and Moon converge and resolve.

Dafydd Neal Dyar is a gem of a Starman fan, whose knowledge of planetary science is encyclopedic. The Starman Team is pleased that he finds our books enjoyable and worth the time and effort it takes him to write his cogent and helpful observations.

Richard L. Routh
Sent Monday, April 15, 2002
To: Jon Cooper
Subject: How I liked your new book

Jon,

I just finished reading your latest book and the two short stories at the end. This book is the best one yet. The two short stories are real gems (delectable morsels for the droves of Starman-trekkies to come). Your team keeps

getting better with each new book. How long
can you keep this up?

Looking Forward to the Next,

Ric

From Mark Johnson

I finished reading DIE this evening. Outstanding. This book takes the Starman saga to new levels and is on par with the finest series book writing.

David, Jon and Mike have done a superb job. In my opinion each book so far has been smoother and richer than the one before. DIE has very few, if any, false or sour notes.

The plotting, pacing and writing come together to form a very cohesive and enjoyable whole.

Most interesting to me is that DIE is both the most original and creative in terms of sci-fi ideas, yet also the most adept at reminding us that humans are human no matter what century they live in.

Take a bow, gentlemen!

THE SHORT STORY

*The Starman short stories are part of the Starman canon but relate events that take place outside the main story line in the books. This fourth issue of the Inter*Stellar features a short story called, "A Matter of Time." It has a curious origin.*

In the spring of 2002, David wrote to Jon and Mike,

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?

Jon responded,

Man! How could we have missed that?? ... If we are assuming that they do have children and the children aren't dead, 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...

After some further exchanges, David wrote,

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.

And Jon responded,

It's hard to say at the moment because we really don't have a plot yet. It's something like trying to figure out whether white carpet or off-white carpet would look good in your next house when you have no idea what your next house will be. Let me throw out a few ideas here:

* In the past series, Richard hasn't seemed at all concerned about his missing children. No mourning for them, no longings, nothing. They haven't been mentioned at all. Suppose this is because Richard isn't worried about them: they're gone but he knows where they are. Specifically, an early SE version of a transporter didn't work the way it was intended: instead of transmitting an object through space, it transmitted them through time and sent the children (who were standing nearby) and whoever else was around ten years into the future or something. All Rick has to do is wait around until ten years pass and then

boom, they'll reappear. (This is a terrible idea since it removes the possibility of searching for the children, but I thought I'd throw it out anyway.)

* Suppose the children (all in their teens and early 20s) had gone out on an expedition in the Asteroid Belt just for the fun of it. They were never heard from again and no one found them. What they had done was stumbled across a long-forgotten portal on a long-forgotten asteroid and transported themselves halfway across the galaxy. ...

* Suppose the Starlight children were captured by some spies with the intent of holding them for ransom. They were immediately recovered (before the spies could even demand ransom), but in the process the Starlight children learned something highly important. Richard decided to hide their recovery and allow the Starlight children to work as top-secret agents, searching in the Asteroid Belt for something or other. The Starmen, being Starmen, have known all along where they were—perhaps [Starman] Kathryn [Mullaney—mentioned in *The Runaway Asteroid*] was one [of the Starlight children] after all—but haven't said anything and keep it a secret, even among themselves.

* Suppose the three Starlight children have some sort of fatal, deadly disease, and were placed in suspended animation until a cure could be found. (Of course, if that is the case, why search for them?)

* Suppose that Richard just hasn't had any children yet; since the average lifespan in the 2150s is 147, it's common to wait until you are 50 or so to have children.

* Suppose the Starlight children got hot on the trail of something

in the Asteroid Belt and Richard helped them disappear from sight. He knows where they are and what they're doing and that they are ok, but no one else has any idea what is going on. (Of course, then, what is the idea of searching for them?)

* Suppose they were on a long, multi-year mission to the Oort Cloud, far beyond Pluto. No one has mentioned them because everyone knows where they are, but the arrival time to the Cloud is still years away. One day, though, their ship vanishes, and that's when the Starmen have to do something and go find them.

* Suppose that the Starlight children came across an old derelict of a ship in the Asteroid Belt—there was no telling how old it was or whom it belonged to. Somehow, they accidentally turned it on and they all vanished. Zip has to find out where they vanished to and what was going on.

Anyway, as you can see, I really don't have any good ideas here...

Well, we worked it out and decided to address the omission with a short story. Read "A Matter of Time" to find out which idea we used...

Inter*Stellar

A fanzine dedicated to the Starman Series

Issue Number Five

October 2002

THE FUTURE—THE WAY IT USED TO BE

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Starlight

a word from Michael D. Cooper

THE SERIES BOOK CONVENTION

in Charlottesville, Virginia

Mark Johnson organized the Convention beautifully. Well over fifty series book aficionados gathered on the site on the weekend of October 11-13. Local advertising brought in two or three dozen members of the curious public. The exhibit hall was packed with tables for display, each of which was laden with series books for sale. The Starman Team took great pleasure in

meeting a number of loyal customers whose names had been known previously only by email or regular mail.

The Starman Team made the first of about a dozen presentations that took place over the weekend. At the conclusion of our talk, we released *The Lost Race of Mars* to purchasers. The day before, copies had been sent by priority mail to those who had ordered the book but were unable to attend the convention.

The Starman table featured numerous copies of all five Starman books and the four Inter*Stellars. Further, patrons of our exhibit could sample Darjeeling tea—the beverage preferred by Starman Joe Taylor—and jalapeño jelly on crackers whose brand was the appropriately named “Zips.” (Those who have read the fifth Starman book will recognize jalapeño jelly as part of the nutritious breakfast enjoyed by Joe on page 50.) The spicy spread was sampled by only a few—one of whom described it as “interesting.”

We also had a continuous showing of the Starman documentary video made in July 2002. The 23-minute presentation features Mike Dodd in an actual land-sailer, scenes from the Anza-Borrego Desert in southern California including the amazing mud cave, and members of David’s karate class staging six fight scenes that appear in Starman fiction.

Jon Cooper has transferred the video to a CD, which interested persons may order from him for \$5.00. Jon says, “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.”

THE FUTURE OF THE STARMAN SERIES

Friesens Printers in Altona, Alberta, Canada has done a magnificent job of printing *Descent Into Europa* and *The Lost Race of Mars*. The company is customer-oriented and dedicated to a good quality product, and asks the best price we’ve found.

Trouble is, the price is still pretty steep for three guys who do this as a hobby. *The Lost Race of Mars* cost about \$7,000 to print.

Producing the Starman books has not ever put us in the hole for long, although we have had to advance our own money, and even borrow some on one occasion, in order to get the books printed. Eventually sales cover the initial outlay. Two sizable donations earlier this year were vital for keeping us in the black. Currently, all bills are paid and we have a few hundred dollars in the bank. The cash on hand will go toward photocopying dust jackets, printing the Inter*Stellars, and postage.

We have finally concluded that we cannot continue to have our books professionally printed and cover the entire cost up front. We are looking at alternatives and have narrowed our options to two: a print-on-demand company called 1stBooks and a division of Applewood Books called American Web Books.

1stBooks requires only a small initial investment and allows for wide distribution. One drawback is that the size of the books is larger than what we've used so far and therefore cannot match the design we chose deliberately to match the classic books; further, our royalties are very small. Sales would just about have to double for us just to maintain our project. (A second edition of *Assault On Mars* is already available through 1stBooks and can be ordered through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and elsewhere. The second edition includes corrections and a few minor additions to the story.)

American Web Books, a newly designed program of Applewood Books, looks increasingly tempting. Phil Zuckerman, the President of Applewood, attended the Convention in Charlottesville. Among other items of interest, in his presentation he described "PartnerPublishing." Up front money is about half what we've been paying, but we have to have a minimum order of 250 volumes. Size and format can match our previous design. Since we have a reliable customer

base of more than 275 people, and since that figure is growing slowly but steadily, it seems likely that the sixth Starman book will be published in this fashion.

The Starman Team will continue to search and consider our future printing options and will, of course, keep you posted.

SALES RECORDS THROUGH OCTOBER 19, 2002

<i>Assault on Mars</i>	418
<i>The Runaway Asteroid</i>	332
<i>Journey to the Tenth Planet</i>	288
<i>Descent Into Europa</i>	286
<i>The Lost Race of Mars</i>	190

The Starman Team members have retained a number of copies of *Assault On Mars* for their own shelves. As of the date of this writing, there are only 31 copies of the first edition of this book left for sale. After that, only the second edition produced by 1stBooks will be available.

WILLING SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

The Starman series has a lot of scientific principles that underlie the stories. Some of these we have presented in previous Inter*Stellars, and two more are found in this issue (see pages 37-38). A few are rather fantastic but still have a basis in current theory, even if the theory is marginal.

Some of our undergirding principles include the theory of the Nemesis (a brown dwarf star that orbits our sun billions of miles away), antimatter drive, the conjecture of a fifth planet between Mars and Jupiter, the existence of a tenth planet, water ice at the south pole of the Moon, an ocean on Europa and the possibility of life in it, water ice close to the surface of Mars, and that Mars was once wet and fertile.

Some scientific principles we know aren't true. In such cases we ask the reader to "suspend disbelief" for the sake of the story.

These include breathable air contained inside a crater with a high wall, the notion that the asteroid belt is dense with rolling rocks, an artificial gravity grid, time travel through expanding the influence of a black hole (our most fantastic premise), a figure-8 orbit that is many millions of miles long, light cloaks that provide virtual invisibility, and the terraformation of Mars in a mere span of 150 years.

We also know that in real life you cannot easily knock someone out with a simple punch or kick to the head, but we include this technique just because it seems to be almost *de rigueur* for the genre.

THE NAMES "ZOOTZ" AND "DEREK DEWDNEY"

Larry Zootz was a henchman of the Banjoman. He first appears on page 199 in *The Lost Race of Mars*. He was named after a store in British Columbia.

Derek Dewdney, a warship navigator for Richard Starlight who appears on page 231, is named after a shoeshine boy in Victoria and a street in Mission, British Columbia.

Stardust

THE COLLAPSE

The Starman series describes itself as taking place in "an age of hope and adventure." Nevertheless, it follows a period referred to throughout the books as "The Collapse." These are a few of our thoughts on the matter.

We have created the world of the Starmen to be, in some way, an ideal. Though evil certainly still exists in the age of the Starmen, the background of the series is, in a sense, a "second chance." The Collapse, which took place from about the 2020s to the 2080s, is similar to the Biblical concept of the Flood. It cleansed the Earth and allowed for a new beginning. The 22nd century is deliberately intended to be a "morning world." We

describe it in terms of an “ideal” to be striven for—even without any adventures at all, daily life alone would be worth emulating and desiring.

Armstrong Forest on the Moon is especially one symbol in this quasi-idyllic world; in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* it is described as a “pristine paradise” (page 23). All scenes that take place on Earth have been almost Edenic: West Virginia and Florida, and the references to Montana, New Zealand, and Canada. The only exception is the nuclear wasteland where DC had been, but that is presented deliberately as being marked off from the rest of the 22nd century by a “sharp line.”

CONTEST WINNER: MARK JOHNSON

When we distributed *Descent Into Europa* we announced a contest: somewhere in its pages was a reference to a classic series book puzzle. The first reader to discover it would be made a character in *The Lost Race of Mars*. The winner was Mark Johnson, who figured out that Harry Tanwick VII, the philanthropist who provided the funds for the Starmen’s journey to Europa, was a seventh-generation descendant of an individual mentioned in the original text version of the Hardy Boys book, *The Disappearing Floor*.

[In this notoriously poorly-written Hardy Boys story, Joe and Frank find an envelope at the beginning of the story with a hundred dollar bill in it; the envelope is marked “Harry Tanwick”; at the end of the story, Joe points out that they’ve never found out who Harry Tanwick is. He had never been mentioned anywhere else in the story.]

Joe Hardy may not ever have been satisfied, for the first Harry Tanwick never did show up. However, those who read pages 30-31 of *Descent Into Europa* will find some sort of closure.

When Mark Johnson sent in his correct answer, David Baumann asked him for a description of himself, which David used in *The Lost Race of Mars* to create a character without whom the fifth Starman tale would have been quite different! He

makes his debut in pages 174-177, appears again in pages 360 and 363-368, and has a final remembrance on page 388.

Starman, the Movie

In the fourth Inter*Stellar, we presented a review of the Leigh Brackett book, *The Starmen*. For the second time we take note of a previous use of the term “Starman,” and in this issue pay tribute to a movie.

In 1985, Columbia Pictures released a film called “Starman.” It was produced by John Carpenter and starred Jeff Bridges and Karen Allen. The premise is that an intelligent extraterrestrial race received the message aboard the spacecraft “Voyager” from Earth that gave greetings in half a hundred languages and invited any recipient to pay us a visit. They took us at our word. A spacecraft headed toward Earth and, when it was close, sent a scout ship. As soon as it entered US airspace, it was shot down.

After slamming to the earth in a fireball, the alien scout (the “Starman”) took refuge in a remote Wisconsin cabin and prepared a human body from DNA in a strand of hair he found in a scrapbook. The body was a duplicate of the dead mate of a young widow, whose husband Scott had died a few months earlier in an accident.

The Starman then sent a message to the mothership that the environment he had found was hostile and asked to be picked up at a pre-arranged rendezvous at the Meteor Crater in Winslow, Arizona. Next, the visitor convinced the widow, Jenny Hayden, to drive him to Arizona.

Two simultaneous storylines run the course of the movie. On the inside, Jenny’s relationship with the Starman leads her to address her grief and rekindle her ability to feel emotion, and the alien gets a quick on-site lesson about human life and love. On the outside, federal government agents, intent on capturing the alien at all costs, pursue him and Jenny across the states.

A representative of SETI assisted the government until he realized that they are a buncha heartless, bullying authoritarians

who were preparing to use force to capture the alien and spread him out on a dissecting table. It is at this point that he muttered the line, “Welcome to Planet Earth!” and changed his tune.

When he objected strenuously to the agent in charge of the search operation, that individual screamed, “I don’t need a lecture on morality from you!” (Seems to me that that is precisely what he *did* need.)

Despite a number of incidents that are highly improbable and contrived, overall it’s an entertaining movie and readily available at most video rental stores.

LOST RACE OF MARS 1960

In midsummer 2002, Jon Cooper sent this email to David 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.

This children’s book was first published in hardcover in 1960 by Winston Press and reissued by Scholastic Book Services in 1972 as a paperback.

The blurb from Scholastic Book Services reads:

Are the Old Martians really a lost race—just withered mummies lying in dark caves? Or are they still alive—somewhere on the red planet? Sally and Jim must find out. They must help their father discover if the Old Martians still exist. His life work as a scientist is at stake! But it's not easy. They are only visitors to the Mars colony in the year 2017. And no one really wants them there.

Jon Cooper reread the book in August and offers this review:

The back of the book sums up the story pretty well. Sally and Jim's father, after years of hard work and pulling strings and calling in favors, finally got a research grant to allow him and his family to study life on Mars for one year. In 2017, only one small colony of a few thousand people was on Mars, and the colony was not at all happy to see the family arrive: they thought that such "pure research" was a waste of resources and that the family was just using up precious air and food without giving anything worthwhile back, and so they were quite mean and rude to the family, put them down every chance they got, and were completely uncooperative. Thanks to the complete lack of help the colony offered the father, no progress was made on finding the lost race, and the children decided to sneak out on their own in an attempt to make contact with the lost race for their father.

The book is quite well written for a children's book: it has a lot of scientific detail. I don't know anything about its author, Robert Silverberg, but he clearly knows what he is taking about. It's really amazing to see how he worked things such as the utter boredom of space travel, the orbital periods and size of the Martian moons, and basic orbital mechanics into a book clearly written for children.

The story isn't dated too badly. There are a few things that stick out, such as a reference to the first manned Mars landing in the 1990s and the first colony started a decade or two after that, and there was a curious reference to stopping the milk delivery while they were gone. No mention at all is made of computers, which I thought was nice for a change.

There are a few similarities between this volume and the fifth Starman book. Both feature a search for a lost race on Mars. In both books the search is made by young people. In both books Mars has a thin atmosphere that can't support life. Both books feature old, withered Martian mummies (although there is a twist to ours!). In both books, the Martians step out, grab the young people, and bring them into their secret homes and show them around. In both books the Martians are an old race that doesn't want to be found. That is about as far as the similarities go, however!

The Starmen's Mars in 2153 is a large, bustling place, home to many thousands of people. Nobody makes fun of the Starmen for looking for the lost race. Nobody tries to shoot Sally and Jim when they're looking for the Old Martians. Sally and Jim's adventure is quite peaceful and tame compared with what Zip, Joe, and Mark go through! Sally and Jim's father is on Mars through a research grant; the three Starmen are on Mars because the future of the solar system depends on their finding the Martians. Sally and Jim are derided because the colonists feel they are wasting precious oxygen sources; the Starmen are nearly killed because the Banjoman doesn't want them to find out his secret. At the end of the book the Starmen are heroes and the bad guys are cleaned up; at the end of Sally and Jim's adventure, the colony accepts them because they now have a use and are going to help the colony—but the colonists haven't really changed at all and actually come out and say that they weren't sorry for the way they acted and were just in acting that way.

This book is certainly an interesting coincidence! I think it's only to be expected that two books with the same title shared some similarities, but the stories themselves are quite different, and they're not to be confused.

From the Starman Appendix

What are the Starmen paid?

Exchanges on the subject from the Starman correspondence

by Mike Dodd

One of the attractions of the Dig Allen series and juvie books in general was that the main characters did NOT worry about how much they were paid. 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.

Jon replied

I agree! My only point was that if SE really existed they would pay their Starmen at *least* six figures and more—probably seven or eight. I'm not saying that we should have the Starmen in the book make that much; I'm just saying that in the real world that is how it would be....

It doesn't make sense that the Starmen, who risk their lives and are highly trained, should get paid the same as the people who work at SpaceDonalds flipping burgers.... If your actions bring in a lot of profits to the company then you should get a good share of that: it's just a matter of getting what you earn. People who have the dangerous job of working on power lines in this country make more than \$100,000 a year; it's not that they are getting paid to risk their lives but they are just getting what they earn. They are worth that so that's what they earn.

Mike wrote back

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.

Jon concluded

That would be fine! It doesn't matter to me what they get paid; we don't even have to mention a figure—we could just leave it open to speculation. These are books, so we don't necessarily have to mirror the real world! Salaries were never ever mentioned for series book characters so there's no reason why we have to break that trend. WE know they are not working for the money, and we can make that clear. At the same time though we don't want to give the idea that earning money, even large sums of money, is a bad thing: what is important is where your heart is.

What we finally came up with:

In Charlottesville, Mike, Jon, and David went to dinner at “Ruby Tuesday’s” on Friday evening and discussed a number of issues such as how and how much the Starmen are paid. We decided that they are not paid any fixed amount, but rather that they have authority to draw from the funds of Starlight Enterprise for whatever they need whenever they need it.

THE FAMILY BACKGROUND OF JOE TAYLOR.

We know something about Zip and Mark, but so far we know very little about Joe. Thanks to a Starman fan, Joe now has a rather full history!

WRITTEN BY NEIL LINDHOLM, August 27, 2002:

slightly adapted

Okay, here is a possible Canadian background for Joe.

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. *[Note: We'll pick Annick]* Joseph is an only child, but has three cousins: a boy, Pascal, and two girls, 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 son in a rural setting. However, they ensured that Joseph was not isolated and made many trips with him and worked with him in order to ensure that he would be ready for whatever career choice he 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 Starlight 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 bade farewell to

Québec and made his way down to the States and transfer to Starlight Academy.

Thanks, Neil! We like it. That's Joe's background, then. His full name will be Joseph Lindholm Taylor. How's that?

WHERE IS STARLIGHT ACADEMY?

In the first five Starman books, we've talked a LOT about Starlight Academy but we never identified its location. When the team met in Charlottesville, we asked ourselves where it is located and came up with the following answer:

It is a floating city in the South Pacific. Roughly one and a half or two miles in diameter, like an iceberg only the top 10% is above the water. The remaining 90% is below sea level.

Mike Dodd painted the cover of *Journey to the Tenth Planet* and for fun, Jon designed an alternate cover for the same book, basing his illustration on the frontispiece Mike drew for that volume. They agree that David should be responsible for the cover artwork of the sixth Starman book. David is considering a painting of Starlight Academy.

THE PLAUSIBILITY OF ANDROIDS

In The Lost Race of Mars, part of the plot turns on the impersonation of a human being by an android. How plausible is that? Here is a reflection by Jon Cooper

I've spent a lot of time considering what I believe in AI [*artificial intelligence*], and right now I just don't know: it might turn out to be possible or it might not. I think there's better evidence to support time travel than AI but yet I still wonder. I think that in terms of raw speed, the brain doesn't stand a chance. There are ALREADY computers that can match the lower end of the brain's processing power, and within a year there will be a computer that can surpass the brain. I don't see anything theologically challenging about that: the brain is built

to take care of a human's needs, and all we need is a teraflop. *[NOTE: A teraflop is one trillion computer cycles per second, or about a thousand times faster than many desktop computers.]* Who cares if a computer can do a hundred teraflops? That's not the same thing as having the ability to think and reason and spend afternoons writing Starman books. After all, calculators can divide two fifteen-digit numbers faster than we can and it doesn't give us chills. We have machines that are stronger than people; why not a machine that processes data faster?

The raw tools necessary to do that (better silicon chips, quantum computing, light computing) certainly exist and are proven to work. The real hurdle is copying intelligence. How far can you go down that road? Current expert systems can give a very very crude approximation of intelligence: you can build one with specific knowledge (say, eye diseases), describe a very specific problem to it (say, a bunch of symptoms), and it can tell you what's going on and how to fix it.

I have actually seen these before; the father of a friend of mine used to own a company that built such things. As time goes on one can imagine these approximations becoming closer and closer to the real thing. Is there really a philosophical problem with building a computer that makes a pretty good approximation of intelligence? Whether the computer actually becomes self-aware doesn't matter, since we don't actually need our robot to become self-aware: we don't really care if it is sentient or not.

As far as brain scanning goes, one can already record what goes on in the brain: all you need is a working brain and a PET scanner. You can't record individual thoughts, but you can see where activity is going on and from that, figure out what parts of the brain handle what functions. Say that you wanted to build an exact duplicate of a hand. With the right technology, you could eventually develop a technique that would allow you to figure out the position of every cell in the hand and from that you could build a "map." If you knew how the cells worked, you could port your map to a computer and run it as a simulation: since all the

parts are there, since you know how they interact, and since you know the laws of physics, your digital hand should respond exactly as a real hand—and if it doesn’t then you could tweak it until it did.

Would this take fantastic technology? Of course! But it’s not impossible in the same way that time travel or perpetual motion or faster-than-light travel is impossible: you’re not breaking any laws of physics here. Scientists want to do to the brain what I suggested doing with the hand. It ought to be possible. What you would get if you did that is not known.

Memories are certainly encoded in the brain, as are language and skills: you ought to be able to get those. How much is brain and how much is soul is anyone’s guess until someone actually tries this (and they *are* trying). However, is it really unreasonable to postulate that you could combine this “digital brain” with a suitably-tweaked approximation of intelligence and get something pretty close (though not exactly the same as) the original person? It wouldn’t *be* the person, it wouldn’t be sentient, it wouldn’t be a “living soul,” but that’s not the end goal.

I think that this is a question that will be answered this century. If it can be done, it will be done within the next hundred years, and if it can’t be done we will know why. Until we have actually tried all these things and have seen the results all we really have to work with is conjecture. But it’s fun to think about! Anyway, that’s my opinion. The experts I’ve read have all gone way beyond me and are predicting full-blown superintelligent sentient AI, but I’m not going to go quite that far yet. We’ll see what the future brings!

StellarGrams

FROM MARK MCSHERRY

As much as I appreciate the effort that the Team has put into their book series, I believe that the Starman Series (as much as it

appeals to us “old folks” who were raised on boy’s book series) deserves to be read by today’s youngsters. The Starman Series is THAT good. I hope that you will seriously consider trying to get your books into every grade school library in the country. You’ve succeeded in creating a living and breathing solar system populated with a fascinating cast of human and alien characters. Any grade school kid with a bent towards reading science fiction would be easily swept away by the scope of the Starman universe.

The Starman Team would be short-changing themselves (and their efforts) if they did not try to get their books in front of their “real” audience—youngsters who are susceptible to reading adventurous tales in near space. If you can do this, capture the imagination of this generation’s kids, then the Starman Series will be a REAL boy’s book series. —And then the adventures of the 22nd Starman will be as fondly remembered in later years by today’s youngsters as we nostalgically recall the exploits of Tom Swift Jr. and Dig Allen.

Perhaps you can release paperback editions (a la “Goosebumps”) for a few dollars apiece. Or why not try and get Scholastic Book Services to publish paperback editions of the Starman Series? A twenty-something Robert Silverberg’s *Lost Race of Mars* was published as a Scholastic Book Services paperback in 1960; Michael D. Cooper’s *The Lost Race of Mars* deserves to be a SBS paperback in 2003!

It may take some persistence to get your foot in the publisher’s door but once past the threshold I believe you’ll be able to make a compelling case. With the first 5 Starman books already printed, with the Team’s extensive background notes for the Starman universe, and with further books in the series already plotted, how can SBS, or any publishing house, not give serious consideration to publishing the Starman Series??? And (hopefully) a positive review in the November 2002 *Analog SF* magazine will add further credence to your presentation.

Enough cheerleading! Just know that you’ve done the hard part—producing five quality books. Finding a publisher may be

easier than perhaps the Starman Team believes possible.

Best wishes to you and the rest of the Starman Team.

Thanks, Mark, for your boundless support! We have the dedication. We just need the know-how and the time!

From Frank Quillen

I enjoyed the Starman session [at the book convention in Charlottesville] a great deal. I was interested in what you had to say about a sense of wonder pervading the books. I think it really does. One reason I believe it communicates so well is that I detect a touch of mysticism in all three of you. I had a nice short chat with Mike Dodd, and I sense that quality very strongly in his personality. Maybe “mysticism” is not the right word. It might better be described as a numinous quality or what Matthew Fox would call Creation Spirituality. Whatever, I found it very refreshing and very much in evidence.

THE STARMAN CHRONICLES

At one time, in personal correspondence David expressed to Jon how much he enjoyed the works of Capwell Wyckoff. Wyckoff wrote juvenile adventure and mystery stories in the late 1920s and early 1930s. His stories conveyed the sense of their time with wonderful poignancy. David wished that he could write a story like that sometime.

That led to an exchange on the topic between David and Jon, until the idea came up that such a story could be brought into the Starman's world, just for fun. A novelette we called *The Lost Tomorrow* was roughed out. Not envisioned as a serious tale, its first line was even, "It was a dark and stormy night." Its premise was that the Starmen had inadvertently fallen into an alternate timeline in which the world was very similar to the 1930s. The story had Starman Joe Taylor tell a friend of his all about their adventure. The friend's name was Owsley Robbins, Owsley being a character devised by Capwell Wyckoff and therefore being a tribute to one of David's favorite writers.

The idea also arose that the story could be told in seven installments as a serial, each issue coming out once a month. The readers could have an opportunity to make comments about it on the message board as the story developed, and perhaps influence the direction of the story.

In February 2003, the Starman Team made the following announcement:

The Starman Team is pleased to announce that a new Starman story is now available for preorder! This story, entitled *The Lost Tomorrow*, is a true Starman tale, but it takes place independently from the rest of the stories in the series. *The Lost Tomorrow* will be released differently from the other stories we

have written. Instead of waiting until the entire manuscript is completed and then sending it off to be printed, we have decided to release this story as a serial. Each installment of the story will be published in a new Starman publication called “The Starman Chronicles.” TSC is a fanzine dedicated to the Starman tales that we plan to release in serial format. If our readers enjoy *The Lost Tomorrow*, other serialized tales will follow.

Each issue of “The Starman Chronicles” will be at least 30 pages long. TSC will resemble the Inter*Stellars in appearance; unlike the Inter*Stellars, which were released intermittently, TSC will be released on a dependable schedule of every two months. *The Lost Tomorrow* is a novelette that will be told in seven segments; therefore the first seven issues of TSC will be dedicated to releasing *The Lost Tomorrow* in its entirety. This is the only format in which the story will be available. We have no plans to publish the tale at a later date in one volume. TSC will also include other material related to the Starman series, but in a lesser amount than that which appeared in the Inter*Stellars.

We are releasing the story as a serial for a number of reasons: it enables us to give our readers the story segment by segment as it is being written, so that neither the readers nor the authors have to wait a year for the completion of the manuscript before it is released; it enables us to release the story very inexpensively (printing the fifth Starman book in hardcover with dust jacket cost more than \$6000); and, most interesting of all, it enables us to give the readers an opportunity to shape the story as it develops.

Each issue of “The Starman Chronicles” will include a set of “points to ponder and discuss” related to the story, with an invitation to share your thoughts with the authors. Although the story has already been fully plotted, readers’ responses to the story can help us shape the way the story unfolds. We may use these comments to tell parts of the story in greater detail, bring

things up we may not have done otherwise, or even move the story in a different direction from what we envisioned at first. This is not something we have ever done before and we're excited about seeing how it turns out. Further, the writer's notes will be provided in footnotes for all readers as the story is told. In the case of the five novels and five short stories, these have been kept in a private file for the members of the Starman Team.

Each issue of "The Starman Chronicles" will cost \$5, which is a reduction in price from the \$7 that we charge for our Inter*Stellars. However, up until March 8, 2003 you can purchase the first seven issues of TSC, which will tell the tale of *The Lost Tomorrow* in its entirety, for a prepaid subscription of \$30, a \$5 discount off purchasing the issues separately. The first issue of TSC will be released in mid-March.

About thirty subscribers signed up. The title of the periodical, "The Starman Chronicles", was suggested by Valerie Kramer. Before announcing the title we'd asked our readers for suggestions with a promise that the person whose suggestion we took would get a free subscription. Five people had made suggestions with over forty imaginative names put forth.

To our surprise, the tale of "The Lost Tomorrow" quickly became a serious story; its whimsical tone disappeared as the story developed. When we saw that the tale could become a key part of the ongoing Starman saga, we asked our subscribers if they would release us from our promise never to publish the story in any other form. Most agreed, but two did not. Therefore the original form of "The Lost Tomorrow" as published in "The Starman Chronicles" remains unique.

However, after consulting with other fans, we realized that the storyline itself could be preserved and told in another

way. We retitled the story *Paradox Lost* at the suggestion of Dafydd Neal Dyar, rewrote it somewhat while preserving the general storyline. This eventually brought the story in line with the rest of the saga, and after the rewrite for the reissue, David suggested that the story be “promoted” to full novel status in the saga. It now takes its place alongside the other novels as book #9.

Placing it as Book #9 after *The Last Command* was Jon’s idea, a brilliant insight. After the death of Zip Foster at the end of the previous volume, an occurrence that shocked many readers and affected all of them, telling a “past story” immediately afterwards in which Zip appears eased the transition to a world without the Starman leader.

Science Validates the Starman Series

Various news agencies as well as NASA itself put out a number of articles on current research, discoveries, and activities having to do with space and new discoveries in science. Here are excerpts from several articles that amazed the Starman Team, since we had already included these items in our stories before we read about them in the news. Some of these were sent to us by readers of the Starman series after they'd read our fictional accounts.

Genetically Modified Earth Plants Will Glow From Mars

by Paul Kimpel
May 8, 2001

In what reads like a story from a 1950s science fiction magazine, a team of University of Florida scientists has genetically modified a tiny plant to send reports back from Mars in a most unworldly way: by emitting an eerie, fluorescent glow.

The plant experiment, which is funded by \$290,000 from NASA's Human Exploration and Development in Space program, may be a first step toward making Mars habitable for humans, said Rob Ferl, assistant director of the Biotechnology Program at UF.

To create the glow, the team will insert "reporter genes" into varieties of the plant, which will express themselves by emitting a green glow under adverse conditions on Mars. Each reporter gene will react to an environmental stressor such as drought, disease or temperature. For example, one version will glow an incandescent green if it detects an excess of heavy metals in the Martian soil; another will turn blue in the presence of peroxides.

In Assault On Mars, following input from Mike Dodd, a field of luminous lichen was made a part of the story. It played a major part in the fifth Starman book, *The Lost*

Race of Mars.

Humans on Europa: A Plan for Colonies on the Icy Moon

By Don Lipper

June 6, 2001

“All these world’s are yours, except Europa. Attempt no landings there.”

—David Bowman, 2010: *Odyssey Two*

Forewarned is forearmed in science fact and science fiction when it comes to Jupiter’s icy moon Europa. Frigid and ice-covered, Europa is believed to harbor a giant liquid ocean beneath its crusty arctic surface, a primordial sea whose tidal motions are driven by Jovian gravity and warmed by intense radiation given off by the giant planet.

Yet despite the planet’s fearsome environment, members of the Artemis Society, a private venture dedicated establishing a permanent, self-supporting community on the Moon, also have set their sights on the creation of a human colony at Europa.

Gravity and magnetic data collected by the NASA Galileo orbiter over the past five years have provided increasing evidence that an ocean exists underneath Europa’s uniform 5 to 62-mile thick coat of ice. The possible ocean on Europa may contain more liquid water than all the oceans on Earth combined.

*A search by the Starmen for an ancient colony of aliens who visited Europa has been the theme of the fourth Starman book, **Descent Into Europa**, since its inception in 1999. The last part of the third Starman book, **Journey to the Tenth Planet**, includes this paragraph:*

“On their own authority and under Zip’s leadership, the Starmen will decide to make a search for the Benefactors’ primary base in the Solar System. The story will be told in

the fourth volume of the Starman saga, *Descent Into Europa*. The vast, lightless oceans of this Jovian moon, crusted with tumbled ice sheets several miles thick, are deeper by far than any oceans on Earth. Do they hold the secret of the Benefactors' presence in the Solar System?"

Dark Planets May Orbit Strange Nearby Objects

By Robert Roy Britt

June 8, 2001

Huge, cold, lonely and of fuzzy origin, brown dwarfs came into significantly sharper focus today when researchers announced that the failed stars with the strange name may harbor planets, a privilege previously reserved for real stars. The finding raises hopes for a planet, albeit a frigid and dark world, orbiting a brown dwarf near our Solar System.

The evidence came in the form of dust disks found around a host of brown dwarfs. These objects are typically 10 to 70 times more massive than Jupiter and are similar to stars but never had enough mass to trigger the thermonuclear fusion that powers a real star. The brown dwarfs in the study are free-floating, meaning they do not orbit another star.

Journey to the Tenth Planet begins with the discovery of a planet which circles a brown dwarf and the Sun in a figure-eight pattern. The idea was Mike Dodd's, which he put forth over six months before, based on an actual theory that a brown dwarf star called the Nemesis is connected with our sun.

Backpack Drone Peers Behind Enemy Lines

Remember the airbot in *The Runaway Asteroid*? This reconnaissance instrument was introduced on page 253 of *The Dawn of the Starmen*. This article appeared in Toronto on October 21, 2000:

A hovering spy craft only 23 centimeters across could soon be flying behind enemy lines to conduct surveillance, or darting about inside buildings to help police find hostage-takers. Micro Craft, an aerospace development company in San Diego, California, last week successfully tested the miniature vehicle. It consists of little more than a ducted fan that rotates inside a protective cylinder. The fan is pitched at an angle so that its wash counteracts the slight spin the fan imparts.

“It performed great. It’s very stable,” says program manager Allen Zwan. Even in high winds, the 1.4-kilogram craft managed to take off, hover, and move around at slow and medium speeds.

A small two-stroke petrol engine drives the fan. This provides enough lift to get the craft off the ground and allow it to hover and move from side to side. To travel at top speed, the vehicle turns sideways so that the fan points almost horizontally and the aerofoil-shaped edges of the duct provide lift. It can fly for about an hour on the 200 grams of fuel it carries.

The aircraft was developed with funding from the U. S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). The idea is that soldiers will carry the small, lightweight reconnaissance aircraft in their backpacks. A remote controller tells the drone where to go and how fast to fly. On-board electronics keep the craft flying, adjusting the speed of the fan and the angle of the control vanes.

The test vehicle last week carried a video camera that transmitted images back to the ground. But it could also support communications relays, or even a laser that would “paint” a target with light to guide in missiles from larger craft.

Mini-devices may soon replace combat scouts;

Tiny vehicles could save lives

by Andrea Stone

Starman fan Tim Owens emailed the following item. This article appeared in USA Today.

Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). The military is close to fielding miniature unmanned aerial vehicles that could eventually render the combat scout as obsolete as the horse cavalry. Pentagon engineers are working on a range of micro aircraft and backpack-sized vehicles for short-range surveillance now conducted by U. S. ground troops.

These UAVs, some as tiny as 6 inches in diameter, would let small units look over the next hill or around a city block without putting advance troops in harm's way. The military has made development of unmanned aerial and underwater vehicles a top priority.

The new generation of UAVs can be launched by one person and are controlled by satellite guidance systems.

Micro air vehicle (MAV). The Army's tiny MAV is a mechanical eye that can fly to a spot up to six miles away and "perch and stare" for weeks. Shaped like a coffee can, it comes in several sizes—the smallest weighs one pound and measures 6 inches in diameter. It flies up to 100 mph and carries video, infrared, acoustic and metal-detecting sensors that can alert soldiers to enemy movements.

Compare the UAV and MAV to "the dragonfly" in *Journey to the Tenth Planet*.

Starman Team Anticipates Fact in China

Here is the beginning of a front-page article in the Los Angeles Times, January 27, 2001: "Call it the ultimate test of Internet freedom: the world's largest state security network

deployed to police cyberspace in the most populous nation on Earth, where the number of online users is growing exponentially. The outcome will dictate how one-fifth of mankind relates to a technology that many are convinced owns the future. Most of those watching the struggle unfold in mainland China believe that the sheer growth of online users in the country—expected to top 100 million well before mid-decade—will eventually overwhelm even the most comprehensive authoritarian effort to regulate the Internet.”

Compare the above with this part of “[Introducing the Starman Series](#)” we wrote more than a year before the article appeared:

Political unrest in China, often subdued in the latter half of the 20th century by force or by fear, was never completely obliterated. In the first decade of the 21st century, the leadership of China was a council mostly comprised by very old men. Their successors, although still hoping to retain power in a Communist government, realized that the old ways would not succeed, and that it was merely the sheer size of their nation that maintained its position as a world power. They knew that they would have to allow foreign investments into the nation if China were not to become isolated from the rest of the world. These foreign investments eventually brought in the ways of the wider world, including a reasonably efficient computer network and internet communications. A controlled press was no longer possible, or even conceivable. Eventually a crisis of leadership brought about a bloodless coup. After a brief period without leadership, and somewhat to the alarm of Western business interests, in 2021 the Chinese people restored the

Emperor.

Mars soil gives hints of green planet

April 5, 2002 Posted: 3:15 PM EST

By Richard Stenger

The Lost Race of Mars postulates that the fourth planet was at one time lush, beautiful, and wet. The following stories were released when the book was about half written:

A reexamination of data from a 1997 mission to Mars suggests that the surface contains chlorophyll, a discovery that could bolster prospects of finding life on the planet.

Chlorophyll, the molecule that plants and algae use to convert sunlight into food, gives all photosynthetic organisms on our planet their distinguishing green color.

A NASA team plans to share their preliminary findings early next week during an international conference of astrobiologists, or scientists who study the possibility of life beyond Earth.

The researchers, Carole Stoker and Pascal Ashwanden, both work at NASA's Ames Research Center in California, which is hosting the Second Astrobiology Science Conference from April 7 to April 11.

An online abstract of their presentation, titled "Search for Spectral Signatures of Life at the Pathfinder Landing Site," summarizes their report.

The pair performed a spectral analysis of Pathfinder photographs to identify chemicals in the vicinity of the NASA probe, which landed in the Ares Vallis region of Mars in July 1997.

The study turned up six potential chlorophyll hot spots. "Two intriguing cases occur in small areas on the ground near the spacecraft," the report summary added.

Also, Mars the wet planet

Newspaper article in the Los Angeles Times, May 29, 2002,
by Usha Lee McFarling: *Odyssey Probe Detects Vast Ice
Deposits on Red Planet*

... “extensive deposits of ice in a thick layer two feet beneath the surface” have been discovered, “... in the mid-latitudes. Closer to the [south] pole, where it is colder, the ice layer was found just one foot below the surface ... helping solve the mystery of where the planet’s once extensive bodies of water may have gone.... The ice may have supported life in the past when the planet was warmer and water flowed on the planet’s surface. ... They have detected trillions of gallons of ice—more than twice the 75 trillion gallons of water that fill Lake Michigan.... The massive canyons, dry lake beds and ancient shorelines on Mars indicate that the planet was once covered with water.”

There’s more, saying things such as that they expect to find up to twice as much more water with further exploration, and that they are trying to find out what happened to “the rest of the water we think Mars once had.” In *The Lost Race of Mars*, the Starman Team devised the answer several years ago.

Japanese Scientist Invents “Invisibility Cloak”

Remember the “invisibility cloak” that appeared in the short story “The Flight of the Olympia” and *The Lost Race of Mars*? Even the Starman Team thought it was a bit far-fetched, but a recent news story had the headline that heads this entry above. The article says,

“It is the brainchild of Professor Susumu Tachi who is in the early stage of research he hopes will eventually make

camouflaged objects virtually transparent.” To read more and see a photograph, use the link provided by reader Mark McSherry: http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_747591.html

Higher Dimensions in Superstring and M-Brane Theory

In the second segment of *Paradox Lost*, Starman Mark Seaton theorizes that the Starmen had landed in an alternate timeline. Far edge of science fiction? Perhaps, but according to some, the science behind it is respectable physics. The following is an excerpt from an article that appeared on the website ufoskeptic.org. Thanks to Mary Doman for the reference.

Within the past few years physicists have begun to theorize that our universe might actually be a three-dimensional “membrane” (four-dimensional if you add time following the dictates of special relativity) that lies within a much higher-dimensional super-space (or super-spacetime)....

All particles and forces are confined to the “membrane” that constitutes our four-dimensional spacetime universe... except for gravity. ...

It has been thought that 90 % of the matter in the Universe must consist of dark matter. But the extradimensional ideas of modern superstring and M-brane theory have begun to open yet another possibility: that there is no dark matter within our Universe after all; rather that the gravitational force of matter in adjacent membrane-universes is spreading out and spilling over into our universe. In other words, entire other universes might exist a tiny fraction of an inch away from our Universe in one or more extra dimensions. We cannot see these universes because their photons of light are stuck to their membrane-universe just as our photons are stuck to our membrane-universe, but gravitational forces can reach from one membrane-universe to another.

As wild as these ideas sound, they are respectable concepts in modern physics. ... Moreover, there is no reason to think that if other parallel universes were to exist, they could not harbor habitable planets.

On top of this, The Los Angeles Times published an article on the topic as well. It appeared on the front page on May 17, 2003.

Concealing Radio Transmissions in Enemy Territory

In *The Heart of Danger*, Dr. Stephen Hoshino says, “We’ll use a pseudorandom frequency shifter, of course, so the signal will appear to be only background noise.” The concept was in Jon Cooper’s summary. Valerie Kramer observed:

You might want to read over the information on “Spread Spectrum” radio signals at <http://www.sss-mag.com/ss.html>. To quote one paragraph from that site, “Spread Spectrum uses wide band, noise-like signals. Because Spread Spectrum signals are noise-like, they are hard to detect. Spread Spectrum signals are also hard to Intercept or demodulate. Further, Spread Spectrum signals are harder to jam (interfere with) than narrowband signals. These Low Probability of Intercept (LPI) and anti-jam (AJ) features are why the military has used Spread Spectrum for so many years. Spread signals are intentionally made to be much wider band than the information they are carrying to make them more noise-like.”

Seiko Epson Develops Micro Flying Robot

The following two articles show that “The Dragonfly” Joe Taylor built in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* is possible even today

By YURI KAGEYAMA, AP Business Writer
Thursday, August 19, 2004



TOKYO - Seiko Epson Corp. is developing a flying robot that looks like a miniature helicopter and is about the size of a giant bug. The company hopes it'll prove handy for security, disaster rescue and space exploration.

The robot, 3.35 inches tall and 0.4 ounces, follows a flight-route program sent by Bluetooth wireless from a computer. On board is a 32-bit microcontroller, a super-thin motor, a digital camera that sends blurry images and a tiny gyro-sensor, which the company said may also appear in digital cameras and cell phones as soon as this year to help deliver more precise images.



The Micro Flying Robot barely managed to get off the ground in a demonstration this week. It crashed off the table at one point and required long waits for battery changes. It can fly just three minutes at a time, for now, and its lift was wobbly because the machine's precision is not much better than a wind-up toy.

But developers say its power, relative to its minuscule size, makes it potentially a useful tool for rescue and surveillance. The robot is not yet available for sale; a commercial model is planned for release in two or three years.

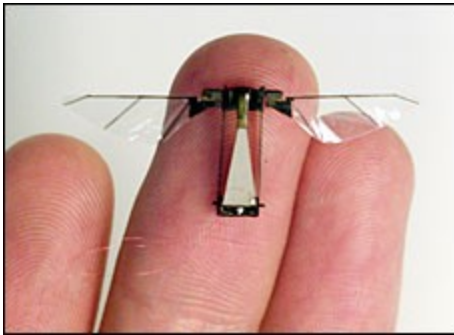
Dragonfly or Insect Spy? Scientists at Work on Robobugs.

By Rick Weiss

Washington Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, October 9, 2007

Vanessa Alarcon saw them while working at an antiwar rally in Lafayette Square last month. "I heard someone say, 'Oh my



God, look at those,' " the college senior from New York recalled. "I look up and I'm like, 'What the hell is that?' They looked kind of like dragonflies or little helicopters. But I mean, those are not insects."

Robotic fliers have been used by the

military since World War II, but in the past decade their numbers and level of sophistication have increased enormously.

Out in the crowd, Bernard Crane saw them, too. "I'd never seen anything like it in my life," the Washington lawyer said. "They were large for dragonflies. I thought, 'Is that mechanical, or is that alive?'"



That is just one of the questions hovering over a handful of similar sightings at political events in Washington and New York. Some suspect the insectlike drones are high-tech surveillance tools, perhaps deployed by the Department of Homeland Security.

No agency admits to having deployed insect-size spy drones. But a number of U.S. government and private entities acknowledge they are trying. Some federally funded teams are even growing live insects with computer chips in them, with the goal of mounting spyware on their bodies and controlling their flight muscles remotely.

The robobugs could follow suspects, guide missiles to targets or navigate the crannies of collapsed buildings to find survivors.

The technical challenges of creating robotic insects are daunting, and most experts doubt that fully working models exist yet.

But the CIA secretly developed a simple dragonfly snooper as long ago as the 1970s. And given recent advances, even skeptics say there is always a chance that some agency has quietly managed to make something operational.

Noah's Cosmic Ark: Preserving DNA on the Moon

Michael Schirber

Staff Writer, Space.com

Monday, September 13, 2004

The short story, "The Eight Treasures", describes how the Ahmanyans preserved their culture and the DNA of their animals through several means of protecting them in case of disaster during the Xenobot war.

The complexity of life took billions of years to push and stretch and reshape the biological niche that is Earth. It would seem prudent – if one had the means – to save some portion of the blueprints of this majesty, so that the process would not have to start over from scratch in the event of a global cataclysm.

Morbid, for sure, yet still prudent. But where to put this valuable backup so that it is both safe and handy? And what form should it take?

Last week the head of Europe's lunar missions said a DNA library might belong on the Moon.

"It would act as a mini Noah's Ark for repopulating the Earth after a catastrophe," explained Bernard Foing, chief scientist with the European Space Agency, in a telephone interview with SPACE.com. "It would be a second chance."

The notion echoes one that has been slowly developing over the past few years in the United States. The Alliance to Rescue Civilization (ARC) advocates a "lunar sanctuary" to preserve Earth's whole record in case the planet is destroyed.

Besides the Armageddon that a large [asteroid] impact would unleash, there are nuclear wars and pandemic viruses to worry about. Foing, the European proponent of lunar living, believes there needs to be a self-sufficient colony on the Moon that can wait for the fallout of the disaster to subside. "It would need to be able to survive independent of Earth for many years," he said.

Foing thinks that a biosphere on the Moon would be the primary function of a lunar base, and only then could a DNA library be worth contemplating.

Burrows agreed: "You need to have people [on the Moon] to rescue Earth." But the details of this rescue have yet to be worked out.

"A 'DNA library' could consist of actual DNA samples, which might last for many thousands of years if stored dry, in the cold, and protected from radiation," Robert Shapiro, the NYU chemist, told SPACE.com.

Superconducting Magnetic Bubble May Protect Astronauts From Radiation

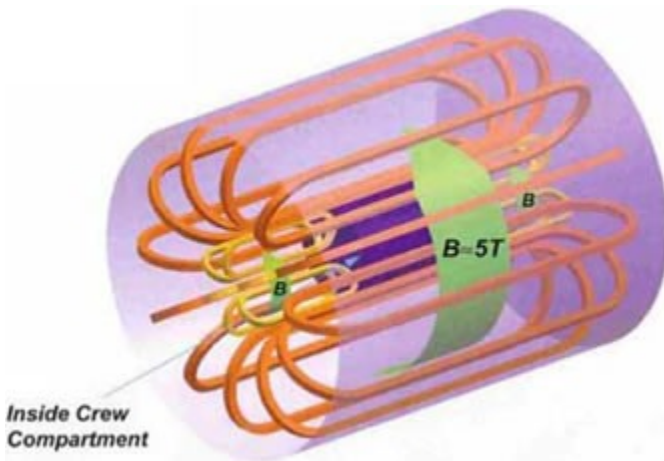
By Bill Christensen

An email from Mike Dodd dated December 18, 2004:

Dear Jon and David,

Could this be our “active shielding” (Descent Into Europa)?

Using fields of force to accomplish goals in space is a favorite device of science fiction authors. In Larry Niven’s



award-winning 1970 novel *Ringworld*, protection against the harsh environmental hazards of space is provided by a hybrid system consisting of a General Products hull and the Slaver stasis field. The General Products hull is an example of a “passive” or material shielding; the hull is transparent to visible light and impervious to electromagnetic energy and matter in any form. The Slaver stasis field creates an area in which time does not pass; since time stands still, no damage can be done to the material occupying the space protected by the field.

Former astronaut Jeffery Hoffman is proposing a different sort of hybrid system to protect future astronauts; on long voyages through the solar system they will be exposed to lethal

doses of radiation from cosmic rays. He has received funding from NASA through NIAC (NASA Institute for Advanced Concepts) to research the idea of a superconducting magnetic radiation shielding system to supplement (or replace) traditional passive shielding.

Methane Rain, River Beds Found on Titan

In Journey to the Tenth Planet, methane lakes and methane rain are described.

(AP) January 21, 2005

A probe to Titan has found that liquid methane rains lash Saturn's largest moon, a freezing, primitive but active world of ridges, peaks, river beds and deserts scoured by the same forces of erosion as Earth, scientists said Friday. Methane is a highly flammable gas on Earth, but on Titan, it is liquid because of the intense pressure and cold. "There is liquid that is flowing on the surface of Titan. It is not water – it is much too cold – it's liquid methane, and this methane really plays the same big role on Titan as water does on Earth," said mission manager Jean-Pierre Lebreton at a news conference.

Titan's rains appear to be liquid methane, not water, and black-and-white photos from the probe showed a rugged terrain of ridges, peaks and dark vein-like channels, suggesting the moon 744 million miles away is scoured by the same erosion forces that shape Earth.

Titan's appearance has long intrigued scientists — and Europe's Huygens probe landed Jan. 14, making it the first moon other than the Earth's to be explored.

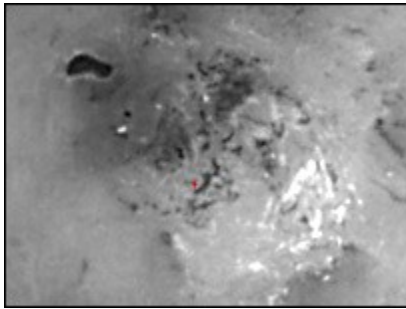
Scientists believe methane gas breaks up in Titan's atmosphere, forming smog clouds that then rain methane down to the surface.

Titan has river systems and deltas, protrusions of frozen

water ice cut through by channels, apparent dried out pools where liquid has perhaps drained away, and stones — probably ice pebbles — that appear to have been rounded by erosion, the scientists said.

Titan dark spot may be large lake

June 29, 2005—BBC News



The “lake” is top-left; bright clouds are evident bottom-right

A dark, lake-like feature on Saturn’s largest moon, Titan, has been imaged by the US-European Cassini spacecraft.

Researchers have long speculated that Titan might harbour open bodies of liquid methane - and the 235km by 75km target is the best candidate to date. But they are being cautious about interpreting the feature, which has what looks to be a smooth shoreline. The scientists say the object could simply be dark, solid deposits caught in a sinkhole of volcanic caldera.

“This feature is unique in our exploration of Titan so far,” said Dr Elizabeth Turtle, Cassini imaging team member at the University of Arizona, US.

“Its perimeter is intriguingly reminiscent of the shorelines of lakes on Earth that are smoothed by water erosion and deposition,” she added.

The feature lies in Titan’s cloudiest region, towards the south pole, which is presumably the most likely site of recent methane rainfall.

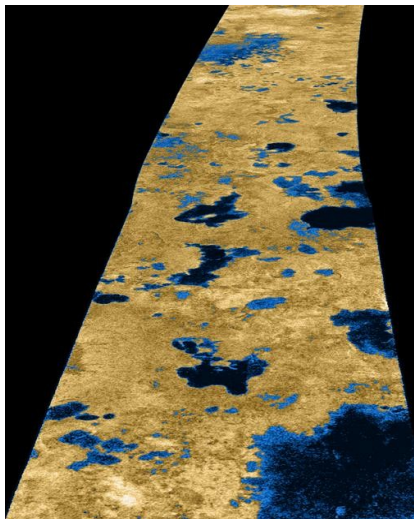
This, coupled with the shore-like smoothness of the feature’s perimeter makes it hard for scientists to resist speculation about what might be filling the lake, if it indeed is one.

Liquid Lakes on Titan

David,

A picture of methane lakes on Titan – is that not cool?

–Jon Cooper[in an email]



January 3, 2007 Full-Res:
PIA09102

The existence of oceans or lakes of liquid methane on Saturn's moon Titan was predicted more than 20 years ago. But with a dense haze preventing a closer look it has not been possible to confirm their presence. Until the Cassini flyby of July 22, 2006, that is.

Radar imaging data from the flyby, published this week in the journal

Nature, provide convincing evidence for large bodies of liquid. This image, used on the journal's cover, gives a taste of what Cassini saw. Intensity in this colorized image is proportional to how much radar brightness is returned, or more specifically, the logarithm of the radar backscatter cross-section. The colors are not a representation of what the human eye would see.

The lakes, darker than the surrounding terrain, are emphasized here by tinting regions of low backscatter in blue. Radar-brighter regions are shown in tan. The strip of radar imagery is foreshortened to simulate an oblique view of the highest latitude region, seen from a point to its west. This radar image was acquired by the Cassini radar instrument in synthetic aperture mode on July 22, 2006. The image is centered near 80 degrees north, 35 degrees west and is about 140 kilometers (84 miles) across. Smallest details in this image are

about 500 meters (1,640 feet) across.

The Cassini-Huygens mission is a cooperative project of NASA, the European Space Agency and the Italian Space Agency. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, manages the mission for NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington, D.C.

[Michael Allison, a major Starman fan, was a member of NASA's Cassini-Huygens mission.](#)

Astronomers Claim Discovery of Tenth Planet

July 29, 2005

By David Tytell

Astronomers in the United States have announced the discovery of the 10th planet to orbit our Sun. The largest object found in our Solar System since the discovery of Neptune in 1846, it was first seen in 2003, but only recently confirmed as a planet. Designated 2003 UB313, it is about 3,000km across, a world of rock and ice and somewhat larger than Pluto. It is more than twice as far away as Pluto, in a puzzling orbit, at an angle to the orbits of the other planets.

Astronomers think that at some point in its history Neptune likely flung it into its highly-inclined 44 degree orbit. It is currently 97 Earth-Sun distances away - more than twice Pluto's average distance from the Sun.

Discoverers Michael E. Brown (Caltech), Chad Trujillo (Gemini Observatory), and David Rabinowitz (Yale University) first imaged the object on October 21, 2003, but didn't see it move in the sky until reimaging the same area 15 months later on January 8, 2005.

The new planet went undiscovered for so long because its orbit is tilted at a 45-degree angle to the orbital plane of the other planets, Brown said.

The Moon is a planet?

August 3, 2006

http://www.space.com/scienceastronomy/top_10_cool_moon_facts-3.html

Our Moon is bigger than Pluto. And at roughly one-fourth the diameter of Earth, some scientists think the Moon is more like a planet. They refer to the Earth-Moon system as a “double planet.” Pluto and its moon Charon are also called a double-planet system by some.

In [The Lost Race of Mars](#), Stenafi described the Earth-Moon system as a “double planet”.

NASA Plans Lunar Outpost**Permanent Base at Moon’s South Pole Envisioned by 2024**

By Marc Kaufman

Washington Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

In the Starman saga, Amundsen City at the south pole of the moon is the major lunar settlement. It is where the Starmen live. In a post by Starman fan Mark Johnson: “I find this remarkable.”

NASA unveiled plans yesterday to set up a small and ultimately self-sustaining settlement of astronauts at the south pole of the moon sometime around 2020 – the first step in an ambitious plan to resume manned exploration of the solar system.

The long-awaited proposal envisions initial stays of a week by four-person crews, followed by gradually longer visits until power and other supplies are in place to make a permanent presence possible by 2024.

NASA Deputy Administrator Shana Dale said that once the team endorsed the concept of an outpost, which would be about

the size of the Mall, the next debate was over where to put it, with a focus on either of the moon's poles.

"Conditions at the south pole appear to be more moderate and safer," she said. The south pole is almost constantly bathed in light and would be an ideal place to set up solar-power collectors for an electrical system – a precondition for achieving the kind of "living off the land" that NASA is aiming for.

Moonbase: In the Dark On Lunar Ice

December 26, 2006

http://news.yahoo.com/s/space/20061226/sc_space/moonbaseint/hedarkonlunarice

NASA is on a flight path to replant astronauts on the Moon, looking to sustain a human presence on that cratered, airless orb on a "go-as-the-nation-can-afford-to-pay" basis. That approach is seen as letting people step back onto the lunar surface no later than 2020.

Space engineers have honed in on one possible site for a lunar outpost: the Moon's south pole. It's a tactical setting on the rim of Shackleton Crater, a feature some 12 miles (19 kilometers) in diameter. There's real estate here that basks in near-perpetual sunlight. Also, it's a region that is a doorway into the depths of always dark, Sun-deprived, territory.

What's possibly lurking there in that super-cold darkness is water ice—portrayed by some researchers as the gold standard for future exploration on and from the Moon. Yet there is considerable debate about this resource. If there, such a raw storehouse might be processed into usable oxygen and hydrogen.

- The environment at the poles of the Moon is relatively benign, making it easier to design a habitat. Temperatures at the poles vary no more than about 50 degrees Celsius all year round, while temperatures at the equator can vary 250 degrees Celsius from day to night.
- At the Moon's south pole there is "ample evidence", NASA planners point out, of enhanced hydrogen - an

important natural resource for future development for energy generation, propellant production and other potential uses.

- The poles can teach robotic and human explorers volumes about the Moon. This landscape is among the most complex of regions, yet very little is known about them.

Essays from the Message Board

The Starman Message Board on Yahoo was quite active from 2000 to the first ending of the series in 2005. Several thousand posts were put up by readers of the books and the members of the Starman Team. Here are some of the most significant essays that were generated on the Board during this time.

The Starman Backdrop:

Theism & Orthodox Christian Theology

David Ethell has asked about the presuppositions or backdrop to the formation of the Starman universe, and wonders whether our occasional references to “millions of years” in the books assumes adherence to belief in some form of evolution, theistic or not. It is not an easy question to answer and I hope that this posting will not tax the patience of the readers. Before I share my response to David’s question, a brief review of how the Starman Team writes is in order.

Jon Cooper develops a plot outline and sends it to Mike Dodd and me. By email, we discuss it a bit and then bring the outline into an agreed form—usually not much different from Jon’s initial proposal. Mike frequently throws in amazing plot twists, “out of the box” suggestions, and scientific undergirding and rationale. (Mike has a wonderful gift of combining both book-solid scientific accuracy and a phenomenal imagination!)

From this outline I write the first draft of the text, chapter by chapter, and send each portion to Jon and Mike for their comments as soon as it is written. They make numerous suggestions; in the course of this process other readers associated with us (basically family and friends) also examine the draft and make comments and suggestions, many of which we take.

This is all by way of saying that the first time any “in depth” formation of the text gets done, it is done by me. (That’s why I’m making the initial response to David’s question.) Therefore, the primary, visible contours of the presuppositions behind the text come from me, although the final text is a decision by the three members of the Starman Team in consensus.

Regarding the weight of the creation/evolution controversy in the published Starman books, when I drafted a line referencing the passage of “millions of years,” one or two of the readers who go through the text as it is developing questioned whether this implies a commitment to a belief in evolution. In most such cases, the Team decided to alter the text to read something more general like “eons” or “ages.” It is not the intention of the Starman Team to take a strong position in our stories on the theory of evolution (theistic or not) or creationism and the various schools of these issues. We want the stories to be readable and acceptable to readers of various convictions on the matters without anyone feeling that his or her conscience or convictions are being dismissed.

In previous exchanges on this message board, we pointed out that the Starman series is not a scientific textbook—it is a story that we hope is based on the best of current scientific knowledge but which ventures plausibly into the realm of fiction. Similarly, the Starman series is not a theological treatise—it is a story that we hope is based on solid philosophical underpinnings but which ventures plausibly into the realm of fiction. We have made clear that all three Starman Team members are Christians, so our philosophical world-view is based on Christian theology; we’ve also made it clear that it is not our goal to use the Starman series as a sneaky means of proselytizing. We don’t hide our Christian conviction, but neither do we wave it around like a flag; we’re simply writing a story and drawing upon what we know best to do so.

I am the only one of the three who has made known his denominational affiliation. As an Episcopalian of the high church or Anglo-Catholic tradition, I am a Catholic—that means I hold the unchanging faith of the undivided Church whose essential tenets are expressed today in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and similar historic Churches whose roots go back unbroken to the time of the apostles. Having stated that, from here on, then, I am expressing only my own positions—I cannot speak for either Jon or Mike on this subject, other than to say that we discussed the question David asked as we were formulating the series and the three of us have agreed upon a fitting approach to the series. Jon and Mike, of course, are welcome to clarify or correct what I am posting.

When I write the Starman series, the backdrop from which I draw is my belief that all truth comes from God who is the Creator of all that is. Anything that can be shown and proven to be true, I acknowledge, whatever its immediate source, as having its ultimate source in God. Since $2+2=4$ everywhere in the Universe, even though it is not stated anywhere in the Bible I believe that this mathematical principle is an attribute of the natural order from creation and comes from God.

The conviction that all truth comes from God and that no provable truth, whatever its source, can really contradict the Bible, came early in the history of the Church. One of the first exponents of this position was Clement of Alexandria who died in the early third century. As a solidly orthodox Christian, he taught that the philosophies of the Greek culture did not need to be rejected utterly, but rather found their correction and fulfillment in Christianity. Around the turn of the twelfth century, Anselm of Canterbury wrote about “Faith Seeking Understanding”—that is, he taught that faith cannot be threatened by secular discoveries, but seeks to know more and understand better by observation of the natural world. In the thirteenth century Thomas Aquinas said much the same thing

when the writings of Aristotle, Plato, and others were rediscovered in the Western world. Aquinas taught that there are many true things that can be learned from observation in the world, but that there is some knowledge that can come only by revelation from God. In essence, I think this means that he understood that science and religion are not adversaries, but partners in declaring and upholding truth—and that there is an Absolute nature to truth. Revelation is inherently logical and consistent with all other knowledge, but all other knowledge finds its fulfillment in what is revealed.

Although I have a Master's Degree in theology, my undergraduate background (UCLA) is in Mathematics, with a leaning toward physics. I still read physics books for fun, especially the writings of Stephen Hawking. I do not see a conflict between science and faith. To state it briefly, I think that science can answer the questions How, When, What, and Where. Faith answers the bigger questions Who and especially Why. To put it another way, science learns only by empirical observation and measurement. Nothing in those endeavors gives any information about the "meaning" of what is observed and measured. Scientists who, for example, try to explain that they have shown that there is no need for God are talking about something of which they are ignorant. But when scientists speak about something they know—namely science—I listen.

When science suggests that the Universe is about 15 billion years old; that it may have begun in an instant of enormous energy; and that the building blocks of matter are assembled in certain ways that make life possible, I think that the evidence points that way and I accept these conclusions as likely without seeing any kind of contradiction with the teaching of the Bible. If later discoveries make better sense—such as when Einsteinian physics expanded upon Newtonian physics—I will accept these new discoveries. They are not matters of ultimate meaning or salvation—ultimate meaning only comes from God by

revelation.

Regarding Darwin's theory of evolution—well, I really don't know much about it and I suspect that only a few truly know in detail what he hypothesized. I don't want to mirror scientists who declaim on matters faith, and pretend I have any authority on scientific matters when my specialty is theology. In the past, the Church made this error when it rejected the discoveries of Galileo and Copernicus. With that disclaimer, I'll go so far as to say that I don't think that Darwin suggested that human consciousness or the soul gradually developed from instinct or whatever awareness the higher animals may have. I am willing to be corrected by those who know Darwin better than I. Darwin himself stated his premise, I believe, as a "theory"—that is, an "educated guess"—willing to be corrected. All good scientists should do so. My understanding is that most scientists today recognize that there are many flaws and gaps in the theory. But whether or not Darwin said that human consciousness or the soul gradually developed from whatever awareness the higher animals may have, this is NOT what I believe.

In short—and FINALLY to answer David's question directly—I believe that scientists have made a convincing case for the age and structure of the Universe but (as most scientists themselves say) they haven't got it all right; I believe that all life was and is created by God, and especially that human beings were created by God—that there was no time when a humanoid animal like an ape was an ape one day and evolved on its own steam into an ensouled human being the next. I believe in the revelation through Jesus Christ that there is one God, who is an indivisible Trinity of Persons in one divine Nature; and that God the Son became fully human, whose perfect love, shown in his death and resurrection, opened the kingdom of heaven to those who were in exile through sin and death. I believe that God is the Source, Guide, and Goal of all that is, and that in the power of invincible love and joy he made the atoms and galaxies and everything in

between; that he is the Giver of life, and fills all things while remaining separate from the Creation. I hold to every tenet of the Nicene Creed as affirmed in the fourth century by the undivided Church and traditionally interpreted straight through into the 21st century.

And from these convictions, with the support and general agreement of my partners Jon and Mike, I flesh out the world of the Starmen in a way that, I hope, is accessible and exciting to people of different convictions within Christianity, different religions, or none.

The Starmen's Martial Arts Training

From a reader:

I really enjoyed reading LROM! There were many things that were fantastic, but I'll focus on just one aspect, here. I loved the fight scenes because I am a first-year karate student and could actually identify several of the techniques and how they flowed into each other. This leads me to two questions.

*1. What kind of self-defense training do the Starmen receive?
How does this training compare to current martial arts training?*

The Starman Team hasn't discussed this in detail, but we take it as a given that training at Starlight Academy includes rigorous physical education. Since martial arts training at its best is deeply holistic, this is the preferred course in phys ed at the Academy—especially for those who are Starmen material. Not every student will become a Starman (Descent Into Europa, page 78), and in one case a candidate who was qualified turned down the invitation (The Runaway Asteroid, page 183). However,

those who DO become Starmen must be highly proficient in martial arts. Classical martial arts training sticks to its roots, but also easily adapts to the time and culture in which it takes place. Therefore, although the externals of training in Starlight Academy may be different from training today, I think that the internal side of the training will be little different.

2. How has handheld energy ray weapons in the 22nd century impacted self-defense techniques? Are energy ray guns inherently more accurate because there is no recoil? Through training is it possible to toughen the body to the effects of energy ray guns, at least against low, nonlethal settings?

Good question. Not being a gun guy, I can only guess at the accuracy/recoil connection. I assume that accuracy would depend at least as much on technique and the skill of the shooter as on the absence of recoil. Today's weapons, in skilled hands, can be quite accurate. As far as martial training, the body can be trained to absorb blows or other invasive techniques in a way that does not incapacitate the victim as much as those without training, and mental acuity and "single-mindedness" in the face of attack or danger are a normal part of classical martial arts training. These qualities would be present in the Starmen. Remember how Zip was able to escape from his attackers in Assault On Mars in spite of being wounded by a laser blast. He did not succumb until he was in the tunnels out of a position of risk. But check out his attitude and determination in that situation in Assault On Mars, pages 76-77, for example. Of course, as today, anyone who gets hit with a lethal weapon is going to come out on the short end, whether it's a large caliber bullet or a laser pulse.

Fight Scenes in the Starman Series

MUTINY ON MARS

The two men were just inside. Their utter surprise showed on their features as both turned toward David and reached for the laser pistols by their sides.

“Hey! What are you—” shouted one. David never stopped his stride. Moving quickly toward both, he punched one powerfully in the solar plexus. A satisfying “whoosh!” came from the man’s mouth as the air was knocked completely out of his lungs, and he flew backwards, skidding across the concrete floor with his legs flailing.

The other had his laser pistol out of its holster and was frantically trying to point it toward David, his eyes and mouth wide open in wild panic. Before he could aim the weapon, David gripped the man’s wrist and pulled toward him, turning the wrist as he did so. The gun dropped to the floor. Still holding the man’s wrist with his left hand, David pulled it down. Then he took the man’s chin in his open right hand, lifted him bodily upward and then slammed him onto his back. He hit the ground hard.

David calmly picked up both weapons. Both men were moaning, badly dazed but still conscious. He went to each one and removed their communicators.

Wynn was furious. Silently, he began to move like a bull toward the door of the tower.

WITH HIS ARMS spread wide, Wynn Sturgess plowed into the group of Tunnel People from behind, knocking most of them flat and piling them up on one another like firewood. Roaring, he threw two men to one side in his rush to get to Zip, whom he blamed for his failure to protect the tower from incursion.

At the first sound Zip began to turn his head, but the impact knocked him forward several feet. He skidded on his side, sliding on his right ear. His index finger was wrapped around the

trigger of his weapon. When he landed, his finger slammed into the hard floor and was crushed. His gun went off, letting loose a blast of red ferocity into the wall.

As he saw Wynn reaching for him, his face distorted with uncontrolled fury, Zip quickly got onto all fours and then released a powerful kick with his right leg, straight back toward Wynn's face.

Wynn saw the kick coming and shielded his face with spread hands, absorbing the blow. He threw Zip's leg aside and picked him up by the waist, turned him so that Zip faced him, and placed the Starman none too gently on the ground.

"You squeaking little cellar rat!" the pirate bellowed. "I'll knock your head into orbit!" He reached back an enormous fist and prepared to let fly.

An equally large hand took hold of Wynn's fist while it was cocked and pulled him back off balance. Wynn let go of Zip and fought to stay on his feet as he was propelled into the center of the room. Zip stumbled back two steps, dazed.

"I've been put under by that paralyzing beam for a little while myself," said a calm voice. "You're not quite yourself yet. I'll give you a minute—even two if you think you need it—to rest up before I show you who's in charge of the tower now."

It was Uneven Stephen. He stood calmly and confidently, facing Wynn Sturgess. The other Tunnel People were all on their feet now, but not one of them even thought of raising a weapon.

Wynn was taken aback, but didn't stay confused long. He glared at Stephen, made two fists, and yelled, "I don't need any rest!" He leaped at Stephen.

He was quicker than Stephen had guessed. Wynn's left fist crashed past Stephen's guard and struck him squarely on the right cheek, snapping his head to the left. The right fist came an instant later, but Stephen's left arm shot up and deflected the blow so that it only glanced by his crown.

Stephen reached under Wynn's arms for his broad chest with both hands spread and pushed hard. The pirate's momentum was checked, and with a powerful thrust Stephen drove him away.

Wynn back-pedaled again to keep from sprawling. The two men faced each other. Stephen's cheek was bright red, and a smear of blood came out of the corner of his mouth. But his eyes were bright and unblinking, focused directly on Wynn's eyes.

Stephen charged without warning, feinted with his right fist to draw Wynn's arm toward him. Then Stephen's left fist crashed against Wynn's jaw, followed up directly by his unstoppable right fist to his sternum. The strength of many years of striking the chisel to carve hard stone was behind the blow. Wynn flew out the door, airborne for a few feet. His heels struck the top of the steps as gravity took over once again, and he pitched over into the street, finally coming to rest spread-eagled and face down. His final position was comfortable enough for the nap he would enjoy for a little while to come.

THE RUNAWAY ASTEROID

Outside was a scene that none of the Starmen had expected. Two pirates, dressed in their gray and black uniforms, were seated opposite one another at a small table on the far side of the corridor. The one on the right was a well-muscled, large man with dark hair, weighing well over 200 pounds; the other was blond, of medium build. He was leaning on his elbow, pondering his next move in a board game. When the door slid open, they both looked up, utter surprise written over their faces.

Both the Starmen and the pirates froze for a split second, then both sides moved at once. Mark charged for the big man and Joe for the blond. Simultaneously the huge pirate bellowed and threw the table toward the charging Starmen, scattering the game pieces. Mark stopped the flying table without slowing his pace and slammed it hard back at the pirates, legs first. The blond man managed to evade the table, but the big pirate took two table legs on his left thigh and upper chest. He groaned, and the laser pistol he had been drawing was caught behind the table. Mark quickly threw the table upside-down to his left, reached with both hands for the pirate's right arm, and pulled the man quickly down and

toward himself. His right knee came up and caught the man in the solar plexus. The pirate went down with a whoosh of air and lay still. Mark picked up his pistol.

Meanwhile, the blond pirate had screamed for help in a panicky voice, turned, and was dashing down the corridor toward the elevators. Joe took hold of the table's leg nearest him and skated the table forcefully down the corridor after the escaping pirate. It caught the man behind his left ankle as he was running. In the low gravity, the pirate turned almost completely over, his pistol flying. Joe caught up with him and delivered a quick punch that rendered the man unconscious. The entire fight had taken less than ten seconds.

THE CITY OF DUST

None

FLIGHT OF THE *OLYMPIA*

none

THE CAVES OF MERCURY

None

THE ORPHANS OF TITAN

none

A MATTER OF TIME

Having done their damage, the three men moved quickly but silently down the shadowy corridor.

Approaching from the opposite direction, Sarah Pletcher turned the corner into the long passage. When she saw the three men creeping furtively toward her, she froze. Adrenaline surged

into her system.

“Hsst!” Link’s voice sounded like a leak in an airlock, and he held out his arms to stop his companions from moving forward. From a distance of ten feet, the two parties looked at one another for a second or two.

Hoping that her apprehension would not show in her voice, Sarah spoke up. “What are you doing here? This is a restricted area!”

Without taking his eyes off the woman, Link leaned his head to one side and muttered to Toby, “Put the baggage in the closet! We’ll be gone before she can get out!”

Toby strode ahead confidently, grabbed Sarah by both shoulders, and pulled her forward a few feet until they were opposite a closet door. Still holding her firmly with his meaty right hand he reached over with his left and pulled the door open, then began to push her into it.

Suddenly a loud, throaty groan burst from his vocal chords, like a large animal in pain. Toby collapsed into himself, both hands grabbing his groin. With her eyes flashing, Sarah reached up with both hands and pulled his head down and to her right. Her left leg bent upward and with her knee she walloped him with enormous force on the right side of his head. The big man went down in a heap and lay on the floor whimpering.

The faces of Link and Sledge showed sudden surprise and then outraged anger. They both leaped at Sarah, clutching hands outstretched.

As they rushed toward her, Sarah jumped at the one on her right, the bigger of the two assailants. With a piercing guttural yell, she lifted her left leg into the air almost as if she were stepping onto an invisible stair and let fly a crushing kick with her right leg. The ball of her foot slammed into Sledge’s solar plexus. The air whooshed out of his lungs loudly, his mouth opened like a fish out of water, and he went down.

Link stopped his rush and glared at the woman with alert wariness, his nostrils flaring with hatred.

“You just made a big mistake, honey.” His voice oozed like poison. Slowly, with a lopsided evil grin, he drew his pistol. Before it had cleared the holster, Sarah dropped instantly to the floor and, supporting herself with her left leg, extended her right leg and swung it in a fast arc. She caught the saboteur just at his right ankle. The man’s feet flew out from under him and he slammed down hard on the metal floor. The pistol went flying.

With a cry, the man rolled away fast from the Starlight student and leaped to his feet. His eyes glared with red fury. He snarled and charged her, bellowing and aiming a hard punch at her face with his right hand balled up in a tight fist.

Just as he released the blow, Sarah swept her right arm across in front of her head and deflected his attack, then slammed her own fist backwards into Link’s face. He howled and closed his eyes, dropped his head, and covered his face with his hands.

Sarah planted her right foot and whirled rapidly counter-clockwise, leaning away from her attacker. At the height of her spin, she lifted her left leg high and dealt Link a hard blow on the left side of his head. For a quarter turn, his body spun like a propeller as he dropped to the floor. By the time he came to rest, he was out cold.

JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET

none

DESCENT INTO EUROPA

Robert’s face blanched and he rocked on his feet. Beowulf Denn slowly rose, put a large hand on Robert’s chest, and pushed him gently but irresistibly down into his chair.

“No,” said Robert quietly, as if into the air. “No. It’s my plant.” He leaped to his feet. Energy surged into him and he screamed. “Get out of my way! I’ll give the orders myself!”

Denn pushed him down into the chair again, none too gently

this time. Robert jumped up yet again, and Denn struck him down with an open hand. Robert fell over the chair and sprawled on the ground, stunned and still unbelieving. Sudden fury filled him. He crawled forward out of Denn's immediate reach, and scrambled to his feet.

He saw a display case in front of him. He grabbed a dark and pocked iron meteorite the size of a lemon, whirled around, and threw it with all his might at his adversary. The heavy stone struck the large, grinning man on his forehead with enormous force. Denn expelled a huge blast of air, clutched upward, and fell back to the floor unconscious.

Robert fled from the room. Outside, he composed himself and headed for the shuttleport. He was breathing hard. NME looked like a strange place to him now. Nolan tried to look normal as he walked down the hallway, but he couldn't keep his eyes from flashing as he took in sights that were once so familiar but now seemed stained and ugly. Everyone he passed was an enemy, a traitor, put in place by the most reprehensible traitor of all.

Denn! He had trusted Denn for years. His lips tightened. Denn had saved his life, but only to use him to gain control over the plant. For that he had needed Nolan alive, but now Denn was completely in charge of NME and didn't need Nolan anymore.

Nolan quickened his pace. If Denn returned to consciousness before he could get off the wheel, Nolan knew he wouldn't get off it at all—at least, not alive.

Walking easily he reached the shuttleport in less than five minutes. The left side of his face throbbed where Denn had struck him.

"I'm going down to join the Christmas festivities," he told the attendant conversationally. The man wore an uneasy look, as if he didn't want to let Nolan go, but didn't know whether he should try to stop him.

"Where is Mr. Denn, sir?" he asked. "Wouldn't he like to go with you?"

"Wulf is in my office. There is a little more work to do before he can come down, but I don't want to ignore the people of NME

too long. There's a group down on the surface waiting for us. I'm sure he'll be along soon."

Those words convinced the man that something was wrong. He knew Beowulf Denn was not going to any party. The man's eyes caught the red place where Denn had struck Nolan.

"I think you'd better wait for Mr. Denn here, sir," he said deferentially, but making it clear that he was not going to let Nolan onto his ship.

Without warning, Nolan suddenly struck out with both fists. He landed blow after blow, taking the man completely by surprise. With the fierce energy that had catapulted him to prominence and excellence, Nolan now fought for his life. He felt no fear, only a kind of exultation. The man dropped. Nolan ran for his ship.

THE TREASURES OF DARKNESS

All at once, Joe whipped the controls to the right and slammed the accelerator forward. Mark, seated at the navigator's post, rolled with the sudden change in course. Zip, standing in the middle of the cabin, flew toward the left wall. He lifted his right leg and caught himself as the wall, for a moment, became the floor.

Steve crashed into the left wall, and then bounced off it in a desperate dance, trying to keep on his feet. Both arms swung in wide circles as he fought to maintain his balance. Joe straightened the *Star Ranger* out again, and Zip suddenly released a furious, piercing yell and charged full speed at Steve from eight feet away. He was certain that Steve knew that if the laser discharged inside the *Star Ranger's* cabin, it could pierce a wall and depressurize the ship. Whatever was wrong with Steve, he hoped that he wasn't trigger-happy.

As he leaped for Steve, Zip planted his right foot down and rapidly spun counterclockwise on the ball of his foot, looked over his left shoulder, transferred the momentum from his whirling body into his left leg and shot it back in a powerful kick

aimed at Steve's midsection. The acceleration in the *Star Ranger* added to the power of the kick and it connected with a satisfying "chunk" sound, like a fastball slamming into a catcher's mitt.

Steve expelled a sudden, thunderous groan and flew backward against the rear bulkhead, but he didn't lose his grip on the pistol. Dazed, he tried to recapture control of his whirling arms and aim the pistol at Zip's chest. Zip, still moving after the back kick, planted his left foot on the deck and swung his right foot in a high crescent between him and the man with the gun. The edge of his foot caught Steve's right wrist and knocked his arm aside. Even at that, Steve held onto the pistol.

Mark leaped into the fray, rolling head over heels to avoid becoming a target for the wavering pistol. As he rolled he pulled to his left and swung his right leg in a fast circle parallel to the deck and struck hard behind Steve's right ankle. Steve's feet shot out from under him and his heavy bulk crashed solidly to the deck. He hit hard, but showed no signs of weakness. As Mark continued his attack and lunged forward, Steve swung his right hand in a fast, desperate arc and caught the Starman a ringing blow on the left side of his head. While Mark was stunned and off balance, Steve struck him a second time.

Zip dropped down and delivered a hard punch to the left side of Steve's jaw and saw his left eye jerk aside and sink for a split second into his head, then return to place.

"Mark!" screamed Zip. "He's an android! He's an android! It's not Steve at all! It's—" Zip's shock had disrupted his attack, allowing the false Steve to grip his throat with his left hand. His thumb pressed cruelly into Zip's windpipe. In a flash, Zip recalled what he knew about androids. They did not have superhuman strength but could not tire. They had a powerful self-preservation program. Causing an android to pass as a human being was one of the most horrific crimes imaginable. Even as he felt the android's hand trying to crush his throat, Zip was recoiling with horror at what he was fighting. His gorge began to rise, and then an immense anger flushed through him at the violation of nature that was writhing under his knee.

Zip pressed his left knee into the android's chest, then bent and twisted the arm so that he could release its grip. In the meantime, Mark had lifted his left arm to block the android's blows. With both hands he twisted the android's right arm and pressed on the back of its hand. Its fingers flew open and the pistol dropped. With a roar, Mark gripped the android's head with both hands, lifted it up, and then slammed it down vehemently on the deck. The light in the android's eyes went dark, the mouth went slack, and the limbs relaxed and lay still.

"Right this way," announced the Banjoman grandly, moving his right hand in a generous sweep. Quick as a blink, Joe extended his left hand and grasped the man's right wrist and pulled so that the old man was placed between him and the gunman on the left. Simultaneously the Starman kicked powerfully upward with his right foot, connecting with the other laser rifle and sending it to the ceiling.

The arachnoid let loose a spray of needle lasers. Wincing from the sudden onslaught, Joe brought the Banjoman in between him and the arachnoid. Forge's expression changed from wide-opened surprise to one of agony as the lasers dotted his backside like buckshot. A hoarse cry erupted from his O-shaped mouth. He scrambled frantically with his left hand at a control he wore at his wrist and deactivated the arachnoid.

Joe reached across with his right hand and gripped the Banjoman's wrist. The large man was howling with outrage and pain. Joe straightened his enemy's arm with a sharp pull, and then twisted the wrist so that the fingers spread outward. With a mighty push, he sent the Banjoman flying backward so that he bowled over the remaining gunman.

The first gunman had hesitated between retrieving the rifle Joe had kicked and leaping in to rescue the Banjoman. When he saw the spray of needle lasers, he had done nothing, but now he bore down on Joe, roaring in with both arms spread. He was a

big man and expected that his size and ferocity would be more than a match for the tall but slender Starman.

Just before the assailant's hands closed on Joe, the Starman, freely and gladly giving vent to the frustration he had contained while being led captive by the arachnoid for hours, emitted a piercing yell and took a step forward into his attacker's lunge. Taken by surprise, the man lost his focus. Joe's right fist slammed full force into the man's solar plexus. The air rushed out of his lungs. Joe whirled, grabbed his assailant's right wrist and used the man's own momentum to hurl him head over heels onto the arachnoid.

Joe quickly took stock of the situation and saw that the other gunman was scrambling to his feet, still in possession of his rifle. Uncontrolled rage was written all over his face. At Joe's feet was the other rifle. He scooped it up by the barrel, which was the part he could reach the quickest. Gripping it like a sword, Joe leaped toward the last man. As the enemy's gun began to swing toward him, Joe brought his rifle down hard on the other man's weapon.

Ready for the blow, the man's aim was deterred but he didn't drop the rifle. He brought it up again. Joe swung his weapon in a small circle and caught the other gun by the bottom this time and hefted it high. The other man's rifle flipped up toward the ceiling but he still didn't lose control of it. Then Joe tossed his own gun into his assailant's face, stepped in and grabbed the man's right leg behind the knee and pulled forcefully. The man's feet shot out from under him and he landed hard on his back. When he hit the deck, Joe was waiting for him. A powerful, well-aimed punch knocked the man unconscious.

Joe stood and surveyed the scene. The big gunman was sprawled upside down over the arachnoid, gasping painfully for breath. The Banjoman was lying curled up with his face in his hands, turning his head from side to side and whimpering. The last man was out cold.

Altering his position very slowly, Zip lifted himself up and began to bring his feet under him for a concerted leap. To his dismay, the crate he was lying on creaked as he moved. The man by the workbench whipped his eyes toward the sound, aimed his pistol, and fired.

As soon as the man began to move, Zip rolled over, pulling the broomstick over with him. He dropped into an aisle out of view of the first man and, he hoped, of the second man as well. The moment his feet hit the floor he charged forward, bent over double. As he expected, the second laser shot went over his head. Before the man could aim again, Zip had struck him a solid blow on the forehead with the broomstick. Even before the man could react, Zip whirled the stick and caught the man behind his right knee. Fiercely Zip pulled the broomstick toward himself and jerked the man off his feet. He slammed down hard onto his back.

Taking advantage of the momentum, Zip whirled and leaped to one side. He had heard the other man running toward the front of the room. The instant he appeared, Zip struck him on his right side with the stick, then quickly shifted and struck him on the other side. The man's face contorted with pain and he hunched over with a groan, pulling his elbows into both sides. With a rapid spin of the stick, Zip caught the man on the top of his right wrist and sent the laser pistol flying. Then the Starman dropped the broomstick and clouted the man's jaw with the back of his right fist. The man fell to the floor.

THE EIGHT TREASURES

none

THE SAND TOMB

none

THE INFESTATION AT SULPHUR CREEK

none

THE PLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE

None

THE ULTIMATE CODE

none

RETURN TO EUROPA

none

DOOMSDAY HORIZON

The redheaded Starman had woken from drugged slumber while his captors were flying him and his two companions in a compact shuttle into the heart of the ruined city where a clandestine landing field had been created out of what had been Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza a hundred years earlier, adjacent to the United Nations Building. Zip had returned to awareness slowly, but by the time the shuttle had landed he was fully alert.

He feigned unconsciousness and remained a dead weight as six men transferred the Starman to stretchers so they could carry them to a starship. Joe and Mark, apparently, were still completely under the influence of the drug that had rendered all of them unconscious. As soon as it became evident that the three Starman were being taken into the spacecraft, Zip knew he had to escape with or without his friends. With lightning speed, he reached up with both hands and grasped the wrists of the man who was carrying the end of the stretcher closest to his head. Simultaneously he wrapped his feet underneath the stretcher to gain leverage. He applied pressure to the man's wrists, pulling him backwards and down. With a gasp of surprise and fright, the

man lost his balance and fell onto the stretcher. At the last possible instant, Zip rolled away and let the man fall hard.

The other captor couldn't reach for a weapon without dropping the stretcher, and remained undecided for a second. When his partner fell onto the stretcher, the second man staggered, then released his hands and grabbed for his weapon.

Zip, meanwhile, had rolled onto all fours and then leaped into a low crouch. Looking over his shoulder, he saw the second man leaning forward. The Starman slammed his right hand down hard on the back of his head, propelling him down forehead first between the legs of his partner. Through the canvass of the stretcher the man hit the ground hard and became limp. His dead weight hampered the first man's attempts to get back to his feet. Zip grabbed a laser pistol from his fallen captor and the pack of supplies that he had carried by a strap over one shoulder. Zip stood up, took a lightning fast survey of his surroundings, and sprinted for the closest building.

The escape had been almost soundless, and Zip's stretcher had been the last in the procession. By the time the others noticed that he had disabled his captors, the Starman was almost at the fence on the perimeter of the makeshift landing field. His superior agility put him on the far side before the other captors could lower their stretchers, get their pistols into their hands, and fire. Zip was free.

Joe pushed the door. It opened onto blackness. There was the sound of several pairs of boots rushing down the staircase and a light was bobbing, illuminating the end of the corridor.

"Get ready," said the lanky Starman, retreating back into the room and pulling the door after him. He left it slightly ajar so that he could hear the approach of their captors.

"Still closed," came a muffled voice. "Those patsies probably don't know that the door's unlocked."

"It doesn't look quite closed to m—" began another.

Joe pushed powerfully on the door, opening it with a

suddenness that caught two men by surprise and flung them hard against the opposite wall. They dropped a light that rolled along the floor. Mark threw his coat over the light and plunged the corridor into darkness. A swift fight exploded, the Starmen taking immediate initiative against four others. Going completely by feel, Joe gripped one man's wrist and led him in a tight circle and a solid encounter with the metal wall.

Mark grabbed another man by the wrist, whirled, and threw him over his shoulder so that the thug hit the deck flat on his back.

A third man began to squeal with fright at the sound of the fight around him. It was the overweight individual who had sealed them into their cell a few minutes earlier.

"Thanks for making a noise, buddy," said Joe, spinning on one foot and shooting his other foot out in an effective kick. A loud noise like a baseball bat hitting a side of beef echoed in the dark hallway, followed by the sound of a body bouncing against the wall, and then falling to the floor.

"Right in the rotunda," muttered Joe with satisfaction. "One of my best kicks, if I do say so myself."

"Stop where you are," came a panicky snarl from the darkness somewhere between the cell door and the end of the corridor where the stairs came down, "or I'll drill you! I've got my pistol out."

Mark lowered into a crouch and dove along the floor with his head tucked in and both arms spread out. He slid along the floor until he collided with the last man. The man's legs flew out from under him and he went down. Mark was instantly on his feet, reached down and picked the man up, and cracked his head against the wall. Then the big Starman laid him gently onto the floor.

The Starmen closed with their pursuers.

Mark leaped forward with a vigorous yell and released a driving straight punch toward the solar plexus of the thug who

was leading the attack. To the Starman's surprise, the man jumped into a deep, balanced fighting stance, swept Mark's punch aside with a skillful block, and countered with a series of penetrating punches of his own. Mark suddenly found himself moving backward, blocking the man's furious attack.

Joe was faring no better. He had led off with a flying front kick, but his target had moved aside and swept his arm upward, catching the Starman's kicking leg on his lower calf. Joe slammed down hard onto the smooth floor, the breath knocked out of him. His assailant slammed a powerful punch toward him that Joe was only able to avoid by a quick roll to one side.

These men are skilled fighters, thought Mark. *We're overmatched!*

An incongruous thought came to Joe. *I hope Mika Watanabe never hears about this.*

Their assailants laughed aloud and all five of them tossed their weapons to one side, eager to prove themselves in hand-to-hand fighting against the Starmen. The fight was too fast for the eye to follow, but it was short. Both Starmen lay on the ground, bruised, bleeding, and panting.

"Man, I enjoyed that!" laughed one of the men, a powerfully built individual with closely cropped blond hair and oversized teeth. He flexed his fingers into fists.

"I thought you said these guys were supposed to be good, Moze," said another.

"Well, I guess we're just better," boasted a solidly built man.

"Now that we've shown you who's in charge, chumps," that individual went on, "let's get down to business." The five thugs stood in a circle, looking down on the fallen Starmen. Mark and Joe rolled up to sitting positions.

"And what might that business be?" said Joe, wiping a trail of blood from the left corner of his mouth.

"You're on your way to the Ahmanyans," stated the man called Moze. "This," he lifted his hands and looked around, "isn't it yet. We want to know where they are. You were leading us on a good chase, but I think maybe the five of us jumped you

too soon. Where were you going, now, hey?”

“Well, I suppose it won’t do any good to hide it from you men,” said Joe with a hangdog look. Mark’s head shot up as he regarded his friend. Joe looked up into Moze’s eyes. “We were going to my mother’s house to get her recipe for peanut butter and tuna sandwiches. She makes the bes—” The man behind Joe walloped him on the side of his head with an open palm. Joe had sensed the blow coming and rolled with it a little bit, but still caught a lot of the power behind it. He sprawled on the floor.

The man who hit him grabbed Joe by the collar behind his neck, pulled it tight, and dragged him backward so that his throat was caught in the fabric. Joe began to choke.

“Listen, you beanpole pipsqueak,” the thug said through clenched teeth, “when Moze asks you a question, you answer it straight and fast!”

Joe turned his head to the right and rolled his eyes up toward the man who held him. With a suddenness that surprised even Mark, Joe swept his right hand hard and low and caught the man behind his right ankle, simultaneously grasping the man’s wrist with his left hand. He pulled and twisted hard. The man yelped once as he flew off his feet. Since Joe held onto his wrist he couldn’t break his fall. Joe timed a hard backfist punch with his right hand so that he connected with the man’s temple at the instant the bully crashed to the hard polished floor, landing cheek first.

The other thugs began to step toward Joe but Moze motioned them back.

Joe turned back to Moze. “Sorry,” he said apologetically. “He tripped. Now what was the question?”

THE HEART OF DANGER

none

THE LAST COMMAND

none

A NEW WORLD

none

STARS OF THE DEEP

none

PARADOX LOST

“Hey!” I yelled, leaning through the top half of the dutch door and knocking on the shelf.

A decidedly unfriendly-looking man came out of a back room, wiping his mouth with a napkin. He was even bigger than Mark and outweighed him by maybe fifty pounds. He was built solidly of muscle and sinew, and wore a sidearm of some kind in a holster. I remember thinking that this Jemno Bartrin knew how to pick his guards!

“Whadda you hayseeds want?” he sneered at me.

I backed off as if I’d been intimidated. “Sorry to disturb you at your supper, sir. My brothers and me, here, well, we’ve just moved in down to the town and went for a walk, like, this evening.” I smoothed my way back up where I’d been before. “An’ we were walking by the field here, and we got kinda curious. Mind if we go out there and take a closer look at the spaceships ya got out there?”

The goon flushed, his mouth tightened up as though he’d just gotten a good suck on a freshly-picked ripe lemon, he slammed his open palms loudly down on the counter, and he leaned through the opening with his face about six inches from mine.

“You hicks interrupt me at my dinner and ask if you can stroll about inside the area I’m guarding!?” he roared. Onion breath blew onto me with something like gale force. “Why, are

you stupid? Did you get kicked in the head by a horse, you pea-brained hay-flinger? If it were 'okay' for brainless louts to totter about the field an' gawk at our ships, d'ya think we'd have a fence up? Have you been—"

With that I figured I'd had enough and I reached out and jerked both his wrists toward me. His hands flew off the counter and his eyes and mouth opened up into three circles as his head fell to the board. He bit off his last word hard.

Mark grabbed one flailing hand and I grabbed the other, and we both yanked him through the door and flung him out so that he went sprawling face-down in the dirt. Without taking the time to see whether the door were locked or not, I vaulted through the opening into the guardroom to see if there were anyone else inside.

There was. Another mountain of a man had just leaped up from a small dining table and was heading for some kind of console where there was communication equipment and a large red button. As he reached for the button, I remember expressing thanks that they had painted it so bright. Made it easier for me to know what to keep him away from.

One blow to his floating ribs made him think of something other than that red button. After that, he wasn't too much of a challenge. He was down for the night and I was turning back to open the door for Zip and Mark, when I heard a loud noise, a pop with some force behind it. I wasn't sure what it was, but it was an ominous kind of sound. I suddenly felt cold all over. I ran to the door and the big fellow was flat on his back, out cold. Mark was standing over him with a determined look on his face and his right hand still curled up in a tight fist. I can still remember the whiteness of his knuckles.

MASTER OF SHADOWS

Kathy wasn't sure what to do. She knew that she couldn't leave and she couldn't approach him. She sat down cross-legged quietly and tried to create an assurance of peace and good will,

but knew that she was failing. Even the best and most irresistible of her thoughts could not penetrate the Lucian's panic.

She simply waited calmly, imagining and anticipating the comfort she would provide once he quieted down or ran out of energy. Then she wondered if he *would* run out of energy, at least in a reasonable time. She knew only a little of the First Races, and this particular Lucian was a completely unknown entity even to those of his own race. He had not seen another face for uncountable eons. His sanctum had been penetrated, his refuge breached. His unbalanced state was now pitched beyond its last protection. Suddenly Kathy realized that she was in completely unpredictable territory. What would happen next?

The Lucian answered that question. He pulled himself onto all fours and in a desperate lunge of self-preservation, launched himself physically at Kathy with a hideous sound that was a combination of a scream of panic and a snarl of rage.

Kathy was caught off guard. She had years of training in martial arts just as all Starmen had, but in her desire to exude goodwill toward the Lucian she had thoughtlessly put herself in a completely unguarded position. Sitting cross-legged was one of the most indefensible postures that one could take, yet the instant that the Lucian leaped, her martial training took over. Kathy threw her upright body back onto the floor, her crossed legs unmoving. The Lucian sailed over her, crashing to the floor beyond her, his knees crashing down on her head, his feet on her chest.

The Starman rolled over and came quickly to her feet, prepared for the next attack; the Lucian scrambled like a spider on glass until he was able to stand upright. He faced Kathy with fury in his eyes, believing that he was defending his life in his last place of refuge. Kathy forced herself to remain calm. She lowered her arms and turned her empty palms toward him. It was, she hoped, a universal gesture of goodwill and lack of animosity.

The Lucian did not appear even to notice. He snatched a long crystal bar from the closest piece of apparatus, wrenched it

from its setting, and charged Kathy, swinging it as a weapon. As it arced toward her head, at just the right moment Kathy stepped toward her attacker, grasped the crystal bar and took control of its momentum. The Lucian lost his balance and toppled forward. Kathy caught him before he fell, and then placed him gently on his feet.

The fight went out of him. He stood wavering. His knees nearly buckled again, but Kathy extended her arm, open palm upward. As if without thinking, he took it and braced himself. His mouth opened and his eyes stared into hers, now more with surprise than with panic or fear.

Kathy said, "I am Starman Kathy Foster, of Earth. We have met before."

Race and Gender in the Starman Series

I think that as soon as race becomes an issue in just about ANYTHING—whether for or against a given race—the point's been lost. Anyone who wants to do so can claim that he or she has been discriminated against, and we realize that this can be a major factor in today's culture. But I think that the point isn't race, it's discrimination. In the world of the Starmen (like that of Star Trek), we are presenting a world that is BEYOND racism and BEYOND sexism. In the series book world, I think we are unique, though the matter of race in the future is occasionally addressed. "Blake Savage" (i.e. Hal Goodwin, author of the Rick Brants) in his single volume story, "Rip Foster Rides the Gray Planet," presents a character in the future who is one of only 17 remaining pure blooded Hawaiians. Sam Epstein, author of the Ken Holts, made it a point never to present a villain with a foreign-sounding name—though a number of his secondary heroes had such names.

As we have pointed out before, especially in the second Inter*Stellar, in the 22nd century, none of these things is an issue any more than feudalism is an issue today. It's no more than curious history. Just about no one in the world of the Starmen is able even to UNDERSTAND the question of why anyone would think that another person is inferior just because he or she is different.

We are presenting, as best we can, an “ideal” world. This is the main reason why the Collapse is built into the Starmen’s world and is frequently referred to—it made it possible for the Starman Team to “recreate” the world as we wanted it for our series. The people of the late 21st century “came together” in the same way the people of the US and the wider world “came together” after the terrorist attacks and put aside the partisan issues that usually divide people. In the US it lasted a few months. In the Starmen’s world, after the horrific worldwide trauma of the Collapse, we are presenting the change as being lasting. In short, we are not writing to address the problem of racism; we are writing as if it had been long solved and then forgotten. This is one of the main “messages” of the Starman series. In the Starman world, there is simply no such thing as racism or sexism.

We know, of course, that this is not the world of today, so people are going to raise the issues that have been raised; discussing them on the message board is precisely what the message board is for. But it seems to me that any kids, or parents of kids, who will not read a book because its main characters are white has a much bigger problem than the Starman series can address. This is the kind of attitude that creates the very problem we are trying to overcome. In such a case, these kids are not being exposed to a series that presents the very world in which “people like them” are respected and included—and they don’t want to read the books just because the “people like them” are not number one? The photos of the Starmen on the web site? They are only approximations of the Starmen’s appearance—our models for the

characters and guidelines for future artists. People may be surprised as these actual guys' backgrounds. "Zip Foster," for example, lived his entire life up to college in rural Indonesia among native people, where his parents and three brothers were the only "whites" for a long way. As Jon Cooper has pointed out, the Starmen are generally presented as Caucasian for a reason that, basically, was beyond our control. Further, we have never specifically explained what "race" these guys belong to, other than human. We didn't care. As the Starman series develops and other Starmen are brought into the story line, they will be just as representative of humanity as the rest of our characters have been. As we've indicated, a female Starman has already been introduced.

Advance notice: the Benefactors finally appear in *The Lost Race of Mars*. I expect that a lot of readers are going to be VERY surprised when they discover what race THESE people look like!—and they are presented as, in Zip's words in *LROM*, "the kindest people we've ever heard of." When one of the Benefactors explains their history to the Starmen, she says, "Usually we lived in peace, but in the far past, occasionally the kingdoms went to war with one another. In time we learned to live without conflict. We worked together and developed the science necessary for space flight, ..." And nobody in the Starmen's world CARES what the Benefactors look like. The word "race" is used pretty frequently in the Starman series, especially in the fifth book—and it ALWAYS refers only to inhabitants of planets. In other words, in the Starman series, there is only the HUMAN race. We've presented our world like that from the beginning.

The Starmen's Personalities

Jon Cooper put up a few polls on this site recently, one of which asks which Starman is the reader's favorite. It is informative to me that three of the eight respondents to date checked "there's a difference?"

It was stated by two or three of our earliest readers that the Starmen were not sufficiently differentiated in *Assault On Mars*. Since then, I have made an effort to distinguish between them better. Consider the following:

Zip Foster is presented in the "official" world of the Starmen as being analytical, tending toward being a bit anxious (note how often his brow is "furrowed"), and able to pull facts together and make a decision without losing the ability to follow a "hunch." He has been shown several times as not responding to a joke, to show that he might be a bit too serious. He does have a deeply tender side, however, but it comes out only when he is with his family. He dearly loves his little sister. Of the three, only Zip has been shown at home with his family. This was done as a means of showing this side of his personality, an essential but concealed part of how he acts when "on duty." The only time (so far) we have seen these two sides of him come together is when he "lost control" for a moment at the time of the failure of the active shielding in *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. He tries hard to keep these two sides of himself separate, but cannot do it very well—hence the only time we've seen them joined was in a moment of weakness. Bringing them together as a strength lies in the future. Because of this, the budding romance with Kristina Bethany leaves him both excited and confused.

Joe Taylor is always ready to do his duty and do it well, but is too ready with a joke. His inclination toward humor might be a bit of a shield to protect some emotional vulnerability. He sometimes makes jokes at the wrong time. Where Zip protects

his vulnerability with seriousness, Joe protects his with humor. Joe is the one who talks the most, but is the one who has revealed the least about himself. On rare occasion, he can be surprising.

Mark Seaton is the mystical one. He is always the one who notes first how beautiful a setting is. He is entranced with the splendor of the stars, and is the first to note that stark, thoroughly inhospitable environments like the terrain of the tenth planet can be stunningly beautiful. He doesn't talk much, but he has a wry sense of humor which is rarely expressed; when it is, his humor is subtle. (Remember his remarks about the "Martian gophers" in *Assault On Mars*.) Mark listens well and does his job without complaint or mistake. When he does talk, it is usually to the point. He is somewhat self-effacing, but can be excitable. He is not emotionally vulnerable, but his emotions are outward directed—way outward. It is difficult to imagine him with a romantic interest.

To see how all three temperaments meld, consider the scene in *The Runaway Asteroid* when the Starmen tried to find the way out of the room in which they were sealed. (Pages 90-93)

Using logic, it was Zip who had the idea that there had to be a way out. Mark picked up on the idea right away. Joe didn't contribute to that conversation, but went along with the suggestion. Joe, being too literal-minded, couldn't figure out where the panel might be and just checked the wall over and over again. He finally urged Mark to check the floor while he kept going over the wall. It was Mark who found the panel. He immediately shared that knowledge with his partners; he has a strong sense of teamwork.

Joe needed a hint to see the panel. Once he saw it, he impulsively tried to open it by simple manipulation and failed. Mark, being open to new ideas, figured out how to open the

hidden panel, using both logic and a mystical temperament. (The method he used, by the way, is an actual martial arts technique.)

Zip praised him for it, but didn't waste much time doing so. He turned immediately to the next task. Joe then leaped in again, ready to manipulate the wires to open the door. Zip stopped him by using his analytical mind to assess whether there was danger in plunging ahead thoughtlessly.

In this single scene, then, we see Zip being a leader (not without flaws) and showing his analytical method of thinking. We see Mark using his heart as well as his mind. Joe is impulsive and somewhat easily frustrated. But ALL THREE were necessary to get the door open.

From Mary Doman

Thanks for taking the time to give us your excellent character sketches. One of the objections I always had to series books when I was a kid, was that the characters were pretty much interchangeable. The only differences between them seemed to be gender and/or physical characteristics. To me, they were just “talking heads” meant to move the story along...there was no difference in how they thought or spoke or acted.

The Starmen are definite individuals, and I am enjoying getting to know each one of them as they reveal themselves through their thoughts and actions.

From David Baumann:

What is also interesting is how the three Starman interact with each other—reinforcing each other's strengths while countering the excesses. Joe and Mark are there to buoy up Zip when he

grows despondent. When Mark starts to wax mystically on some subject the other two can bring him back to reality. And the laid-back Joe is forced to stick to the business-at-hand by the intentness of his teammates. All of which contributes to their growing maturity - and seasoning - as individuals and as a team.

The Starmen's Tears

- > *Lurker for a few weeks, not much going on so, first post.*
- > *Ok, I'm not bashing ok, I'm just giving an opinion: The*
- > *Starmen cry too much. Once or twice in the whole series*
- > *at a meaningful spot maybe, but it seems to happen every*
- > *book, sometimes multiple times in the same book. Please.*

From Jon Cooper

Now that is something I hadn't seen before! I went through the books and made a list of all the times one of the Starmen cry, and this is what I came up with:

[NOTE: This list has been updated from the list in the original post, and now goes through the sixth Starman book instead of the first four. David's comments have likewise been slightly altered to include the sixth book.]

ASSAULT ON MARS

- none

THE RUNAWAY ASTEROID:

- Zip, memories of the nuclear war, possible destruction of Earth imminent
- Mark, Vly's crystal display
- Joe, when the asteroid was about to hit Earth
- Zip, when meeting his sister again

JOURNEY TO THE TENTH PLANET

- Zip, upon discovery of the radiation leak
- Zip, upon meeting Kristina
- Zip, after the mutinous fight on board the Starventure
- Joe, upon sight of the holograms of the Benefactor's ships on Nyx
- Mark, after seeing Zimbardo's madness

DESCENT INTO EUROPA

- Joe, after his trick with the water balloon (definitely not tears of sadness though)
- Zip, after Mark discovered that the octopi on Europa knew Titanian

THE LOST RACE OF MARS

- Zip, when he learns that Ahmanyia is Mars, and had been destroyed by the Xenobots
- Zip, when he names Tharsos
- Mark, when he remembers that the Collapse caused the death of four billion Earth people

DOOMSDAY HORIZON

- Joe, when he talks to Mark about how they had been tricked and failed the Ahmanyans' trust

When they are all put together like that it does seem like quite a stack! It's obvious that the Starmen are not stoic, strong men who have no emotions at all but are actually fairly soft-hearted.

It's an interesting question: how should Starmen behave? Should they pull themselves together, or not? Of the three, Zip seems to be the softest. Does anyone have any thoughts on this?

From Mary Doman

A few personal observations.

> *The Runaway Asteroid:*

> - *Zip, memories of the nuclear war, possible destruction of Earth imminent*

My Dad STILL cries occasionally over guys that he saw killed or lost during WWII, and that was 50+ years ago...he cried then, too, and he's no wuss. So do a lot of the vets from the "greatest generation" and Vietnam and Korea and the Gulf. I think Zip had a good reason to cry here.

> - *Mark, Vly's crystal display*

Something of this magnitude and beauty would bring tears to ANYONE who had an ounce of feeling!

> - *Joe, when the asteroid was about to hit Earth*

If having your planet about to be destroyed doesn't bring tears, what does it take?!

> - *Zip, when meeting his sister again*

Watch military guys who come back from a tour of duty, peacetime or war, or who come back from being POWs. PLENTY of tears!

> *Journey to the Tenth Planet:*

> - *Zip, upon discovery of the radiation leak*

Remember Star Trek's "Wrath of Khan"...Kirk totally lost it when he knew Spock was going to die!

> - *Zip, upon meeting Kristina*

So maybe Zip has the soul of an artist...is that unheard of in a warrior?

> - *Zip, after the mutinous fight on board the Starventure*

Tears under duress...ever seen any of the documentaries about guys in WWII or Vietnam. Yup, tears!

> - *Joe, upon sight of the holograms of the Benefactor's ships on Nyx*

"Close Encounters of the Third Kind"...remember the reactions of the folks on Devil's Mountain to their first view of the "mothership"?

> - *Mark, after seeing Zimbardo's madness*

Tears of compassion, and probably fear.

> *Descent Into Europa:*

> - *Joe, after his trick with the water balloon (definitely not tears of sadness though)*

Brings back memories of some DARN good practical jokes at college...and later.

> - *Zip, after Mark discovered that the octopi on Europa knew Titanian*

Zip is solving one of the greatest puzzles of the Solar System, reaching deep into the collective memory of the human race and its longings...ever cry at a movie, even though you knew it wasn't real, because it touched something personal or "human"?

> *The Lost Race of Mars:*

> - *Zip, twice and Mark, once (I can't tell you why, of course!)*

As part of the reading group, I can tell you it seems justified to me.

> *When they are all put together like that it does seem like quite a stack! It's obvious that the Starmen are not stoic, strong men who have no emotions at all but are actually fairly soft-hearted.*

Do we want unfeeling, uncaring "robots" out there in space...we have them...they're called Xenobots! I wouldn't give 20 cents for a warrior without caring and feeling (heck, in the second "Terminator" movie, the big draw was that the Terminator "grew" human).

> *It's an interesting question: how should Starmen behave? Should they pull themselves together, or not? Of the three, Zip seems to be> the softest. Does anyone have any thoughts on this?*

They're together when it counts, right? What more can we ask? I think the 50s style of two-dimensional characters who existed only to serve the mystery is frankly, well....BORING! Give me an "Alan Alda" type, any day!

From David Baumann

> > *The Starmen cry too much. Once or twice in the whole series at a meaningful spot maybe, but it seems to happen every book, sometimes multiple times in the same book.*
 > > *Please.*

[Jon]

> *Now that is something I hadn't seen before! I went through the books and made a list of all the times one of the Starmen cry, and this is what I came up with...*

It seems to me that one other person did mention this a while back, but I appreciate the comment and am impressed that Jon did the research and surprised at the result. It does make quite a list!

The tearing-up scenes are not part of Jon's summaries, so I plead 100% blame/credit for this part of the Starman series. First off, believe me that I have no intention of creating Alan Alda-type characters!! My intention was to show that the Starmen do have emotions and can express them without compromising their manhood—I cannot improve on Mary Doman's response, other than to emphasize that in the right circumstances strong men can (and should) express emotions, including those that call for tears. In none of those scenes do any of the Starmen "lose control" except when Zip is taken by surprise at the radiation scene in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* and his discovery of the history of Ahmanya in *The Lost Race of Mars*. In every other reference, the Starmen show emotion, but it is brief and controlled.

I intend to show that the Starmen are believable as fully human characters. In the series, they evidence a variety of emotions such as joy, excitement, apprehension that sometimes even crosses the border into fear, frustration, depression, and anger. (Allen Foster, Zip's Foster really brought this out in *Journey to*

the Tenth Planet.)

I intentionally created the character of Kathy Foster so that Zip, who in his role as Starman leader is mostly analytical and decisive, could show his tender side. She is younger than Zip by ten years so that “sibling rivalry” would not enter into their relationship. With a child he can show tenderness and love without feeling vulnerable. (With Kristina Bethany he is awkward.) I can’t think of any other way in which the lead character could “let his soft side out” than to express love to a child. Kathy is the symbol for Zip’s family and, more symbolically, for the family life he doesn’t have and can’t have as a Starman on duty.

Although in the 1950s the philosophy of “real men don’t cry” was common, I personally believe that this is unhealthy. The Starman series is willing to break new ground when it seems good to do so, and I think that this is one of those situations—but if they are coming across as Alan Aldas, then I haven’t done it well. I’ve no intention of presenting them as softies. The Starmen should be realistically but idealistically masculine. They should be strong, dependable, honest and honorable, capable, courageous, and other things that series book heroes should be—but also flawed. They don’t solve all their problems alone, they make mistakes and errors in judgment. They should be fully men. To my way of thinking, real men are strong and gentle, dependable and tender, just and compassionate. I try to present the Starmen as heading in that direction.

In *The Lost Race of Mars*, I can tell you that there are three fight scenes in the book (there are only two in the previous four books together!!), and these fight scenes are detailed and action packed!

In the fourth short story, “A Matter of Time,” a woman takes out three big guys all by herself. (I don’t think the men cry when

they hit the deck, but I could write that part in.)

From The Dot

>The Starmen should be realistically but idealistically masculine. They should be strong, dependable, honest and honorable, capable, courageous, and other things that series book heroes should be—but also flawed. They don't solve all their problems alone, they make mistakes and errors in judgment.

A response on the yahoo group

Thank you for putting the “but also flawed” in. I have read quite a few G. A. Henty books and became disgusted with the perfection of the main characters (that and the fact that they were almost cookie cutter plots . . .). Aside from the crying ;) I think they have been portrayed fairly realistically.

GLENN P.

> Aside from the crying ;) I think [the Starmen] have been portrayed fairly realistically.

A response on the yahoo group

I agree. Although this is still something that only the authors can answer, one thing they need to consider, if “realism” is their goal, is: “How often do REAL people cry?” I think you’d have to agree that while occasions for tears are not unknown, they are rather uncommon in real life.

From David Baumann:

It should be pointed out that the Starman don't really cry—they “tear up” or their eyes glisten for a moment. That's not the same thing as having tears pour down your face while you sob. As my wife points out, “tearing up” means having feelings that you are trying to control—this is what I intended in writing those scenes, and it is a rather common masculine characteristic, whether the feelings are those that produce tears or other feelings not associated with tears.

Keep in mind also that for the Starmen, “real life” means being in situations that are very emotionally demanding—much more than what ordinary folks experience—so they are likely to sample the palette of feelings more than most. In *The Lost Race of Mars* there are several scenes that, in my opinion, have enormous emotional impact that few people are ever likely to encounter.

Sense of Place and Place of the Senses

From Mark McSherry

One of the strengths of the Starman books—in my humble opinion—is the sense of place as well as predicament in the telling of the stories. The Starman Team has enough confidence in their work to take time to leaven the plotting with descriptive accounts of both locale and environment. And, by drawing on all five of the reader's senses while doing so, enriches the tale by adding a depth that lingers in the memory long after the telling.

I knew the Series could be something special while reading AOM. The trek across the Martian landscape to Eagle City, which takes up the middle portion of the book, is exciting in and of itself. But the journey, especially after meeting up with Jogren, takes on a leisurely, almost lyrical quality as the earthmen land-sail across a snowy plain, then work their way on foot through the maze of the mud caves, till finally kayaking the Martian Sea. It is writing such as this, and there are other examples throughout the entire series, that transcends the boys'-sf-adventure series genre that the Team seeks to emulate and pay homage to. It is a style that could almost be called Tolkienesque. Likewise, as an example in *The Lost Race of Mars*, the exotic setting of the villain's desert refuge is visualized in a manner resembling Middle-Earth locales imagined by that inimitable don.

From Jon Cooper

Thank you! Your review of *The Lost Race of Mars* was also very thorough; I really enjoyed reading it. I haven't had a lot of time to post on this board recently thanks to all the work I've been doing (this week and last week are probably the busiest weeks I've had this year) but I have been paying attention. Thanks for taking the time to let us know what you thought of LROM: it is just amazing what we learn from these reviews. Hearing our reader's comments really does help us write these books: among other things, they help us see our stories in ways we hadn't seen them before. I have to give David Baumann the credit for the Tolkienesque quality of the Starman books. David is the one that writes those descriptions and that thinks them up in the first place: they're not in the summaries. David adds dinners and peaceful scenes and reminisces and other things of that nature to the books, and it definitely enhances them; the conversation you refer to, including the entire location it takes place at, was David's idea. This is why it takes all three of us to write the

Starman Series. Without David, the books wouldn't have those Tolkienesque scenes. Without me, a lot of the plot and excitement wouldn't be there—that's the sort of thing I tend to add. Without Mike, the books would be much more ordinary; there would be (among other things) no Xenobots and no Benefactors. I know books aren't usually written by three people, but the Starman Series really does take the three of us, and I think it's much better because of it.

From David Baumann

Thanks, Mark, for your thoughtful and insightful comments. The fact that you found it “Tolkienesque” is highly gratifying, since JRRT is my favorite author, and I believe that his saga is in a class of its own, above all other fiction.

> by drawing on all five of the reader's senses while doing so, enriches the tale by adding a depth that lingers in the memory long after the telling.

You're the first reader to mention this fact, but it is indeed deliberate. I think that reading should be sensual (in the best sense of the word)—that is, it must appeal to all five of the senses. The reader should be able to feel cold or warmth or the walls pressing in, taste the food, smell the smoke, hear the sudden clap of thunder, see the sunlight, etc. I think a story should be a “full immersion” experience for the reader.

> The trek across the Martian landscape to Eagle City, which takes up the middle portion of the book, is exciting in and of itself.

As we've pointed out before, our series includes an innumerable amount of references or connections with previous series. Some are very subtle and (unfortunately) we haven't even kept track of

them all. The trek was intended to be reminiscent of the trek Tom Corbett and friends made on the red planet in Stand By For Mars! —my personal favorite scene in the eight Tom Corbett books.

> It is writing such as this, and there are other examples throughout the entire series, that transcends the boys'-sf-adventure series genre that the Team seeks to emulate and pay homage to.

I'm glad you see it that way. It's not intended by any means to be plagiarism, but rather building on, or perhaps building with, the abundant material that exists in the classic books. With that material and much of our own stuff, we want to create something that feels familiar but is quite new.

The Failures of the Starmen

From Neil Lindholm

Well Jon, I finished the book today. I dislike criticism, especially when the object being criticized is a labour of love but hey, we are all friends here, right? :) So here goes.

I hate to say it but the book did not improve upon a second read. I followed the story better the second time as I had no clue what was going on during my first read. Not too exciting and Heinlein did it better. KIDDING! Anyway, what really turned me off the book was the personalities of the characters. The Starmen are an elite force, handpicked from the best the Earth has to offer. Why are they such crybabies? It starts off with Zip's collapse during the emergency. When his skill is needed the most, he gives up

and becomes a liability to his teammates. Why would they ever trust him again in a stressful situation if he just gives up? While there is a disaster going on, he just sits there and sobs.

The scene with Allen Foster was pointless. What was he trying to get across? It serves no purpose other than shock value.

I found the initial scene with Kristina somewhat offensive. When I meet someone in a wheelchair, I don't start crying or asking them what happened. It is none of my business. I have a friend in a wheelchair and the last thing he would want is pity or someone crying over his condition. The scene reinforced what an emotional wreck Zip is.

When the crewman insults Zip a while later, does he assert his command and put a halt to it? Nope, he starts to cry again. He needs the captain to bail him out. As a leader, he would not be trusted.

It goes on and on. When Zip is not bawling, Joe is crying over an alien ship and Mark is crying over Zimbardo. Zip's emotional instability seemed to be contagious. Why would Zimbardo, a towering presence and natural leader, totally lose it in captivity while his fellow pirates some out if the ordeal more or less unscathed? It doesn't match his previous personality.

The scaring of the Xenobots by means of holograms didn't ring true as well. This is an advanced race, but even though their rays travel through their visual enemies and nothing they do can stop them or their ships, they still don't realize that they are attacking holograms? If I shot at someone and the laser beam went right through them, I would be suspicious.

To be honest, not a very enjoyable read which didn't improve the second time. I realize that this book is an anomaly as the other books in the series are great. I hope this starts a discussion about

the merits of this book as many of the readers must have had a different take on this volume. Or maybe not.

From Jon Cooper

Neil,

> Well Jon, I finished the book today. I dislike criticism, especially when the object being criticized is a labour of love but hey, we are all friends here, right? :) So here goes.

Right! No problem at all. It's good to get more feedback! We like a good, solid, honest response. Thanks for the review, Neil!

> I hate to say it but the book did not improve upon a second read...

I'm not too surprised! A lot of your objections go back to the emotional nature of the Starmen: we see these breakdowns as signs of characters who are growing. The Starmen, as you noted, have fewer of these as times goes by and in book six they have none at all, even though had the events that happened to them in book six happened around the time of book three, they would all have had severe nervous breakdowns. I imagine this is mostly a matter of opinion here.

> The scene with Allen Foster was pointless. What was he trying to ge> across? It serves no purpose other than shock value.

This I can disagree with! It wasn't pointless. To quote from Starman Appendix volume 5:

"I've given some thought to your response to Neil Lindholm when he said that he couldn't get into JTP and that 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."

As David said, the whole bit with the active shielding was necessary to push Robert Nolan over the edge. When the shielding failed that was bad enough, but what really did him in was when Allen Foster went on national TV and humiliated him. Nolan was not a very solid character: he had lived his life in Richard Starlight's shadow, and this was his big chance to get ahead - and not only did it fail, but Allen Foster - a famous hero - really let him have it. This left him open for Beowulf Denn to lead him astray in book four, and book four is a result of this. Without the Allen Foster scene Nolan would not have gone over the edge. To quote from Starman Appendix Vol 2:

"Robert Nolan's besetting sin would come from always being in Richard's shadow, no matter the reality of his own success and wealth-hence, jealousy and envy. Addressed properly, that would lead him to growth in charity and true rejoicing in his own impressive achievements and Richard's with equal joy. But if he

gives in to the temptation, it would lead, as it does in DIE, to treachery, deceit, and smoldering secret anger and hatred. Nolan wants control as a way of making himself “feel good about himself.” That’s why he blew up, even at the President, in TRA. When his objection wasn’t followed he felt personally rejected and humiliated, especially when he was later proven wrong. Then he tried to make up for it with an apology and the generous act of donating the decoy freighters. That helped him a lot to move in the right direction. Then his REALLY BIG PLOY for fame and FINALLY COMING OUT ON TOP AND LOOKING GOOD was the active shielding in TRA-his own personal invention. When that failed so publicly and when the public was already against him, he was tottering on the edge of the abyss. Then when Allen Foster blew his stack on live, public television, Robert collapsed. He was ripe for the little nudge over the edge from Beowulf Denn. That’s why Denn’s words summarized ALL OF THESE THINGS, twisted the truth about Richard Starlight, and offered the ANSWER to Nolan’s deepest fears and angers: power, supremacy over Richard, revenge, and a way to look good publicly, all at the same time. Nolan’s decision to choose evil was an easy one at that point-but a decision he would never have made at any other time. Beowulf Denn’s timing and method were perfect.”

Is it wrenching? Yes, it is, and I even remember objecting to David about this. Here’s what he said (a quote from Starman Appendix vol 1):

“Well, keep in mind that that scene was SUPPOSED to be wrenching. It has to cause the collapse of Robert Nolan, which is the main reason it’s in there. It also indicates the results of radiation poisoning, which intensifies and focuses many other scenes, such as David’s emotional outburst on the ship, his reaction to Mike Saunders’ accusation after they leave Titan, Kathy’s sobbing out her prayer, etc. I think the intensity is just what we need. It’s placed in the book to be after David’s outburst on the

Starventure and before his reaction to Saunders' accusation.”

I understand that you object to it, but can you understand why it is there and why we thought it is necessary? It was a critical link in the chain that pushed Robert Nolan over the edge.

*> I found the initial scene with Kristina somewhat offensive...
The scene reinforced what an emotional wreck Zip is.*

Zip was pretty fragile emotionally, but as you noticed, that changed as time went on. We're trying to show a character slowly growing: he's got flaws and he's got problems, but they are gradually disappearing. By the way, we did run that scene by Kristi (the person Kristina is based on) and she had no objections. She thought it was fine, and so we went with it.

> Why would Zimbardo, a towering presence and natural leader, totally lose it in captivity while his fellow pirates some out if the ordeal more or less unscathed? It doesn't match his previous personality.

This is because he had already lost it earlier: he went over the edge in TRA when he decided to throw the asteroid at Earth in an attempt at killing everyone just before he abandoned it. From there it was just a downhill slide as evil ate away at him. Once again, to quote from Starman Appendix vol. 5:

“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 Bin Laden. 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 know, I know, volume 5 hasn’t been released yet. I’m still working on it; we’ll try to release it before too long.) So that is what happened to Zimbardo, and that is why he acted as he did. Evil persons, in our opinion, do not stay at a constant level: they either grow and reform or they become more evil and depraved until nothing is left of them.

> they still don’t realize that they are attacking holograms? If I shot at someone and the laser beam went right through them, I would be suspicious.

The idea was that these were “solid” holograms - Star Trek style. I read book three so long ago that I don’t remember if we mentioned this or not. Didn’t one of the characters run into a holographic tree? Maybe I was just imagining this.

> I hope this starts a discussion about the merits of this book as many of the readers must have had a different take on this volume. Or maybe not.

So do I! You bring up some great issues. To be honest, few people have let us know what they think of this volume; I don’t really know what the “average” opinion is. A good discussion of this book - or the topics it brings up - would be a good thing.

You can also see why I wanted to release the various volumes of the Starman Appendix! It gives a glimpse into our thought processes, and why we included the scenes that we did, and what themes we were trying to work out. It can be fairly interesting.

From David Baumann:

Great comments, Neil, and really very much appreciated. Yes, really! I think that Jon has made some good responses to the points you raised, so I will just add a couple of other observations.

Yes, the holograms in JTP were solid. The Xenobots did not see their laser beams pass through them; what they saw was that their lasers had no effect. This was intended to frighten them. Keep in mind, as is revealed in LROM (two books later), that the Xenobots are deeply afraid of the Benefactors, and this event was a “new” one in their experience in their battle against their “ancient enemy.” What the holograms could NOT do was fire back. The Benefactors’ technology could create holograms more advanced than what we can create, and there is evidence for this is TRA (the hologram room) and JTP (another hologram room, introduced just before the Xenobot attack). Further references are found in LROM, and in Doomsday Horizon you will find still further references to the Ahmanyans’ ability to use light in this fashion. (This ability also appears in the final segment of *The Lost Tomorrow*.) The Ahmanyans are, in fact, masters of light.

Regarding Zimbardo’s “demon possession”: one doesn’t have to believe in it for the story to make sense. A reader who thinks that demon possession is totally idiotic and a medieval superstition can still enjoy the story—I just used classic descriptions of such a thing that form a consistent set of data. Jon’s statement that we believe that evil people either grow or continue to decline rather than stay the same is very good. Throughout TRA and JTP, Zimbardo declines and never goes back; his colleagues make other decisions at different times. One of the themes in the Starman series is personal responsibility and choice, both in the heroes and the villains. No major character stays the same—all of them either grow and mature, or decline and fade. Some do so

rapidly; others do so slowly. By the time we get to Doomsday Horizon, for example, the over-emotional side of the Starmen is pretty much past history. To be honest, this is in part due to the criticism that several readers have made to this part of the story in the early books. We do want to put out a good product and our readers' comments, criticisms, suggestions, and reactions help us to do that. We listen and we chart our course accordingly.

Finally, regarding some of the points you raise that you found less than satisfying, I can just plead guilty. All I can say is that we are still laying the groundwork for further developments in the story. For example, Allen Foster's inordinate anger and other unresolved feelings about his radiation burns are directly connected to Zip's "losing it" in JTP when he is irradiated. Zip does improve in DIE and LROM. It is, in many ways, a drawback that we are telling one long story in this series, because a scene that is unsatisfying in one book may not find its fulfillment until a book that may not come out for several years. I hope that our readers will be patient; they still may not be satisfied at the end either, but nearly everything you mention has, in fact, a well-considered place in the overall story.

Thanks again for your comments! We are very pleased when someone takes the time to give us a careful analysis of our books.

From Mark McSherry

>Well Jon, I finished the book today. I dislike criticism, especially when the object being criticized is a labour of love but hey, we are all friends here, right? :) So here goes.

>I hate to say it but the book did not improve upon a second read. I followed the story better the second time as I had no clue what was going on during my first read.

Neil, I did a year ago what you're doing now. Prior to the release of LROM I re-read the first four Starman books— one following immediately after the other. My opinion of JTP improved greatly during the second read-through—Many of the concerns you mention seemed to resolve themselves. There is little doubt that the Starman Team was attempting to 'push the envelope' in terms of character development (especially with the boy's series book genre) both for the 'good guys' and the villains.

>Anyway, what really turned me off the book was the personalities of the characters. The Starmen are an elite force handpicked from the best the Earth has to offer. Why are they such crybabies? It starts off with Zip's collapse during the emergency. When his skill is needed the most, he gives up and becomes a liability to his teammates. Why would they ever trust him again in a stressful situation if he just gives up? While there is a disaster going on, he just sits there and sobs.

Events (beginning with AOM) have thrown these three newly-commissioned Starmen (only days after putting on the Starman red) 'into the fire' before they've had a chance to be 'broken in' to their responsibilities. In AOM Zip is on Mars carrying out his first (rather hum-drum) assignment while Joe and Mark are sitting back on the Moon waiting for their first tasks as Starmen. Then the pirates attack... The youth of the Starmen can be a great asset, but such exuberance can also lead to emotional lapses (or excesses); modulation will come with more experience (seasoning)...Zip's mettle (along with Joe's and Mark's) had been proven in Books' One and Two. Zip's collapse (after the break-down of the active shielding) was exceedingly brief—And only seconds later, Zip was helping Mark pull a dazed crewmate out of danger

>The scene with Allen Foster was pointless. What was he trying to get across? It serves no purpose other than shock value.

The first time I read this scene I was shocked too— There was little forewarning— I expected, perhaps, a heated exchange of words but not what followed...But Allen Foster's emotional outburst helps set the stage for events in DIE. Knowing this probably tempered my reaction to that scene on the next reading. And the tension between Allen Foster and Richard Starlight doesn't entirely go away in the later books...

>I found the initial scene with Kristina somewhat offensive. When I meet someone in a wheelchair, I don't start crying or asking them what happened. It is none of my business. I have a friend in a wheelchair and the last thing he would want is pity or someone crying over his condition. The scene reinforced what an emotional wreck Zip is.

I didn't see it that way, Neil - even after the first reading. Zip is obviously smitten-at-first-sight with Ms Bethany. It is only after two pages of conversation with Kristina, during which Zip falls deeper under her spell, that he realizes she is sitting in a wheelchair. I found his reaction, which was only momentary, perfectly understandable. And Kristina's disarming response to Zip's awkwardness only reinforces the attraction he (and the reader) feels toward her.

>When the crewman insults Zip a while later, does he assert his command and put a halt to it? Nope, he starts to cry again. He needs the captain to bail him out. As a leader, he would not be trusted.

In this incident, Zip's immediate reaction is anger; he is about to deliver a crippling blow when Joe stops him with one word. Then the captain intervenes. Zip is quietly ashamed...There is no sobbing. Only Mark and Joe notice Zip's glistening eyes. Obviously, Zip's emotions have been rubbed raw by the continual reminders of what happened to his father nearly a generation ago. And, just as obviously, there are issues here

unresolved for both father and son...Issues that will slowly be worked out as the Series continues— As in ‘Doomsday Horizon’.

I enjoyed reading your honest appraisal of JTP. Of all the books, this one is the most experimental in the Starman Series— especially for a series which seeks to relate ‘an epic tale told in the classic series book style’. And, perhaps, the most problematic— Which also makes it one of the more interesting to discuss... :-)

I’ll save my comments about Zimbardo and the holograms for another post. And I’m looking forward to your comments about DIE.

From David Baumann

> I just got to that part in the fourth book today and I agree that it is a glaring error. One member in training fails a test and is forever denied a position as a Starman yet another member totally collapses at his first command crisis and receives no reprimand. ... Training is where these defects are (hopefully) found.

Actually this is a mighty good observation! No has made this connection before, and it is, at best, an anomaly that has not been addressed, if it is not simply a real honest-to-goodness glitch. Yancy Dufaire was denied the offer of being made a Starman because of a panicky lapse during training. (I can’t agree that he was forever denied the position.) However, Zip’s “phobia” regarding radiation burns would certainly have been known during his training. He may not have lapsed in an actual situation as Yancy did, but he was obviously not “cured.” The possibility of exposure to radiation is quite likely common in space flight, which would have made Zip a high risk individual. One can only

guess how this aspect of his psyche was addressed in his formative years in the Academy—perhaps it would make a good subject for a short story sometime.

I suspect that what happened is that he didn't "mess up" in any way during his training, but when it came time to offer the position of Starmen to certain Academy graduates, the discussion around the table regarding David Leland Foster was probably rather heated²⁶. Some would have held forth that, because of his known fear of radiation he ought not to have been made a Starman until he'd been proven in the field, while others said that in spite of his known fear of radiation he had not buckled under their testing. He may have been approved by the skin of his teeth, and as a compromise was assigned to a virtual "desk" job on Mars as his first assignment—no one suspecting that the assignment would put him directly in the line of action.

In the adventures on Mars and later the Asteroid Belt (AOM and TRA), Zip proved his leadership capability and pulled together the Starman Team. Perhaps that allayed any reservations about his ability, and the lapse aboard the Starventure was a surprise to everyone—followed up by his surge of anger when he was insulted by the future mutineers after they'd left Titan. Perhaps after he returned to Earth at the end of JTP he was allowed to head up his personal expedition to Europa in place of an assignment, since certain persons at SE who had had reservations about him before may have raised objections again—and for good reason, in spite of his successes overall and, by this time, fame. Remember that the adventure in DIE was not an assignment for SE but a personal quest funded by discretionary funds and not the company coffers.

²⁶ In the rewrite of *Assault On Mars*, as a result of these observations such a scene was inserted. David's acceptance as a Starman was controversial, his recommendation was mixed. In the end, Richard Starlight made a unilateral decision over the objection of some.

For now, most importantly, I must reiterate that this side of Zip's character was long foreseen by the Starman Team, and is an absolutely vital part of the saga for a reason that has not yet been published. When that reason becomes public, I think all doubts about the propriety of Zip's fear will be laid to rest.

The Sentient Beings

January 19, 2006

David Ethel wrote [regarding The Last Command when it was thought to be the final story in the Starman saga]:

> What a finish! ... I can say that the ending was very satisfying.

Thank you, David.

> Now to my questions or "critiques" if you could call them that: 1) Why didn't the Lucians just destroy Luxa with the singularity at the outset?

Jon has answered this question already, but I'll add more to the answer. In writing about the First Races, I tried to give the impression that they were not technologically very aware. The appendix to TLC says a bit more about this—the technicians and scientists among the First Races are in stasis on Larson's Folly. The few members of the First Races who are still active were distant and essentially uninvolved with the Xenobot menace until they were brought into it by circumstances. First there was the Janitor, who didn't appear until THOD. Then Saleh only appeared in TLC. To create the singularity, the First Races needed the information in the greegles, and for them, gathering

and using this information, much less applying it, was not their skill.

Eons earlier, the Xenobots (when they were still recognizable as the Lucians) were the most powerful of the five First Races. They had, in essence, won the war with the other First Races. The small group of active members of the First Races at the time of the Starmen were, basically, refugees. They could not have prevailed against the Lucians until the latter had declined into Xenobots and kept going on the path of decay.

By that time, the Ahmanyans had encountered them and taken on the battle. The Ahmanyans, although not First Races, were at that time technologically superior to the active First Races. Although they lost their home planet, in the first Xenobot war the Ahmanyans were the winners and the Xenobots the losers. Only when the second Xenobot war was imminent and humans became involved, did the stakes get to be very high once again. At that time, but not before, the First Races stepped in. They were relatively weak (and I hope I made this clear in the story) but they also felt partly responsible for the crisis. In fact, they DID have a unique role to play, simply by virtue of being the peers of the Xenobots/Lucians. This also was expressed in TLC.

In short, it was actually the virtue of the human-Ahmanyan alliance that caused the active First Races to get involved—latecomers, but with an essential part to play. They were somewhat reluctant to do so, not least because of their lack of technological expertise. It is for this reason that Richard Starlight's and Izmaka's insistence that they wait to launch the black hole was particularly difficult for them. They weren't sure they could "hold it" for very long, and if the hyperbubble "broke" early, it would destroy the active First Races.

As is the case in much of the Starman saga, the real adventure takes place in the minds of the participants. What were the First

Races thinking? What was their motivation, their weaknesses, etc. From these things actions emerge. At the end, we had four major players: 1) The Xenobots whose decay I hope was thoroughly described throughout the series, with its result of moral vacuity, lust for survival at all costs, and generally “psychopathic” behaviors. 2) The active First Races had the dignity of their standing in the Creation, but they could still become “weak”, and did so. They weakened in virtue and lost confidence—they abdicated into silence and became bystanders in the face of an implacable foe. They are less culpable for their fall than the Xenobots since they “slid” into that position, and obviously did not “fall” very far from their first glory. However, the Xenobots actively chose it and, like Lurton Zimbardo, pursued it into oblivion. 3) The Ahmanyans rose to prominence and developed an attractive culture and ethos, based on beauty, harmony, etc. Their dedication to “light” is a “symbol” as well as a fact in the story. (See the appendix to LROM for more information on that.) However, the destruction of their planet brought their survivors to passivity. Their exercise of mercy at the end of the first Xenobot war was well intentioned but somewhat misplaced. It allowed for the return of the Xenobotic menace. Yet it was not a “fault” of the Ahmanyans, i.e. they were not wrong to show mercy. At the end, it was only the First Races who had the authority to “speak the final word” against the Xenobots, i.e. destroy them. 4) The human element became vital to the mix because the humans motivated the Ahmanyans and also brought a “fighting spirit” to the final encounter. The place of the Wind People, Tunnel People, and others have all those elements in common, though they use them differently.

The human-Ahmanyan alliance is key to the ultimate triumph. As Jon pointed out, had the First Races acted unilaterally to suck Luxa into a black hole, it would have effected very little. The human-Ahmanyan alliance was essential. Human “fiber” and “oomph” and willingness to act heroically had to be blended with Ahmanyan serenity and artfullness for the good guys to

“win”. This is ultimately signified in Robert Nolan’s being the one to preside over the rebuilding of Ahmanyans and the eventual “union” of Mark Seaton and Stenafi. The fact that that union could take place is one way of pointing out that humans and Ahmanyans are essentially one race, one people.

One thing that might be considered “missing” from the above list is that there are no “bad” Ahmanyans anywhere in the saga. We definitely have bad humans, weak First Races, and the totally depraved Xenobots, but there are no “bad” Ahmanyans. This was deliberate on my part. A discussion on this subject might be worthwhile if anyone is interested.

> 2) Why couldn't the Ahmanyans detect earlier that the torus was a hologram?

I think Jon answered this pretty well. One “quirk” we put into the series is that both sides use their enemy’s weapons against them. It is touted several times that the human-Ahmanyans alliance used Xenobotic weapons against the Xenobots, but the alliance never thought that the Xenobots could do the same. The fear, verging on terror, that the Xenobots had for the Ahmanyans was set out in JTP in the scene where Mark creates golden soldiers and battleships out of holograms. Remember that the Ahmanyans are the ONLY race that had conquered the Xenobots. That created the intense hatred in the Xenobots for the Ahmanyans, but also produced a powerful measure of fear. The fact that they would use an Ahmanyans weapon in the war just never occurred to the good guys. This is in addition to Jon’s answer, that the alliance never really got a good look at the torus until it was too late anyway.

> Thank you so much, gentlemen, for the past five years of reading. I remember well a young man in my church lending me the first three books in the series almost 5 years ago. I devoured

them in a weekend and have enjoyed the series ever since. These are seven books that I will greatly enjoy reading with my children and passing down to them some day.

You're welcome again, David. It was a great pleasure to bring the Starman series into existence.

By the way, if you only have seven books, you're missing one!

David Baumann

Extras

The following short essays first appeared in the third Inter*Stellar, which was sent to fans in March 2002.

TERRORISM AND THE NATURE OF EVIL

by David Baumann to Jon and Mike

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. From the beginning, our premise of “The Collapse” in the mid-21st century was that it was caused by terrorist activity in the face of impotent national governments.

The leaders of these terrorist cells bear the marks of classic supernatural evil by which they deceive gullible human beings into following them. Our entire presupposition for Lurton Zimbardo is that he was demon possessed. Now one doesn’t have to believe in demon possession or even supernatural evil for the classic symptoms I devised in Zimbardo to be consistent. One may believe that all the old documentation about demon possession, etc., were the result of credulity in people who didn’t know about epilepsy, schizophrenia, etc. That’s fine, though I think that mental and other illnesses do not rule out supernatural evil also.

Still, for the sake of uniformity and consistency in developing Zimbardo’s demise, 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 persons. Under the guise of political causes, their true delight is in destruction and bloodshed—even of their own adherents.

In TRA (*The Runaway Asteroid*), when the pirates 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). In JTP (*Journey to the Tenth Planet*), 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 in the real world, but someday there may be. This aspect of the Starman series—the moral and spiritual stuff—may prove to be at least as accurate as the scientific hypotheses we’re working from.

TEMPTATION AND CHOICE

by David Baumann to Mike and Jon

This kind of thing is where my own expertise comes into play. I have spent my entire ministry as pastor of a church working through people’s spiritual lives, including the things to which they are tempted. People are subject to different temptations, and most people have what is called a “besetting sin”—the one to which they are most subject. It is usually a shadow of their strength. A person who is passionate for justice may well have a besetting sin of anger, etc. So it was not difficult to discern what the besetting sins of our Starmen would be. E.g. Mark’s spiritual questing makes him subject to falling for anything “mystical.”

Robert Nolan’s besetting sin would come from always being in Richard’s shadow, no matter the reality of his own success and wealth—hence, jealousy and envy. Addressed properly, that would lead him to growth in charity and true rejoicing in his own impressive achievements and Richard’s with equal joy. But if he gives in to the temptation, it would lead, as it does in DIE (*Descent Into Europa*), to treachery, deceit, and smoldering secret anger and hatred. Nolan wants “control” as a way of making himself “feel good about himself.” That’s why he blew up, even at the President, in TRA. When his objection wasn’t followed he felt personally rejected and humiliated, especially when he was later proven wrong. Then he tried to make up for it

with an apology and the generous act of donating the decoy freighters. That helped him a lot to move in the right direction. Then his REALLY BIG PLOY for fame and FINALLY COMING OUT ON TOP AND LOOKING GOOD was the active shielding in TRA—his own personal invention.

When that failed so dramatically and publicly and when the public was already against him, he was tottering on the edge of the abyss. Then when Allen Foster blew his stack on live, public television, Robert collapsed. He was ripe for the little nudge over the edge from Beowulf Denn. That's why Denn's words summarized ALL of these things, twisted the truth about Richard Starlight, and offered the ANSWER to Nolan's deepest fears and angers: power, supremacy over Richard, revenge, and a way to look good publicly, all at the same time. Nolan's decision to choose evil was an easy one at that point—but a decision he would never have made at any other time. Beowulf Denn's timing and method were perfect.

Jon Cooper's response:

There's no way you could have a serious conversation regarding the temptations that might face, say, Tom Swift and Bud Barclay: there just isn't enough material in those characters to allow it. It's fascinating.

David responded:

Tom could be secretly proud. He's never been challenged by anyone who is really an ally—no corporation head has ever said, "Sorry, Tom, but we can't help you." All doors open for Tom. If his reputation ever went sour, he could be devastated. Bud probably has an "I'm so stupid" attitude, so that his besetting sin is a form of sloth—i.e. indifference to the serious things of life, not interested in self-improvement or personal growth. Just a guess, but you can see what I mean.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

by Mike Dodd to Jon and David

I will share a little bit here,..... I have a very clear memory from college...I was sitting in the college planetarium during an Astronomy class...the instructor was showing a cosmology film on the dome ceiling...and all of a sudden I had an “epiphany” and all the conflict between God and Science dissolved into the vacuum of intergalactic space. Some scientific minds have reported that it was scientific knowledge that convinced them of the order in the universe and therefore the existence of a Creator/Designer. I have a suspicion that in the next few decades we will see increasing peace in the old conflict between Science and Religion.

MYTH AS STORY-TELLING

by Jon Cooper;

written in correspondence with a Starman fan.

The fan wrote:

I will read The Lord of the Rings someday. Fantasy rather annoys me, except Science Fantasies like what C.S. Lewis did. You see, there is no such thing as magic, and any magic can be scientifically explained, but things that seem magical are possible through science, and henceforth fantasy is generally unnecessary. Writers who want to describe strange, utterly bizarre worlds can utilize alien planets and alien science (which they do not have to explain).

Jon responded:

Ah, but you misunderstand the whole concept of fantasy. Fantasy writers know full well there isn't magic and that their worlds aren't real. They aren't trying to describe bizarre, weird worlds—no, their goal is much higher than that.

You see, fantasy writers are trying to describe a world beyond us—something that's more real than our own world, something just at the edge of our senses. That's one reason why C S Lewis got into fantasy with his Narnia series: he wanted to describe something beyond us—something that we just get glimpses of in this world.

Lewis said that he longed for something else—he stated that people were designed to fully appreciate something that you can't get here. He called it his “island in the west” in one of his books—a place far better than Earth, a place more *real*—a place like our true home, which we can never quite see. Aslan's country was his attempt at describing it: it made the original Narnia look just like a shadow.

I think that, perhaps, Lewis longed for something more than reality: a place where diamonds weren't cold, dead pieces of stone but grew and were alive, and one could squeeze them and drink their juice [*The Silver Chair*]. He imagined a place where the trees came alive and danced in the light of the moon [*Prince Caspian*], where the rivers were creatures and the very stars sang together [*Magician's Nephew*]*—in short, where creation was alive. It was like Creation back in the beginning, before sin entered the world; it's like what the earth will be like after time has ended and everything is at rest.*

Of what use is science to describe these things? We're searching for something we can't put into words: something beyond reality, beyond the universe. Sure, we know what diamonds are, and that stars aren't creatures, but that misses the entire point. How could you possibly use science to depict a world beyond the human experience? We don't *want* reality and facts: we want the thing that lies just beyond it. That is what fantasy—good fantasy—is trying to do: it's trying, as best it can, to satisfy that longing for the Otherworld. Haven't you ever longed for something just beyond, or maybe caught a glimpse of it in something?

As G. K. Chesterton said, things are arbitrary in fantasies because things are arbitrary on Earth. Sure, the sky is blue—but

it could have been any other color just as easily. We have scientific laws, but hey: the Creator could have given us another system with the same ease. Good fantasy highlights the order of our own universe while at the same time celebrating what might have been.

The Lord of the Rings is a truly terrific work because it is fantasy in this sense. It gives a glimpse of another universe, with its own laws, beings, and history. There is magic in it, yes, but it's kept to a minimum—and besides, it's not like magic in this world: instead of violating order, it's a part of the order. LOTR is filled with scenes that stir one's soul: things that take one back to those glimpses of the “island in the west” and the longings for that Otherworld. It tells a terrific tale, yes, but more than that it creates a terrific world: a world with hobbits and orcs and, well, **life**. Yes, there are the Rings of Power (including the “One Ring to rule them all” that's mentioned in that unforgettable poem), but they are just a backdrop on a magnificent canvas—a slight glimpse at that Otherworld.

Some of the following entries are assorted relevant and interesting items whose source we don't remember now. We don't think that they appeared in the Inter*Stellars or on the Yahoo Board (although they may have), but whatever their source, they have a proper place in *The Starman Companion*.

Martian Time

For the sake of simplicity and so as not to interrupt or confuse readers of the Starman saga, in the course of our story all time is measured according to Earth standards, and temperature is noted in Fahrenheit. However, the length of the Martian day and year, of course, are different from those of Earth. The Martian day is slightly longer than an earth day, by 41 to 43 minutes, the difference being because of the eccentricity in the orbit of Mars.

The Martian year is just a little less than 687 earth days. A rough estimate of one's age on Mars can be determined by multiplying one's age on Earth by 0.53.

The tilt of Earth's axis is 23.5 degrees; the tilt of Mars' axis is 25 degrees. Since they are so close, Mars has seasons much like those of Earth, and as on Earth, the seasons of the northern and southern hemispheres are opposite to one another. But unlike Earth, the eccentricity of Mars' orbit creates seasons that are not of near-equal length. The shortest season can be about 142 days, and the longest about 195 days.

Earth has a very large moon with a predictable cycle, which gave rise to the measure of time we call the month. Mars' two moons are so small and travel so quickly that it is unlikely that anything like a "month" would make sense on Mars. We postulate, then, that those who live on Mars would measure time not only by the year, but by the season rather than the month.

Therefore, rather than defining a date by a method that would create a reference such as June 6, dwellers on Mars (Ahmanya) might refer to a date as Autumn NH 153, NH standing for "Northern Hemisphere", since in the southern hemisphere it would be spring. The keeping of a holiday with a fixed date such as Christmas would most likely be set so as match its time on Earth; therefore, the date of a fixed holiday on Earth would fall on different dates on Mars.

C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien

Here's what Lewis himself had to say about his science fiction trilogy. He wrote it in a letter to a friend after the publication of *Out of the Silent Planet*:

“You will be both grieved and amused to hear that out of about 60 reviews only 2 showed any knowledge that my idea of the fall of the Bent One was anything but an invention of my own. But if there only was someone with a richer talent and more leisure I think that this great ignorance might be a help to the evangelisation of England; any amount of theology can now be smuggled into people’s minds under cover of romance without their knowing it.”

Regarding *The Lord of the Rings* being Christian, J. R. R. Tolkien himself wrote (in his Letters), “*Lord of the Rings* is about God, and His sole right to divine honour.” Also, when Frodo “failed” at the crack of doom, Tolkien wrote, “The Other Power then took over: the Writer of the Story (by which I do not mean myself), ‘that one ever-present Person who is never absent and never named.’” “I am a Christian (which can be deduced from my stories)” “I actually intended [*LOTR*] to be consonant with Christian thought and belief.” And “*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision... the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism.”

The Starman Vision

August 14, 2003

An email from Jon Cooper to David:

Tonight as I was sitting here I began to think about taking the manuscript for the first *Starman* book, editing it a bit, and seeing how it would look as the seventh Dig Allen book. It would be easy enough to do a few find-and-replace edits to replace the character’s names and the location’s names. Then you’d have to

go through and change SE to Space Command, add the pirate lingo that was used in Dig Allen, and get rid of the introductory narrator comments used throughout the story. It would take a bit of work, but it could be done.

At this point, though, I realized something: on a fundamental level the Starman books are not Dig Allen books. There is a certain level of emotion and depth that is just lacking from Dig Allen. Dig Allen does not have scenes like Robert Nolan's cliff scene in *Descent Into Europa*, or scenes where the characters melt down as Zip did in *JTP*, or even scenes like the one where the Tunnel People get together and have a meal underground with Zip. There is no backdrop of horrible destruction that the world in the series is rebuilding from and there is no character like Richard Starlight, who is trying to build a better future and at the same time knows what his ancestors did to the past.

The Starman books are operating on a different level, and I don't think you can take a Starman book and turn it into a Dig Allen book - it just wouldn't work. The Starman series is something different; in your writing you've added terrific emotional and personal scenes that have transformed it into something special. The other series out there just aren't quite the same: this is something different, and I like it.

I just hadn't realized before exactly what we had here...

—Jon Cooper

Dear Jon,

> *I just hadn't realized before exactly what we had here.*

Really? To be frank, when I read the Dig Allens back in 1998 when I first got them all on your recommendation, I enjoyed

them but wasn't overly impressed. The series definitely did not make it into the top portion of my list of favorites. So when we started to write DA#7, I really felt quite constrained by having to fit into a mold that I thought was rather shallow and confining. When Golden denied us permission to do DA#7, I felt liberated and set out to write with all stops pulled out. Actually, I didn't pull out all the stops until TRA. For AOM I just tried to do a good job without killing myself. It was a hobby, not a project. Once I saw that the series might have a future, then I really dug in and used everything I had to make it as good as I could: pastoral experience with people that taught me how people think, feel and react; martial arts; etc.—and mostly deeply imbedding Christian theology into the writing. That is, without having to be a Dig Allen, we were free to create our own series without constraints. And we have done it! It really is a very fine, very very fine series. Mark Johnson, shortly after last October's convention, said that we were better than 98% of all series book writers. My interpretation of that is that we rank with Ken Holt and Rick Brant. And you know, I really think that we do.

David

Ahmany

Portions of the following appeared as an appendix to *The Lost Race of Mars*. Other portions deal with relevant matters but were part of email exchanges with readers.

The Origin of Ahmany

As the backflap said in the first Starman book, published in July 2000, "In the course of their adventures, the Starmen gradually

learned the amazing history of the Solar System. They discerned that this history is far different from what Earth had long believed. Finally they discovered the opportunity and responsibility of the people of Earth to defend and preserve their home—now understood not to be a country or even a planet, but the entire system of worlds circling our star.”

In *The Treasures of Darkness*, published more than two years later and formerly titled *The Lost Race of Mars*, the Starman Team revealed the meaning of the vague paragraph we had written more than two years earlier, and introduced the Ahmanyans who, up to that point, had only been known in the Starman saga as the “Benefactors”. The term was first used at the end of chapter 8 of *Descent Into Europa*, when the Starmen realize that the three-moon logo they had seen before was more significant than they had suspected.

Suddenly they heard Joe gasping. “Men, men! You’ve gotta see this! Come down, come down right away!”

“What is it, Joe?” asked Kristina anxiously. Zip and Mark were already hurrying down the stairs. Joe didn’t answer. The other two rounded the corner and came to the opposite side of the dais from the entrance. Joe was waiting for them.

“What is it, Joe?” repeated Zip. Joe merely tilted his head toward the dais. Zip and Mark followed his glance.

There, imprinted on the plain, metal wall at the back of the dais was a huge, rich, golden symbol—a lush planet with about 80% blue oceans, a few continents, and thick cloud cover. Three small moons were arranged at the upper left, set at the points of an equilateral triangle.

The Starmen were speechless, with awe written across their faces. Kristina, puzzled at their

reaction, said hesitantly, “We assumed that was the Titanians’ home planet.”

“No,” said Zip. “It can’t be. It has to be the planet their benefactors came from. We have seen this symbol before. They’ve been to Mars, too!”

From this point, the Starmen’s search for the race they called the “Benefactors” begins in earnest. We envisioned this noble and tragic race from the beginning of our labors, although we had no name for them at that time. To ourselves, we merely referred to them as “the ancient Martians”.

The earliest notes in my files reveal that their appearance was patterned after Africans, especially Egyptians. Their culture was to have a flavor of the admittedly stereotypical American Indian bond with nature, with a philosophy akin to a Taoist following of a “Way” of harmony inherent in the created order. The Ahmanyans consider that science, art, and spirituality are facets of one indivisible whole.

The word “Ahmanyā” was first introduced in chapter 17 of *Descent Into Europa* in this passage:

At length Mark turned to Zip with a look of frustration. “I didn’t learn anything we didn’t already know, Zip. The Europeans live at the bottom of a dark ocean. They’ve never seen stars and don’t know what a planet or a sun is. They only know what the Benefactors taught them. They just said that the race that lived here told them that they came from a fertile, verdant planet with three moons. I did learn that the Benefactors called their home ‘Ahmanyā’.”

Zip’s face fell. “Ahmanyā”, he whispered, as if rolling the word on his tongue. He felt an acute, painful longing for something beyond the horizon,

almost like a vision of intense splendor. “A beautiful word.” He shook his head slightly to clear it, then looked up.

I created the word at the moment I wrote that scene, but the instant it came to me, my reaction was the same as Zip’s. It is a combination of Tolkien’s word *Aman* for the home of the Valar in *The Silmarillion* and *ya*, the suffix for “place” in Japanese. (*Hon*, book, plus *ya* makes the word *honya*, “place of books”, i.e. bookstore.)

The dramatic moment when Ahmanya is identified is presaged by this passage from chapter 3 of *The Treasures of Darkness*:

The image on the large screen came into three-dimensional relief.

“Ahmanya,” breathed Zip reverently, recalling the word he had learned from the octopoid dwellers at the bottom of the European ocean. About a fourth of the planet’s surface was hidden under clouds and the right side was dark with shadow, but the visible portions showed evidence of at least a dozen islands and two sizable continents, all surrounded by deep blue seas. There were splotches of bright green, especially in the very center of the image.

“It’s so beautiful,” Zip whispered to himself. The longing he had felt fluttering in his breast when he had first heard the word “Ahmanya” surged over him again with ten-fold power. He was on the verge of a great discovery; he could feel it. Repeatedly he had to stop and try to calm down and ease his trembling.

Unquestionably, in spite of the vast amounts of new knowledge about the red planet that have come our way in the past

generation, Mars still is a symbol of “otherness” and “mystery”. Although it was Jon and Mike who came up with the concept of the “ancient Martians” in the Starman series before I joined the two of them in the formation of the Starman Team, I took their concept of the ancient Martians and developed the planet Ahmanya and its ancient, tragic, noble race to be a heart-warming and heart-wrenching focus or symbol of primeval longing in humanity for something beautiful beyond the horizon.

When I worked on the Starman saga, I often used “mood music” as I wrote to assist in the creation process. Whenever I wrote about the Ahmanyans, I found the music of Yanni’s album “Tribute” to be especially fitting. I consider his piece “Nightingale” on that album to be the Ahmanyman theme song.

From the time of Jules Verne and perhaps before, space travel has been one of the great dreams of humankind. Countless movies, television specials and series, short stories, and books have investigated this dream. For me, the dream is only one variation on the desire, set deep in the human heart, for a place of beauty and adventure, whether it be “over the rainbow,” in Shangri-la or El Dorado, or going “boldly where no one has ever gone before.”

Mars has fascinated humanity from the time of the ancients who named it for the mythological god of war (because of its distinct red color, suggestive of blood). Orson Wells’ radio drama of H. G. Wells’ *The War of the Worlds* that aired on October 30, 1938 caused widespread panic when it was thought that Martians had landed on Earth and were wreaking immense havoc. Several movies made in the last few years have featured landings and adventures on Mars.

Unquestionably, in spite of the vast amounts of new knowledge about the red planet that have come our way in the past generation, it still is a symbol of “otherness” and “mystery.”

Although it was Jon and Mike who came up with the concept of the “ancient Martians” in the Starman series before I joined the two of them in the formation of the Starman Team, I took their concept of the ancient Martians and developed the planet Ahmanya and its ancient, tragic, noble race to be a heart-warming and heart-wrenching focus or symbol of primeval longing in humanity for something beautiful beyond the horizon.

When I looked up into the night sky in late August during the recent close approach of Mars to Earth (2003), I found myself suddenly moved by the glowing, ruddy point of light in the sky. I felt that heart-longing myself, and whispered “Ahmanya.” The experienced surprised me, and greatly gratified me.

The Ahmanyen Culture

The Treasures of Darkness presented the Ahmanyens as having one culture and one language, but as the series progressed, it became evident that there were dialects and differences in philosophy among the Ahmanyens. Those few whom the Starmen met are, of course, not only generally representative of their race but also specifically of their own limited community.

The Ahmanyens revere hierarchy, as may be seen, for example, in the deference given to the Elder in *Imlah Taltahni* and to the sleeping royal family. Anciently the Ahmanyens were governed by kings and in the latter days by a High King. Leadership, in spite of their reverence for hierarchy, was not considered as setting one person “above” another solely by virtue of position. The Ahmanyens considered that leadership is one responsibility among the many that are vital for maintaining their culture and life. Their story should make clear that each person was honored for his or her unique place in Ahmanyen society. The Ahmanyens actually have very little of what we would call “government” and almost nothing of politics.

They do not consider that service rendered to others or obedience given to leaders is degrading or servile. Obedience is offered rather than compelled, and the dedication to the community is very strong. This made the burning of Ahmanya immeasurably traumatic, but also made possible the survival and tenacity of the remnant.

The Ahmanyen culture in the 22nd century is ascetic, artistic, patient, placid, harmonious, generous, innocent, pure, and humble. These characteristics were present in the ancient Ahmanyans, but they were much altered by the destruction of their planet. On the negative side, the Ahmanyans tend to be passive, perhaps even timid; it takes great need to motivate them to action. Once motivated, however, they are courageous and determined.

The near-extinction of their race by great evil, in spite of their being manifestly good and virtuous people, created a deep racial shock that, thousands of years later, had yet to be healed. For their healing, they looked, perhaps not fully knowingly, to the emerging people of Earth. Similarly, the Starmen expected that finding the Benefactors would “make everything right”. This unrealistic expectation in fact led to the disquieting but challenging discovery that the people of Earth had a crucial responsibility of their own to help the Ahmanyans, and with them defend their common home from the Xenobots.

In *The Heart of Danger* it was revealed that Ahmanyans are not used to animals since there hadn’t been any on Mars since the Xenobots ruined their planet. The Ahmanyans that had been charged with the guardianship of their race only knew them by histories but had not seen any. Until the end of the Starman saga, only a few Ahmanyans had been “revived” from suspension—for them, animals would not be strange; the others are descendants of the original guardian families. It didn’t occur to the Starman Team that this unfamiliarity with animals was significant until

we got to the scene where Saadervo sees Montezuma Vly's koalangs; then I realized that this was a major event. The usually self-sufficient Ahmanyans were suddenly at a complete loss.

The guardian Ahmanyans always had the capacity for interplanetary space travel but didn't use it much. Shortly after the ruination of Ahmanya they made a few forays to Earth and also visited the Asteroid Belt, but no Ahmаныan had been to Europa, though they knew about the city there. It took the people from Earth, with their adventuresome spirit, to re-energize and inspire the Ahmanyans to "get with it". The Ahmanyans on this jaunt to the neon planet were just as inexperienced as the Earth people when it came to interplanetary or wormhole travel. At the time of the foray to Omega Centauri, King Izmaka and a few others were familiar with interplanetary travel, but they were the exception among their people.

Pleera is presented as "not having the customary Ahmаныan patience" (as she says somewhere herself); she is putting a spin on the reality. "Ahmаныan patience" is really "Ahmаныan passivity". It is described that way in the Appendix to *The Lost Race of Mars*²⁷, of which this essay is an expanded version. Pleera is a real go-getter, which is why she became the commander of Tharsos. She is quite a fireball—very non-typical of Ahmanyans, male or female, and therefore a treasure to them.

In the Starman saga, we definitely presented bad humans, weak First Races, and the totally depraved Xenobots, but no "bad" Ahmanyans. This was deliberate on the part of the Starman Team. However, we certainly had no intention of suggesting that the Ahmanyans are an "unfallen" or "sinless" race. This is not the case. Their history (see the Appendix at the end of *The Lost*

²⁷ The original title of the tale published as a separate book in 2002, later renamed *A Kingdom in Twilight*, and now given its final title, *The Treasures of Darkness*.

Race of Mars) reveals that in their early history they had actually gone to war against one another.

In the saga, we wanted to present the Ahmanyans as having been so beaten down by the first Xenobot war that they had simply settled for a state of passivity, perhaps even racial depression. If they were to be generally subject as a race to a certain category of sin, I suppose it would be sloth—indifference to matters of eternity and spiritual issues. They were wrapped up in their losses. Stenafi recognized this, or at least implied it, in her conversation with Tayan at the end of *The Heart of Danger*. The revelation of Ahmanyans history in *The Treasures of Darkness* (the chapter called “A Refuge in Twilight”) shows this also. Horribly tragic as it was indeed, the Ahmanyans were “self-absorbed” about it. Saadervo deferred to Stenafi to tell the tale. It was revealed shortly after that that Stenafi had been so absorbed in her own grief that she had “forgotten” for a moment that Earth had gone through a similar planet-wide trauma. (This incident, by the way, is the first time that anything like “personal sharing” occurred between Stenafi and Mark.)

Nevertheless, Stenafi is presented as having more “fire” in her than most Ahmanyans—it is for this reason that she is ultimately drawn to Mark. Her reflections at the end of *The Heart of Danger* reveal this. And of the three Starmen, Mark is the one who is most “like an Ahmanyans”, as he himself mused on one occasion. This is what makes these two compatible. It is also why Mark is both attracted to her and amazed at the attraction almost to unbelief, as described in the dinner scene in The Hidden Garden in the final chapter of *The Last Command*. The story of the time they both realize that they love one another and reveal it to each other is told in the short story, “Light From Light”. This story was written in May 2008, the very last Starman tale to be written, three years after *The Last Command* was completed. Along with “The Infestation at Sulphur Creek”, “The Sand Tomb”, and *Danger at L5*, it is published here for the

first time.

Mark needs his friends, Joe and Kathryn, to affirm his romantic relationship with an Ahmanyman. When we see Stenafi at the last, her attraction and commitment to Mark are already complete. Until the short story was written, we did not see her dealing with her emotions as she discovered that she was attracted to an Earthman. There are only a few lines in the last two books where her growing awareness of her attraction to him is presented, and they are very, very subtle. I doubt that a reader would catch them for what they are, although I had the matter in mind as I was writing. Consider Stenafi's musing on her affection for the men of Earth in the middle of chapter 9 of *The Last Command*, for example.

Saadervo is formal. His "warm" side only came out when he met with Montezuma Vly and was given a baby koalang. Jogren grew a sense of humor but he did not start out that way. The three major Ahmanyman characters are Stenafi (who matches Mark); Saadervo (who parallels Zip—both being "analytical" and "emotionally guarded", whose emotions only come out when they can show affection in a safe way: Zip to Kathy and Saadervo to the koalang); and Jogren, who matches Joe.

Pleera is introduced late in the saga—she first appeared in *The Heart of Danger*, the second-to-last book. However, of all the Ahmanyans, she is presented as the one who is most "human-like", yet without sacrificing any sense of her definite Ahmanyman characteristics. She had an innate sense of humor and could even make a joke in the face of danger. Her conversation with Zip in *The Heart of Danger* when Zip was drifting down river toward the Xenobot spaceport revealed that side of her. She was also passionately emotional when she felt responsible for Zip's apparent loss when Tharsos attacked the torus in *The Heart of Danger*. This emotional outburst was unusual for an Ahmanyman. Pleera also was the one who showed empathy toward Allen

Foster when he first came aboard Tharsos, and encouraged him. She also provided a truly intimate but chaste kiss for each of the three Starmen before the Janitor took them to his home planet.

Throughout the saga we see the Ahmanyans (beginning with Jogren in *Mutiny On Mars*) grow gradually from an almost isolationist attitude to one of warmth and increasing confidence. That is, they grow gradually out of their sloth into engagement. They needed the Earthmen to inspire this change. They knew this inside themselves, although probably without being able to identify it clearly. This is why Stenafi, in the very beginning of *The Treasures of Darkness*, was so eager to have the Ahmanyans reveal themselves to the Starmen, and she chafed when she was told to wait. We begin to see the change in them in *Doomsday Horizon*.

Long before the saga begins with *Mutiny On Mars*, we see the attitude of isolationistic self-protectiveness in the Ahmanyans. They did not reveal themselves to the Earthmen during the time of the humans' Martian settlement in the early twenty-first century—they only revealed themselves to the Wind People after the mass exodus from Mars back to Earth, and only then to guarantee the Wind People's survival. This episode was recounted in the new short story, "The Sand Tomb".

Stenafi grew more in warmth than any of the Ahmanyans, but only because she was "hurried along" by love. Other than the atypical Pleera, only in the last pages of the last chapter of the last book do we find any Ahmanyman showing any kind of overwhelming personal passion, when Stenafi showed her complete commitment to Mark in a romantic way.

When the Ahmanyans' racial passion revives, and when the sleeping millions are brought back to the surface, there will definitely be many challenges for them all. Selfishness, fear, overwhelming grief (remember that none of the "sleepers" had

ever seen Ahmanya devastated, except the few that were aboard Tharsos), isolationism, questioning of authority, distaste for humans, and other negative qualities will emerge, to be sure.

Ahmanyan Physiology

Ahmanyan physiology appears at first to be almost identical to that of humans from Earth. The most observable difference is that their proportions are generally thinner and taller, and their digits are longer. In necessity, however, they can pass for humans and have done so. There are other, subtler differences that were only hinted at in the saga, and there are also features to Ahmanyan physiology that are highly unusual but at the time of the saga had not yet been discovered by humans from Earth. They were hinted at in *Paradox Lost* but not specifically described.

Nevertheless, it is evident that humans and Ahmanyans are closely related as a species. The marriage of Mark and Stenafi was specifically presented not only as a symbol of the ultimate alliance between the peoples, but also to show that they are ultimately of the same stock. The prologue and epilogue of Jon Cooper's novelette, *Danger at L5!*, give concrete evidence that the two species can not only marry but produce children. Dianda, the daughter of Mark and Stenafi, is the first progeny of a human-Ahmanyan union, but will certainly not be the last. It is noteworthy that her name is the Ahmanyan word for "treasure". Jon did his research before coming up with that name!

Ahmanyans and Animals

June 7, 2004

Hi Valerie,

The reason that Ahmanyans are not used to animals is that there haven't been any on Mars since the Xenobots ruined their planet. The waking Ahmanyans only know them by histories but haven't seen any. Only a few Ahmanyans in this age have been "revived" from suspension—for them, animals would not be strange; the others are descendants of the original guardian families. It didn't occur to me that this unfamiliarity with animals was significant until I got to the scene where Saadervo sees Montezuma Vly's koalangs; then I realized that this was a major event. The usually self-sufficient Ahmanyans was suddenly at a complete loss.

The waking Ahmanyans always had the capacity for space travel but didn't use it much—certainly not interplanetary travel. Shortly after the ruination of Ahmanya they made a few forays to Earth and also visited the Asteroid Belt, but no Ahmanyans had been to Europa, though they knew about the city there. It took the people from Earth, with their adventuresome spirit, to re-energize and inspire the Ahmanyans to "get with it." The Ahmanyans on this jaunt to the neon planet are just as "green" as the Earth people when it comes to interplanetary or wormhole travel.

Pleera is presented as "not having the customary Ahmanyans patience" (as she says somewhere herself); she is putting a spin on the reality. "Ahmanyans patience" is really "Ahmanyans passivity." It is described that way in the Appendix to LROM. Pleera is a real go-getter, which is why she became the commander of Tharsos. She is quite a fireball—very non-typical of Ahmanyans, male or female, and therefore a treasure to them.

David

Ahmanyen Character

> David Baumann wrote:

>>We definitely have bad humans, weak First Races, and the totally depraved Xenobots, but there are no “bad” Ahmanyens. This was deliberate on my part. A discussion on this subject might be worthwhile if anyone is interested.

Mark McSherry responded:

> I am one who is (very) interested.

Well, to start with, I certainly had no intention of suggesting that the Ahmanyens are an “unfallen” or “sinless” race. This is not the case. Their history (see the appendix at the end of LROM) reveals that in their early history they had actually gone to war against one another. I think I wanted to present them as having been so beaten down by the first Xenobot war that they had simply settled for a state of passivity, perhaps even racial depression. If they were to be generally subject as a race to a certain category of sin, I suppose it would be sloth—indifference to matters of eternity and spiritual issues. They were wrapped up in their losses. Stenafi recognizes this, or at least implies it, in her conversation with Tayan on pages 311-312 of THOD. The revelation of Ahmanyen history in LROM (the chapter called “A Refuge in Twilight”) shows this also. Horribly tragic as it is indeed, the Ahmanyens are “self-absorbed” about it. Saadervo defers to Stenafi to tell the tale. It is revealed shortly after that that Stenafi had been so absorbed in her own grief that she had “forgotten” for a moment that Earth had gone through a similar planet-wide trauma. (This incident, by the way, is the first time that anything like “personal sharing” occurred between Stenafi and Mark.)

Nevertheless, Stenafi is presented as having more “fire” in her than most Ahmanyens—it is for this reason that she is ultimately drawn to Mark. Of the three Starmen, Mark is the one who is most “like an Ahmanyen”, as he himself mused on one occasion.

This is what makes these two compatible. It is also why Mark is both attracted to her and amazed at the attraction almost to unbelief, as described in the dinner scene in *The Hidden Garden* in the last chapter of *TLC*. He needs his friends, Joe and Kathryn, to affirm his romantic relationship with an Ahmanyman. When we see Stenafi at the last, her attraction and commitment to Mark are already complete. We do not see her dealing with her emotions as she discovers that she is attracted to an Earthman. There are only a few lines in the last two books where her growing awareness of her attraction to him is presented, and they are very, very subtle. I doubt that a reader would catch them for what they are, although I had the matter in mind as I was writing. Read the paragraph that begins in the middle of page 144 of *TLC*, for example.

Saadervo is formal. His “warm” side only comes out when he meets with Montezuma Vly and is given a baby koalang. Jogren grows a sense of humor but he does not start out that way. The three major Ahmanyman characters are Stenafi (who matches Mark), Saadervo (who parallels Zip—both being “analytical” and “emotionally guarded”, whose emotions only come out when they can show affection in a safe way: Zip to Kathy and Saadervo to the koalang). Jogren matches Joe.

Pleera appears late in the saga—she first appears in *THOD*, the second-to-last book. However, of all the Ahmanyans, she is presented as the one who is most “human-like”, yet without sacrificing any sense of her definite Ahmanyman characteristics. She has an innate sense of humor and can even make a joke in the face of danger. Her conversation with Zip in *THOD* when Zip is drifting down river toward the Xenobot spaceport reveals that. She is also passionately emotional when she feels responsible for Zip’s apparent loss when Tharsos attacked the torus in *THOD*. This emotional outburst is unusual for an Ahmanyman. Pleera also is the one who encouraged Allen Foster when he first came aboard Tharsos. (I suppose everyone knows

that Allen Foster's name is a tribute to Dig Allen? That was Jon's idea.) She also provided an intimate but chaste kiss for each of the three Starmen before they were taken by the Janitor to his home planet. And somewhere, I think, there is a discussion about her in which she is described as a "treasure" of Ahmanya because of her personality. I've forgotten whether that is a part of the saga or something I wrote about her elsewhere.

Throughout the saga we see the Ahmanyans (beginning with Jogren in MOM) grow gradually from an almost isolationist attitude to one of warmth and increasing confidence. That is, they grow gradually out of their sloth into engagement. They needed the Earthmen to inspire this change. They knew this inside themselves, although probably without being able to identify it clearly. This is why Stenafi, in the very beginning of LROM, is so eager to have the Ahmanyans reveal themselves to the Starmen, and she chafes when she is told to wait. We begin to see the change in them in Doomsday Horizon. Long before the saga begins, we see the attitude of isolationistic self-protectiveness in the Ahmanyans. They do not reveal themselves to the Earthmen during the time of the humans' Martian settlement in the early twenty-first century—they only reveal themselves to the Wind People after the mass exodus from Mars back to Earth, and only then to guarantee the Wind People's survival. (This episode would make a good short story sometime. It is a critical moment in the Starman saga—the first time after the scourging of Ahmanya that the Ahmanyans make themselves known to another race. The debates in the refuges were tense. They had to weigh the risks of self-revelation versus allowing the refugee humans to die.)

Stenafi grows more in warmth than any of the Ahmanyans, but only because she is "hurried along" by love. Only in the last pages of the last chapter of the last book do we find any Ahmanyan showing any kind of overwhelming personal passion, when Stenafi shows her complete commitment to Mark in a

romantic way.

Strayed a bit from the original subject of "bad" Ahmanyans. When their racial passion revives, and when the sleeping millions are brought back to the surface, there will definitely be many challenges for them all. Selfishness, fear, overwhelming grief (remember that none of the "sleepers" had seen Ahmanya devastated, except the few that were aboard Tharsos), isolationism, questioning of authority, distaste for humans, and other negative qualities will emerge, to be sure.

David Baumann

The Ahmanyen Language

I created the Ahmanyen language, but only as needed for the sake of the story and by no means extensively. The language follows a consistent pattern of conjugations, declensions, sentence structure, and other characteristics of actual languages.

Their language is phonetic, but only because it is assumed that the Ahmanyen words in the text are English transliterations. As one would naturally expect and as was pointed out in the first Starman book, the Ahmanyens do not use an English alphabet. The only place where written Ahmanyen words can be found in the saga is in the short story, “The Eight Treasures”. These words are reproduced at the end of this document.

The language has many long vowels, and hard consonants are seldom used; in most cases the letter “r” is lightly “flapped”, and there are no gutturals. The sound of the language is itself symbolic and representative of their culture and philosophy: peaceful, patient, and lovely. Sometimes I write pieces in Ahmanyen just for the pleasure of reading them aloud.

Vocabulary Not Yet Used

When Galileo turned his telescope toward Saturn in 1610, even he was amazed. The planet looked nothing like others in the solar system. Through 17th century optics, Saturn appeared to be one bright star closely flanked by two dimmer ones—a blurry suggestion of the planet’s magnificent rings.

What Galileo did next was nearly as unusual as Saturn itself. He wanted to tell everyone what he had seen, but he also wanted to keep his work secret while he studied the puzzling planet. So he published his discovery in code: *smais mr milmep oet ale*

umibunen ugttauir as. Unscrambled, the anagram means “I have observed the highest planet tri-form.” These words can be drawn on sometimes for additional Ahmanyen vocabulary.

<i>ahntahr</i>	ahn-TAR	sincerity
<i>ahntahrmna</i>	ahn-TARM-nuh (related to <i>ahntahr</i>)	affection
<i>fea</i>	FAY-uh	love (verb)
<i>fean</i>	FAY-ahn	beloved
<i>adahr</i>	ah-DAHR	
<i>adrias</i>	AH-dree-ahss	
<i>mvaya</i>	mm-VIE-uh	
<i>voldolek</i>	vahl-DOE-leck	
<i>enseh</i>	ENN-seh	
<i>adyool</i>	ah-DYOOL	
<i>vento</i>	VENN-toe	
<i>daym</i>	dame	
<i>parayo</i>	pa-RAY-yo	
<i>palataka</i>	pah-lah-TAH-kuh	
<i>elthen</i>	EL-thenn	
<i>agar</i>	ah-GAHR	
<i>agazei</i>	AH-guh-zay	
<i>didalai</i>	dee-dah-LIE	
<i>gamer</i>	gah-MEHR	
<i>bomos</i>	BOE-moss	
<i>dikazo</i>	DEE-kah-zoe	
<i>ermas</i>	EHR-mahss	
<i>kathopsei</i>	kah-THOPE-say	
<i>meno</i>	MEH-noe	
<i>mastrakinos</i>	mah-strah-KEE-noss	
<i>pagain</i>	pah-GA’een	
<i>plax</i>	plax	
<i>rixa</i>	RIX-uh	
<i>vixa</i>	VIX-uh	
<i>thahn</i>	thahn	
<i>thenn</i>	thenn	

<i>frain</i>	FRA'een	
<i>ayin</i>	AH-yinn	
<i>telemo</i>	TELL-eh-moe	
<i>alayn</i>	ah-LAIN	
<i>rayra</i>	RAY-ruh	
<i>shanak</i>	shah-NACK	
<i>wakor</i>	wah-KORE	
<i>nekor</i>	neh- KORE	
<i>festoi</i>	fess-TOY	
<i>osed</i>	OH-sedd	
<i>zazin</i>	ZAH-zinn	
<i>prail</i>	prayl	
<i>a'nbanta</i>	ah-nn-BAHN-tuh	
<i>ncapa</i>	nn-KAH-puh	
<i>nyana</i>	NYAH-nuh	
<i>ardath</i>	AHR-dath	
<i>espero</i>	ESS-pear-oh	
<i>kayem</i>	KAY-emm	
<i>aatra</i>	AAH-truh	
<i>aano</i>	AAH-no	
<i>vaza</i>	VAH-zuh	
<i>wan</i>	wahn	
<i>tolka</i>	TOLL-kuh	
<i>tyeltee</i>	TYELL-tee	
<i>tyessee</i>	TYESS-ee	
<i>mahssolka</i>	mah-ss-SOLE-kuh	
<i>suan</i>	swahn	
<i>di</i>	dee	

The numbers one through ten

<i>loon</i>	loon	one
<i>ti</i>	tee	two
<i>zaka</i>	ZAH-kuh	three
<i>mis</i>	miss	four
<i>gosa</i>	GO-suh	five
<i>nim</i>	nihm	six

<i>ba</i>	bah	seven
<i>kal</i>	kahl	eight
<i>man</i>	mahn	nine
<i>tenkra</i>	TEN-kruh	ten

PROPER NAMES

People

<i>Cynia</i>	SINN-yuh	Sister to Izmaka
<i>Izmaka</i>	izz-MAH-kuh	Ahmanyen Prince, later King
<i>Jogren</i>	JOE-gren	
<i>Karax</i>	CARE-ax	Guardian of Olovanda
<i>Kennatha</i>	keh-NAH-thuh	Ahmanyen Princess
<i>Kuznika</i>	kooz-NEE-kuh	Settlers (the Wind People)
<i>Mikel</i>	MY-kell	
<i>Nskao</i>	nn-SKAH-oh	Great-grandmother of Stenafi
<i>Pleera</i>	PLEE-ruh	Commander of Ossëan/Tharsos
<i>Raffon Dorn</i>	raff-ahn DORN	
<i>Saadervo</i>	saah-DEHR-vo	
<i>Santilla</i>	sahn-TILL-uh	Ahmanyen High King
<i>Sione</i>	see-OH-nee	
<i>Sotik</i>	so-TEEK	
<i>Seran</i>	ss-SEHR-ahn	
<i>Stenafi</i>	steh-NAH-fee	
<i>Tayan</i>	TIE-uhn	little girl in Imlah Taltahni
<i>Timon</i>	TIE-muhn	little boy in Imlah Taltahni
<i>Seran</i>	ss-SER-ahn	physicist in Olovanda
<i>Vixa</i>	VIX-uh	Tayan's koalang
<i>Yenl</i>	YEH-n'l	

Places

<i>Ahmanya</i>	ah-MAHN-ya	Mars
<i>Azemir</i>	AH-zay-mere	the original fifth planet
<i>Domoli</i>	doe-MOE-lee	abandoned Ahmanyan city on Europa
<i>Enkrina</i>	en-KREE-nuh	Pluto
<i>Endra</i>	ENN-dra	Earth
<i>Hol</i>	haul	Phobos
<i>Imlah Taltahni</i>	IM-lah tall-TAH-nee	Refuge of Twilight
<i>Lamdo</i>	LAMB-doe	Europa
<i>Malda</i>	MAHL-duh	the Titanians' home planet
<i>Mtalan</i>	mm-ta-LAHN	Nyx
<i>Nsedna Zar</i>	nn-SED-nuh ZARR	city; "Diamond of the South"
<i>Olancha</i>	oh-LAWN-chuh	Quaoar
<i>Olovanda</i>	oh-low-VAHN-duh	City on Tharsos
<i>Ossëan</i>	oh-SAY-ahn	Tharsos
<i>Sunis</i>	SOO-niss	northern city in pristine Ahmanya

VOCABULARY: AHMANYAN TO ENGLISH

<i>ahntahr</i>	ahn-TAR	sincerity
<i>ahntahrmina</i>	ahn-TARM-nuh	affection (related to <i>ahntahr</i>)
<i>ajuni</i>	ah-JOO-nee	guardian
<i>alati</i>	ah-LAH-tee	plural "be" (imperative)
<i>allamah</i>	ah-LAH-mah	word used for applause or to express approval or pleasure
<i>alto</i>	ALL-toe	I am (form of <i>alati</i>)
<i>alzenta</i>	all-ZEN-tuh	griegles
<i>anhallo</i>	ahn-HALL-oh	belonging to; native of
<i>banna</i>	BAN-nah	please (request)
<i>basor</i>	ba-SOHR	deep, strong, lasting
<i>byela</i>	BYAY-lah	from

<i>chendro</i>	CHEN-dro	who
<i>dala</i>	DAH-la	come (imperative)
<i>dantra</i>	DAH-ahn-truh	to pass through; to enter
<i>dianda</i>	die-AHN-duh	treasure
<i>donor</i>	doe-NOHR	close (imperative)
<i>e</i>	ehh	to, toward, in the direction of
<i>ekon</i>	EH-konn	strong, powerful, dignified
<i>eleh</i>	eh-leh	exclamation like “hey!”
<i>emmaino</i>	eh-MA’ee-no	Greetings! (used among close friends)
<i>fea</i>	FAY-uh	love (verb)
<i>fean</i>	FAY-ahn	beloved
<i>fenna</i>	FENN-nuh	illuminate (imperative)
<i>feo</i>	FAY-oh	live; be alive
<i>feotra</i>	fay-OH-ruh	the living
<i>fornlimwa</i>	forn-LIMM-wa	hidden, secret place
<i>hostis</i>	HOSS-tiss	the characteristic Ahmanyen tree
<i>ilien</i>	EE-lee-enn	house, shelter, family dwelling; implies a close community
<i>illunas</i>	eel-LOO-nahss	bioluminous lichen
<i>imlah</i>	IM-lah	refuge
<i>imna</i>	im-na	emphatic possessive
<i>ja</i>	jah	that, so that
<i>katelu</i>	kah-TELL-oo	planet
<i>kathizo</i>	kah-THEE-zoe	star
<i>kilindra</i>	ki-LINN-druh	resurrection
<i>kuzen</i>	KOO-zen	to settle
<i>malatira</i>	mah-lah-TEE-rah	(a word connected with another to show desire)
<i>maura</i>	MAH-ruh	supreme Ahmanyen exclamation of dismay
<i>me-aht</i>	MEE-aht	go
<i>mellifla</i>	MELL-i-flah	hot cider of <i>moolafentori</i>
<i>mellis</i>	meh-LISS	farewell (used among close friends)

<i>melisso</i>	meh-LISS-oh	friend
<i>moolafentori</i>	moo-lah-fenn-TOE-ree	delicious fruit resembling plums
<i>nsedna</i>	nn-SED-nuh	diamond
<i>ntef</i>	NN-teff	red
<i>ohn</i>	own	not (negative imperative)
<i>pandaka</i>	pawn-DAH-kuh	citizens; native inhabitants
<i>pennaio</i>	pen-NAH'ee -oh	bring
<i>prenta</i>	PREN-tuh	descend (imperative)
<i>puol</i>	POO-ohl	bond, as in friendship
<i>romthaia</i>	rome-THIGH-uh	fall back
<i>sando</i>	SAN-doe	fortress
<i>sapin</i>	sa-PEEN	open (imperative)
<i>sa</i>	sah	fire
<i>si</i>	see	my
<i>ssi</i>	SS-see	mine
<i>somnora</i>	somm -NOR-uh	the dead
<i>soross</i>	so-ROSS	again
<i>suan</i>	su-WAHN	certain
<i>tal</i>	tall	child
<i>tali</i>	tah-LEE	children
<i>talil</i>	tah-LEEL	little boy
<i>talitha</i>	tah-LEE-thuh	little girl
<i>taltahni</i>	tall-TAH-nee	twilight
<i>tanmanna</i>	tan-MAH-nuh	greetings (formal)
<i>tiono</i>	tee-OH-no	to hope
<i>varna</i>	VAR-nah	shy
<i>vu</i>	voo	hope
<i>wollen</i>	WOE-lenn	people
<i>yekmor</i>	YECK-more	enemy
<i>yis</i>	yiss	where
<i>zanin</i>	ZAH-ninn	sail
<i>zar</i>	zarr	south
<i>zomne</i>	ZOM-neh	bolt
<i>zomtor</i>	ZOM-tore	receive
<i>zten</i>	zz-TEN	gift

Words uniquely Ahmanyan

<i>hostis</i>	HOSS-tiss	tree found only on Ahmanya
<i>imna</i>	im-na	emphatic possessive
<i>malatira</i>	mah-lah-TEE-rah	a word connected with another to show desire
<i>mellifla</i>	MELL-i-flah	hot cider of <i>moolafentori</i>
<i>moolafentori</i>	moo-lah-fenn-TOE-ree	delicious fruit resembling plums

VOCABULARY: ENGLISH TO AHMANYAN

applause, word used for	<i>allamah</i>	ah-LAH-mah
affection (related to <i>ahntahr</i>)	<i>ahntahrmna</i>	ahn-TARM-nuh
again	<i>soross</i>	so-ROSS
be (plural imperative)	<i>alati</i>	ah-LAH-tee
belonging to; native of	<i>anhallo</i>	ahn-HALL-oh
bolt	<i>zomne</i>	ZOM-neh
bond, as in friendship	<i>puol</i>	POO-ohl
boy (child)	<i>talil</i>	tah-LEEL
bring	<i>pennaio</i>	pen-NAH'ee -oh
child	<i>tal</i>	tall
children	<i>tali</i>	tah-LEE
certain	<i>suan</i>	su-WAHN
citizens; native inhabitants	<i>pandaka</i>	pawn-DAH-kuh
close (imperative)	<i>donor</i>	doe-NOHR
come (imperative)	<i>dala</i>	DAH-la
(the) dead	<i>somnora</i>	somm-NOR-uh
deep, strong, lasting	<i>basor</i>	ba-SOHR
descend (imperative)	<i>prenta</i>	PREN-tuh
diamond	<i>nsedna</i>	nn-SED-nuh
enemy	<i>yekmor</i>	YECK-more
fall back	<i>romthaia</i>	rome-THIGH-uh
farewell (used among close friends) <i>meliss</i>		meh-LISS
fire	<i>sa</i>	sah
fortress	<i>sando</i>	SAN-doe
friend	<i>melisso</i>	meh-LISS-oh

from	<i>byela</i>	BYAY-lah
gift	<i>zten</i>	zz-TEN
girl (child)	<i>talitha</i>	tah-LEE-thuh
go	<i>me-aht</i>	MEE-aht
griegles	<i>alzenta</i>	all-ZEN-tuh
greetings! (used among close friends)	<i>emmaino</i>	eh-MA'ee-no
greetings (formal)	<i>tanmanna</i>	tan-MAH-nuh
guardian	<i>ajuni</i>	ah-JOO-nee
hey!	<i>eleh</i>	eh-leh
hidden, secret place	<i>fornlimwa</i>	forn-LIMM-wa
hope (noun)	<i>vu</i>	voo
hope (verb)	<i>tiono</i>	tee-OH-no
house, shelter, family dwelling; implies a close community	<i>ilien</i>	EE-lee-enn
I am; form of <i>alati</i>	<i>alto</i>	ALL-toe
illuminate (imperative)	<i>fenna</i>	FENN-nuh
lichen, bioluminous	<i>illunas</i>	eel-LOO-nahss
live; be alive	<i>feo</i>	FAY-oh
(the) living	<i>feotra</i>	fay-OH-truh
not (negative imperative)	<i>ohn</i>	own
open (imperative)	<i>sapin</i>	sa-PEEN
pass through; to enter	<i>dantra</i>	DAHN-truh
people	<i>wollen</i>	WOE-lenn
planet	<i>katelu</i>	kah-TELL-oo
please	<i>banna</i>	BAN-nah
receive	<i>zomtor</i>	ZOM-tore
red	<i>ntef</i>	NN-teff
refuge	<i>imlah</i>	IM-lah
resurrection	<i>kilindra</i>	ki-LINN-druh
sail	<i>zanin</i>	ZAH-ninn
settle	<i>kuzen</i>	KOO-zen
shy	<i>varna</i>	VAR-nah
sincerity	<i>ahntahr</i>	ahn-TAR
south	<i>zar</i>	zarr
star	<i>kathizo</i>	kah-THEE-zoe

strong, powerful, dignified	<i>ekon</i>	EH-konn
that, so that	<i>ja</i>	jah
to, toward	<i>e</i>	ehh
treasure	<i>dianda</i>	die-AHN-duh
twilight	<i>taltahni</i>	tall-TAH-nee
where	<i>yis</i>	yiss
who	<i>chendro</i>	CHEN-dro

VOCABULARY: ENGLISH TO AHMANYAN

by parts of speech

NOUNS

applause, word used for	<i>allamah</i>	ah-LAH-mah
affection (related to <i>ahntahr</i>)	<i>ahntahrnna</i>	ahn-TARM-nuh
beloved	<i>fean</i>	FAY-ahn
bolt	<i>zomne</i>	ZOM-neh
bond, as in friendship	<i>puol</i>	POO-ohl
boy (child)	<i>talil</i>	tah-LEEL
child	<i>tal</i>	tall
children	<i>tali</i>	tah-LEE
cider (hot) of <i>moolafentori</i>	<i>mellifla</i>	MELL-i-flah
citizens; native inhabitants	<i>pandaka</i>	pawn-DAH-kuh
(the) dead	<i>somnora</i>	somm-NOR-uh
diamond	<i>nsedna</i>	nn-SED-nuh
enemy	<i>yekmor</i>	YECK-more
fire	<i>sa</i>	sah
fortress	<i>sando</i>	SAN-doe
friend	<i>melisso</i>	meh-LISS-oh
gift	<i>zten</i>	zz-TEN
girl (child)	<i>talitha</i>	tah-LEE-thuh
griegles	<i>alzenta</i>	all-ZEN-tuh
greetings	<i>tanmanna</i>	tan-MAH-nuh
guardian	<i>ajuni</i>	ah-JOO-nee
hidden, secret place	<i>fornlimwa</i>	forn-LIMM-wa
hope (noun)	<i>vu</i>	voo

house, shelter, family dwelling;		
implies a close community	<i>ilien</i>	EE-lee-enn
lichen, bioluminous	<i>illunas</i>	eel-LOO-nahss
(the) living	<i>feotra</i>	fay-OH-ruh
people	<i>wollen</i>	WOE-lenn
planet	<i>katelu</i>	kah-TELL-oo
plums, Martian	<i>moolafentori</i>	moo-lah-fenn-TOE-ree
refuge	<i>imlah</i>	IM-lah
resurrection	<i>kilindra</i>	ki-LINN-druh
sincerity	<i>ahntahr</i>	ahn-TAR
treasure	<i>dianda</i>	die-AHN-duh
tree, uniquely Ahmanyen	<i>hostis</i>	HOSS-tiss
twilight	<i>taltahni</i>	tall-TAH-nee

PRONOUNS

where	<i>yis</i>	yiss
who	<i>chendro</i>	CHEN-dro

VERBS

be (plural imperative)	<i>alati</i>	ah-LAH-tee
bring	<i>pennaio</i>	pen-NAH'ee -oh
close (imperative)	<i>donor</i>	doe-NOHR
come (imperative)	<i>dala</i>	DAH-la
descend (imperative)	<i>prenta</i>	PREN-tuh
fall back	<i>romthaia</i>	rome-THIGH-uh
go	<i>me-aht</i>	MEE-aht
hope	<i>tiono</i>	tee-OH-no
I am; form of <i>alati</i>	<i>alto</i>	ALL-toe
illuminate (imperative)	<i>fenna</i>	FENN-nuh
live; be alive	<i>feo</i>	FAY-oh
love	<i>fea</i>	FAY-uh
not (negative imperative)	<i>ohn</i>	own
open (imperative)	<i>sapin</i>	sa-PEEN
pass through; to enter	<i>dantra</i>	DAH-trueh
receive	<i>zomtor</i>	ZOM-tore
sail	<i>zanin</i>	ZAH-ninn

settle	<i>kuzen</i>	KOO-zen
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ADVERBS

again	<i>soross</i>	so-ROSS
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ADJECTIVES

belonging to; native of	<i>anhallo</i>	ahn-HALL-oh
certain	<i>suan</i>	su-WAHN
deep, strong, lasting	<i>basor</i>	ba-SOHR
my	<i>si</i>	see
mine	<i>ssi</i>	SS-see
red	<i>ntef</i>	NN-teff
shy	<i>varna</i>	VAR-nah
south	<i>zar</i>	zarr
strong, powerful, dignified	<i>ekon</i>	EH-konn

INTERJECTIONS

farewell (used among close friends)	<i>meliss</i>	meh-LISS
greetings! (used among close friends)	<i>emmaino</i>	eh-MA'ee-no
hey!	<i>eleh</i>	eh-leh
please	<i>banna</i>	BAN-nah
supreme Ahmanyen exclamation	<i>maura</i>	MAH-ruh

PREPOSITIONS

from	<i>byela</i>	BYAY-lah
to, toward	<i>e</i>	ehh

CONJUNCTIONS

that, so that	<i>ja</i>	jah
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SPECIAL VOCABULARY

emphatic possessive	<i>imna</i>	IM-na
a word connected with another to show desire	<i>malatira</i>	mah-lah-TEE-rah

RULES OF AHMANYAN GRAMMAR

plurals are usually made either by adding “n” or “i”

melisso, melissan

tal, tali

plurals that refer to a group of people may end with “a”

alzenta, pandaka, kuznika

adding “ta” to a number is equivalent to adding “th” in English

nim (six), *nimta* (sixth)

imperatives are achieved by merely saying the verb, as in English

infinitives

subjunctive: add “e” prefix and “n” suffix

feo (to live); *effen* (might live)

to show affection or intimacy, add *ni*

fean, feanni

for adverbs, add *ki* to a verb

varna, varnaki

Distinctive Features of Ahmanyen

The use of the initial double letter (e.g. *Seran*) that lengthens the initial sound.

The use of the double consonant (e.g. *Mtalan*)

The Written Language

Although Ahmanyen was a written language, I never created letters for it. For a long time the only place where Ahmanyen was written down in the Starman saga was in the short story, “The Eight Treasures”. The writing looks like this:



The two words are *Nimta Dianda*—The Sixth Treasure. It took me about three hours to create that writing.

A second example of Ahmanyen writing was created for Master of Shadows when the First Races renamed Starman Kathy Foster’s ship and wrote its new name on the hull in both English and Ahmanyen. It looks like this:

Serene Deliverance



The April Fool's Day Post

A post on the Yahoo Starman Group April 1, 2003

Dear friends of the Starman series:

A number of people who have received their copy of the first segment of "The Lost Tomorrow" have raised their eyebrows at these sentences in the story, when Joe begins his amazing recounting of the tale of the lost tomorrow to his friend Owsley Robbins: "Zip, Mark, and I were in the heart of Tharsos. It was in the mid-2150s—about a year before the great gathering of all the Starmen for David Foster's funeral."

To satisfy the curiosity of our readers, I am providing this brief excerpt from the sixth Starman book:

Zip's three captors held him in close formation as they hustled him down the corridor of the black ship, heading outward from the sun into a region of starless vacuum.

"You've saved your last planet, famous Starboy," sneered Maldo Bandersnatch as he clutched his laser blaster close to his chest. The redheaded Starman could tell that he was itching for an excuse to use it. Well, he would give it to him.

With a suddenness that shocked even the conscienceless leader of the malicious thugs aboard the *Scorpion*, Zip erupted into a flurry of fists, elbows, and feet. He twisted the laser blaster from Bandersnatch's hairy hands and swung it furiously as a club toward the largest of the three goons, slamming the seven-foot giant to the deck, unconscious. Throwing the weapon from him in order to free his arms, Zip pummeled Bandersnatch with a succession of elbow strikes, simultaneously stomping with his left heel on the instep of the third captor, whose habitual slack-jawed expression became suddenly animated. A high shriek

came out of his dirty mouth. The wail lasted for only a second, as Zip backfisted the thug and shut him up so quickly that it seemed as if a loud radio program featuring Swiss yodeling had been snapped off.

With a last surge of adrenaline, the Starman grasped the hanging arms of the leader, already reeling in the fog of confusion, and pulled the malefactor across the narrow corridor so that his head collided with the wall. He fell heavily like a sack of potatoes.

David was free. The Starman drew himself up to his full height, took a deep breath, and exhaled loudly and with much satisfaction.

Suddenly the double door at the far end of the corridor slammed open, and out stepped an image beyond Zip's worst nightmare. *It was MIKA WATANABE!* Former Japanese national female sumo wrestling champion, at age twenty-five she was past her prime. Yet, tipping the scale at 497 pounds, she was still a formidable opponent.

David, a devoted fan of Japanese female sumo wrestling, had long admired the consummate skills of Mika Watanabe. Never in his wildest dreams did he ever imagine that, after her retirement from the ring, she would cast in her lot with the thugs on the *Scorpion*, or that she would be the final opponent who stood between him and freedom.

Through layers of well-developed, sculpted facial fat, Mika Watanabe's utterly malevolent eyes glittered with hatred under beetling brows. Her lips turned up slowly in a grimace of disgust and wickedness. Slowly, as her grimace turned from disgust to a wicked smile that was even more terrifying to behold, she reached up and... *turned off the gravity grid!*

Then she pushed off the wall behind her and came hurtling down the corridor, her hands reaching out like a vulture's claws, her hideous mouth opening wide and her eyes bugging out. Like a gigantic puffer fish, she sailed down the corridor totally dedicated to the destruction of the Starman.

A panic-driven shriek burst forth from the depths of Zip Foster's throat. Inwardly he screamed, *But I can't hit a girl!* It was his last coherent thought.

Starman Theme Music

Every now and then, when David was writing and listening to music, he'd find a piece that seemed to him particularly fitting to a particular scene or an overall theme of the Starman saga. These can be found on youtube. Here are links to seven of them.

The Ahmanyen Theme

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMdbNMq2ifA>

Search: Yanni, Nightingale

Theme of the Xenobots

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA6ZkWDCCMs>

Search: Winged Migration Sound Track, "Amidst the Factory Smoke"

The Ahmanyans Reveal the Treasure of Ahmanya

The Search for the Benefactors, page 460 "Here is Ahmanya!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTXJQoqmggs>

Search: Yanni, Adagio in C Minor

David Foster Funeral: Entry of the Starmen

The Search for the Benefactors, page 674

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDbcU_L72Wk

Search: Secret Garden from (0:26 to 2:56), "Dawn of a New Century"

Kathy Foster at Bethesda

The War of the Light, page 361

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzwhOF7dVYc>

Search: Jia Peng Fang, A Water Lily

Kathy Foster Alone in Space

The War of the Light, page 573

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-G272M77N0>

Search: Holst, Neptune the Mystic

The Departure of Olor

The War of the Light, page 721

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ayZSVcOWvE

Search: Samuel Barber, Agnus Dei

The Starmen Interviews

On a couple of occasions, the Starman Team was asked to write about the Starman series for other series book publications.

We were given a couple of questions for publication in “Susabella Passengers”; I don’t remember when this was published. Later, for the same fanzine, I was asked to write an article on the theme of War. “Susabella Passengers” usually features a theme for its issues. My article appeared in “Susabella Passengers”, number 59, March 2004. The article was called, “Cosmic War: Light Versus Darkness: War in Science Fiction Series Books”.

Susabella Passengers

1. You created the Starman series almost forty years after the demise of series books in popular culture. How did that fact influence your creation of the Starman series?

We decided to self-publish rather than seek a commercial publisher, and then publicize directly to potential customers. To create a customer base, we believed that we had a “ready market” in the series book collectors we knew, and that we could interest other collectors through established fanzines, websites, and message boards. Because our first advertising was aimed at those who know the classic series, we shaped the Starman books to conform to the classic parameters, and in the text of our stories we included many tributes to the books we grew up with—some subtle and others very obvious. Being established collectors ourselves, we believed that we knew what appealed to collectors, and were hopeful that we could create a new series that would meet that appeal, drawing upon the best qualities of the known series and putting these qualities into our new series.

To be specific, we tried to create a series that would have the sense of adventure and scientific accuracy of the Rick Brant series, the intellectual component and plot intricacy of the Ken Holts, beautiful descriptions of weather and terrain such as those in the X Bar X Boys series, and the futuristic drama of the Tom Corbetts. Further, like the Judy Boltons, many of our characters are drawn from real people and, like the Rick Brants, many of the settings are based on real places. We avoided the too-frequent “coincidence” in some of the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drews and the near-magical inventions of Tom Swift Jr. We also produced the books to look and feel like the classic hardback books with dust jackets and attractive artwork.

It was also of primary importance to us to retain the high moral quality and affirmative innocence of the classic series. “These are honorable young men,” said Hal Goodwin in 1984, describing Rick Brant and Scotty, and we wanted to follow the same ideal. We reject the moral slide of the past forty years as being either normal or acceptable. We were hopeful that, even in the early years of the twenty-first century, protagonists who were upright, courageous, kind, and honorable could appeal to potential readers. The fine-stroke theme of the Starman books is to extol basic virtue—true pleasure, integrity, loyalty, patience, respect, endurance, resourcefulness, etc. The broad-stroke message is that light will always conquer darkness, good will conquer evil. The message is stated several times in different ways in each of the books. Above all, we want to hold to these standards while telling a tale that is exciting and, quoting Hal Goodwin again, “gives pleasure” to the readers.

2. With these firm parameters you established for yourselves, what, then, makes the Starman series unique?

We are well aware that we are building upon a venerable history and are dependent upon the giants who have preceded us, but at

the same time, we do not hesitate to set new precedents. When it seems that there is a good reason to do so, we break new ground. In examining the uniqueness of the Starman series, probably three things stand out.

First, character development is central to our stories—the Starmen are complex and believable human beings. The Starman series may be unique in not being named for a single character but rather for the entire Starman threesome. Further, unlike most series, our characters are considerably flawed—they are undoubtedly heroic, but rarely, if ever, are they solely responsible for the triumph in each book. They depend upon others from time to time; they make mistakes and they show confusion. Even though they are well trained in academics and the skills needed for their adventures, they are still young men whose social and emotional immaturity is occasionally evident. They “grow” as the series progresses.

Secondly, in the Starman series, we are telling a continuing story. From the beginning of our work we envisioned one long saga. Although each of the books features a self-contained story with its own resolution, there are also manifold signs of a mysterious underlying reality that the Starmen came to discern only dimly and gradually. Each story presented a number of unsettled matters that intruded with increasing urgency upon the Starmen. Readers learned in stages that this underlying story is actually the major tale we are telling. This became evident only in the fifth book. In short, though the Starman series is truly a series, it is also a saga²⁸.

Finally, perhaps the most important initiative we took was to

²⁸ This is probably the first time that I used the term “saga” to describe what up to that point we had called the Starman series. A few years later, when most of the writing was done, I began to refer to the work as “The Starman Saga” more often than “The Starman Series”.

introduce spiritual and philosophical matters into the series. We're taking a little-traveled road in the series book field by putting philosophical, at times even religious, matters into the books—although even this has some precedents in the series book world. We do not, by any means, use the stories as a means of pushing any religious conviction; the underlying philosophical or spiritual issues are those common to all people, such as good versus evil and virtue versus depravity. Overall, the Starman series is about personalities, relationships, and choices that are developed through the telling of an adventure story. Putting these issues in our stories rather than ignoring them makes the stories closer to reality. After all, no matter what any given reader's personal convictions may be, everyone does have some kind of philosophy of life, and each person's philosophy is refined by encountering others' philosophies. We believe that ignoring that fact of life in a series book would keep it at a shallow level, and we don't find that satisfying either to read or to write.

Cosmic War: Light Versus Darkness

War in Science Fiction Series Books

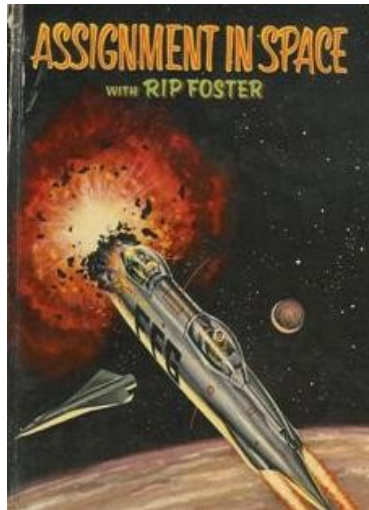
with special insight into the Starman series

February 7, 2004

2,521 words

Published in *Susabella Passengers*, number 59, March 2004,
under the pseudonym Michael D. Cooper

This article was written by David Baumann and Jon Cooper
and was slightly revised June 10, 2007



The three of us (Mike Dodd, David Baumann, and Jon Cooper) turned ourselves into series book author Michael D. Cooper back in 1998 when we began to work on producing the Starman series. Since we wanted our series to be like the books we loved growing up, one of the first things we determined to do was to fit our stories into the unwritten guidelines followed in the classic

series books. Among these was that violence and bloodshed were not to be excessive or overdone. Fistfights were okay and added excitement, but cruelty, torture, and amputation were inappropriate. Gunfights could be allowed to elevate the heartbeats of the readers, but only if the shots missed or “winged” the combatants. There are plenty of “flesh wounds” and unscathed barn doors in the X Bar X Boys series, for example. Fight scenes in series books could be vehement, but no one could be allowed to have an eye gouged, get his head bashed in with a two-by-four, or be maimed in any way. The one or two exceptions (the Skippy Dare book *Prisoners in Devil’s Bog*, for example) are seriously disturbing, especially when we consider that these books were to be read by juveniles.

Series books that were written in wartime addressed the issues of their era in different ways. When it came to war in series books, the tale customarily became an adventure story or inspiration for patriotism rather than an all-out account of bloody battles and wholesale destruction. Such horrors, if they were brought into the story at all, were described from a distance. The five books of the Tom Slade series that were composed during World War I relate Tom’s exploits as a doughboy. The account is riveting, but is very clearly an adventure story that takes place in wartime rather than a story about battles. The Hardy Boys books that were written in the first part of the 1940s were unusual in the genre by hardly mentioning World War II at all. In Rick Brant, readers learn early in the first volume that Scotty is an ex-marine who served heroically in the south Pacific (where author Hal Goodwin had served himself); in the fourth Rick, *100 Fathoms Under*, published only two years after the end of the war, the Japanese character Hashimo is presented as a deceptive, contemptible villain. In the early 1960s, the Biff Brewster series takes note of the cold war, especially in its particularly strong entry *Mystery of the Chinese Ring*.

Girls' series books did not ignore wartime either. Margaret Sutton in her Judy Bolton series addressed the issue in a clever fashion by having her hero serve in the FBI rather than in the armed forces. This encouraged patriotism without overly dating the books or having to introduce battlefield scenes.

When it comes to science fiction in series books, we enter a special category. Jules Verne has been recognized as the first writer of what later came to be called "science fiction," and H. G. Wells was not far behind. However, the genre really didn't take off until about the 1920s or '30s. At that time the term "science fiction" became popular, replacing the earlier term "scientifiction." Therefore the early books of the original Tom Swift series (1910-1942), about scientific inventions and the adventures that their inventor and his friends had with them, may not fit into the "science fiction" category, but they are at the least a precursor to those series that are indisputably of that genre.

Tom Swift most definitely engaged the Great War. The first entry in the series that dealt with war was the twenty-first: *Tom Swift and His War Tank*, published in 1918. The series books of that era used secondary titles, and the one for this book is "Doing His Bit for Uncle Sam." It details Tom's efforts to build the best war tank of his time to do his "bit" to aid his country in the war.

Tom Swift and his associates were unabashedly red-blooded Americans. The author went to great lengths to make it clear that the Swifts were doing everything they could to back the government in the war, but there is no real description of the war or bloodshed. Mention is made of an army construction plant where aircraft are being turned out by the hundreds, but that is about it. Their friend Ned Newton does get enthusiastic about the idea of a war tank:

"This is, without exception, the greatest thing out since an airship. It

will win the war for us and the Allies, too, and don't you forget it! Fritz's barbed wire and dugouts and machine gun emplacements can't stand for a minute against these tanks! Why, Tom, they can crawl on their back as well as any other way, and they don't mind a shower of shrapnel or a burst of machine gun lead, any more than an alligator minds a swarm of gnats. The only thing that makes them hesitate a bit is a Jack Johnson or a Bertha shell, and it's got to be a pretty big one, and in the right place, to do much damage. These tanks are great, and there's nothing like them."

No discussion of any kind is made as to why the war started, or what each side believes; the Germans are just the bad guys and need to be mowed down with tanks. THEY ARE BAD and WE ARE GOOD, and that is how it is presented throughout the series—this is not the series for subtle nuances.

The war tank wasn't the extent of Tom's efforts. There are mentions in other books, although not quite as specific as those that were produced during wartime. The author wants to make it clear that Tom is patriotic, Tom builds great weapons of war and gives them away to the government, and is doing all he can to aid the nation in a time of war. He is behind the government 100%, and anyone who is not should be ashamed. The message couldn't be more clear.

One could classify the Tom Swift Jr. series (1954-1973) as science fiction without too much stretching. This series, written in the years of the space race and the cold war, is most definitely a product of its time. Young Tom's adversaries, the Brungarians, are clearly eastern European iron curtain types that readers of the

books would not have any difficulty morphing into Soviets. It has been pointed out more than once that the bad guys in *Assignment in Space With Rip Foster* (also known as *Rip Foster Rides the Gray Planet*) are identified as the Consolidation of People's Governments or "Consops," but commonly known as "Connies." This book first appeared in 1952. Again, readers of that era need no more than a gram or two of imagination to hear this word as "Commies," the slang term for Communists. (The illustration at the beginning of this article is a thumbnail of one version of the cover illustration of this story.)

The authors of these series rightly assumed that freedom is right and tyranny and oppression are wrong, but unless today's reader is a history buff, the politics of these times are history lessons if not downright obscure. Readers of the original Tom Swift series do not find out why Tom feels the way he does. However, readers in our time may ask, What is Tom supporting? Why does he believe that his country is right? What are they fighting for? What are they afraid of losing? What are the stakes?

War can be seen as a political occurrence, entered into with mixed motives—even when one's nation is responding to attack. Wars, in themselves, are horrible realities, but at times they are forced upon us, and then cannot be avoided. But when wartime appears in fiction, it can be a means of addressing a deeper issue: goodness versus evil, or to put it poetically, light versus darkness. The *Star Wars* epic, *The Lord of the Rings*, and similar sagas treat war in this fashion, and in the Starman series we have chosen to address war on the same ground.

The Starman series debuted in 2000. Nine novels and several short stories brought the series to its end in 2005, although several short stories were added in 2007. Naturally, as its creators, we know it inside out. We have definitely addressed the issue of war in our series, but we have presented conflict as a moral or even spiritual issue, not political: What is the meaning

of life, What is eternally significant, How do we know what is true and right, What is heroic and what is truly evil? Books set in the future, i.e. science fiction, have a freer hand in addressing these issues.

In wartime, propaganda tries to make the enemy faceless by the use of epithets, generalizations, etc. that reduce human beings, who may indeed be unconscionably evil, to subhuman objects deserving of enmity. In science fiction, this is often done completely by introducing a non-human enemy. The Starmen and their civilization in the middle years of the 22nd century engage an enemy that is literally “faceless.” This passage in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* describes the first encounter with the Xenobots:

With a determined shake of his head, Bors pushed his way to the front of the crowd and stepped forward, facing the creatures that had come from the cavern's mouth. As he stepped out, the circle of creatures stopped moving, but those whom Bors faced continued their approach. When they were about twenty feet away, Bors focused his attention on where their heads had to be. He could tell that there was something different at that place from the rest of the creatures' bodies. As they came closer, he squinted, turned slightly aside, shook his cottony head once again, and stared.

When he finally realized what he was seeing, his head cleared instantly. The rush of adrenaline that surged through him eradicated all traces of the drug that had been put into his coffee.

They have no faces! he thought. He

wanted to laugh and shriek at the same time. Inside the viewports were things that looked like the bottom of a snail's foot. *Like raw liver with some sort of shiny gelatin on it!*

When the great war of the Solar System's history is described in the Starman series, it is done in a way intended to be shocking and frightening, not by any means to inspire patriotism or present the "glory" of battle. Here is an excerpt from *The Lost Race of Mars*.

"In Omega Centauri, many warships lifted off from the Xenobots' home planet and made their last stand, but our fleet fought masterfully and reduced the planet of the Xenobots to a primitive condition."

Stenafi smiled with fondness, and then sighed deeply. "It was a great triumph, for the Xenobots had never been defeated in war."

Then the Ahmanyen lost control. She placed her hands over her face and, through her long slender fingers, began to weep silently. Her shoulders shook. The men from Earth did not know what to say or do. They waited in acute discomfort for Stenafi to continue her tale.

After a moment she sighed again. "I am sorry, Starmen. It is a tale that, though now thousands of years old, still seems to us almost to have happened in our own time." She gathered her resolve, exhaled,

and then picked up the narrative, her voice straining with the effort.

"Unknown to us the Xenobots had kept back a small but monstrously armed fleet, which none of us had discovered," she continued. "When this fleet observed that their fellows had been defeated and that most of our ships had pursued the enemy to their home planet, they launched a second attack. This time fertile Ahmnya itself was the target, and against this second wave of ships we were almost defenseless. When it came, the strike was far fiercer than we had anticipated in our worst imaginings. The Xenobots clearly wanted not only to exterminate our entire people, but also intended to wipe out any trace that we had ever lived. The vehemence of the attack was overwhelming."

Our intention is to contrast evil and goodness. Descriptions of hostilities between political adversaries cannot do this effectively, since human beings, no matter how evil or altruistic their motives, will always be a mixture of good and bad. Of course, in real wartime, true evil will always be present; the atrocities committed by the Nazis, for example, are evidence of unspeakable evil, not just fruits of a political conviction. I think it is safe to contend that the terrorist attacks engineered by Al Qaeda are evil rather than religious or political acts. Sadly, atrocities are not perpetrated solely by one side in most if not all wars.

The ultimate battle between goodness and evil is something we sincerely hope we are getting across in the Starman Series. What are the Starmen risking their lives to save? Why do they feel the

way they do? What are they fighting for? Our motivating axiom is, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." The quotation is from the Gospel of John, and the philosophy is stated clearly in our first book:

Richard Starlight said, "When my father dropped his surname and took the name 'Starlight,' it was a symbol to himself and to his generation. Born in the last days of the Collapse, he took a name to signify light in the great darkness, as stars are points of light in the darkness of space. Maybe overwhelming darkness, but still characterized by light, the inspiring light of beauty and adventure, which the darkness cannot overcome. No one had ever borne that name before. It was a new name in the chronicle of human history, a deliberate choice to begin anew." ...

"Evil always fails, no matter how powerful it may seem to be or how much damage it can do," said Richard. "Look to the Collapse for that lesson. Earth will prevail over Captain Troy Putnam. The only question is how and when. There is no doubt of that, but we must minimize the damage he can do. A little light will always overcome even the most stygian darkness."

It is the responsibility of the fiction writer to resolve these issues so that goodness wins. In spite of whatever tensions may be wrought during the telling of the tale, there can never be any real doubt that the good guys will triumph. Edith Louisa Cavell, an English nurse in Belgium executed by the Germans during World

War I for providing nursing aid to all soldiers, but allowing the Allies to escape to their own lines, put it well before she was lined up before a firing squad: “Patriotism is not enough.” In science fiction—at least in the Starman series—we extol total dedication to goodness and truth and renunciation of evil, regardless of cost. And we do so while presenting a saga that we hope is thrilling.

The Bayport Gazette

About a year later, Austin Johnson, webmaster of *the Bayport Gazette*, asked us to provide an interview. He gave us many excellent questions, and we provided the following.

by David Baumann
with input from Jon Cooper and Mike Dodd
Written February 4-10, 2005

We liked what we’d written so much that we revised it several times. We thought it was a good, thorough explanation of the Starman saga. Austin’s questions were well considered and led us to bring out a great deal of the meaning of the saga and the work behind its production.

Updated August 23, 2005
Updated again November 21, 2005
Updated again November 24, 2010
Updated again February 24, 2015

Austin Johnson is the webmaster of the *Bayport Gazette*, an online magazine for fans of the Hardy Boys series. In February

2005, Austin asked the Starman Team to provide an interview for his magazine. We agreed to do so, and he sent us a number of questions, for which we wrote extensive answers. Our answers have been updated [as of February 2015] to provide current information.

1. What is the Starman series? Can you give us a brief synopsis of the saga?

The Starman series is a set of nine novels, two novelettes, and ten short stories. It was written by three men who refer to themselves as the Starman Team: Jon Cooper, Mike Dodd, and myself—David Baumann. Putting our names together, we came up with our pen name of Michael D. Cooper. As of February 2015, Jon is 35, Mike is 58, and I am 66.

We love the classic series we grew up with and, when the opportunity came our way, we wrote a series reminiscent of our childhood books. We are well aware that the golden age of series books ended in the late 1960s. Nevertheless, perhaps against the odds, we wanted to create a series that could be both reminiscent of that age and appealing to contemporary readers. We were fortunate enough to find some readers who shared that vision and even hungered for it. After our first customer, Steve Servello, read our initial offering, he wrote: “A new juvenile series. Who’d’ve thought?”

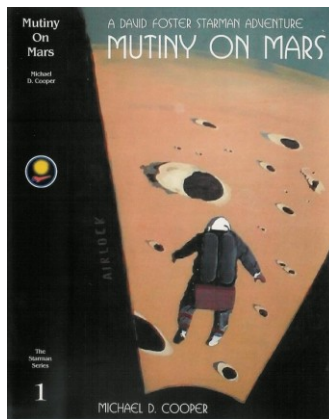
Mike came up with the Starman motto, that puts our hope and purpose into a concise statement:

THE FUTURE—THE WAY IT USED TO BE.

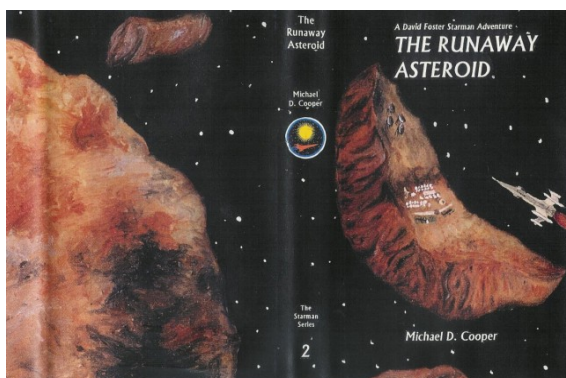
That first book was issued in July 2000. We found ourselves hard at work from that moment, and after five years came to what we thought was the completion of our series. The eighth book was released in October 2005. We thought that was the last book, but five years later we decided to tie up some loose ends that we had deliberately left unresolved. With some new ideas we wrote the climactic book in the series in the fall of 2010.

The books were first published as individual hardbacks in dust jacket. Here are the covers of the eight books in the Starman saga that came out 2000-2005:

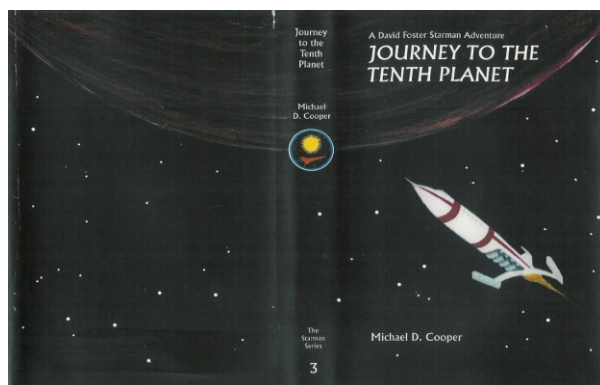
Mutiny On Mars



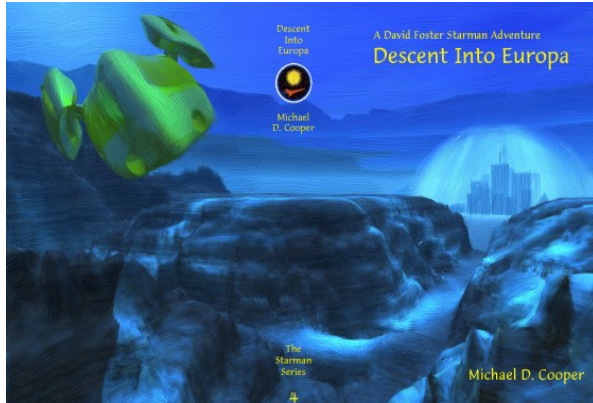
The Runaway Asteroid



Journey to the Tenth Planet



Descent Into Europa
 including the short stories
 “The Flight of the *Olympia*” and “The City of Dust”

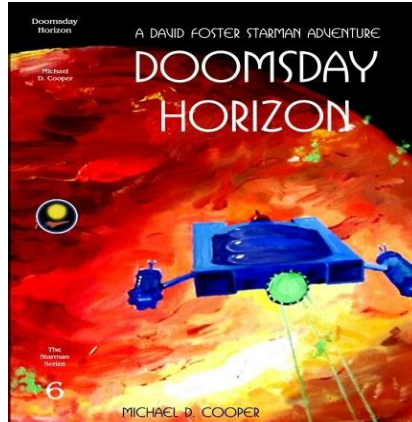


The Lost Race of Mars
 including the short story
 “The Orphans of Titan”



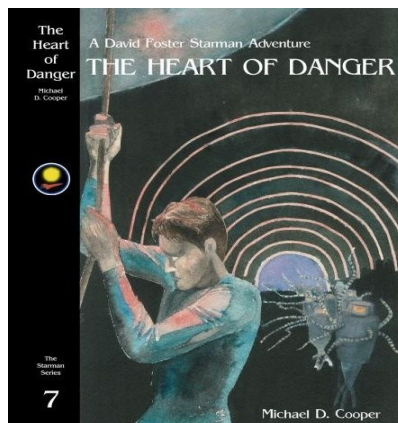
Doomsday Horizon

including the short stories
“A Matter of Time” and “Return to Europa”



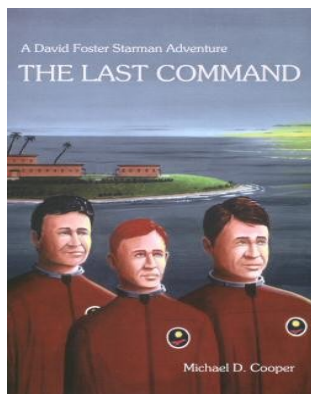
The Heart of Danger

including the short story “The Eight Treasures”



The Last Command

with a summary of the novelette *The Lost Tomorrow* and appendices.



The entire saga weighs in at well over 660,000 words, more than *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* together. The text on the cover flaps of the first book introduces the saga in this way: “Starlight Enterprise was founded in 2089. Originally a company dedicated to finding new sources of energy, it quickly became known for high ideals, philanthropy, and interplanetary ventures. In the early 22nd century, Starlight Enterprise produced its first Starmen. The Starmen were the gifted and highly trained venturers of Starlight Enterprise. With their exploits, a new age of exploration and discovery began. Earth had not seen such a time for more than six centuries, when Columbus, Magellan, Drake, and others had set sail to discover new worlds.

“In the course of their adventures, the Starmen gradually learned the amazing history of the Solar System. They discerned that this history is far different from what Earth had long believed. Finally they discovered the opportunity and responsibility of the people of Earth to defend and preserve their home—now understood not to be a country or even a planet, but the entire

system of worlds circling our star. An ancient enemy, long ago defeated but now quickly regaining strength and motivated by implacable hatred, will soon be at their doorsteps. The volumes of the Starman saga chronicle the adventures of Starman David Foster, Joe Taylor, and Mark Seaton. Each volume is an independent episode, yet the series tells one continuing story of the glorious middle years of the 22nd century.”

2. How did you stumble across the idea to create your own series?

In the summer of 1998, I did a web search for Tom Swift and found an excellent website that Jon Cooper had put up. It was so good I wrote to him out of the blue to commend him for it. In Jon’s response, he recommended the six-volume Dig Allen series that had come out in the late 1950s and early ‘60s, which I’d never heard of. He said that another person, Mike Dodd, had recently contacted him about Dig Allen, and that the two of them wanted to write a seventh book in that obscure space series. Jon was a plotter of stories and Mike had lots of ideas bubbling up in his fertile imagination, but neither was a writer. I was a free-lance writer and the idea of writing a science fiction juvenile novel intrigued me, so we all three partnered up to write the seventh Dig Allen story. We contacted Golden Press, the publishers of the Dig Allen series with our proposal, but they flatly forbade us to write a new book. So we decided to write a new series that was similar to but quite independent and distinct from the Dig Allen series—books in the genre of Tom Swift Jr., Tom Corbett, Dig Allen, Rick Brant, Ken Holt, and other juvenile series that had been popular fifty years earlier. After a year of collaboration, thought, and research, our team produced well over a hundred pages of email correspondence and had created a couple of dozen files filled with plots, background material, and scientific information. The Starman series was

ready to launch. In February 2000, I began to write *Assault On Mars*.

3. How did you three meet as co-authors?

As described above, we met first in cyberspace. It wasn't until more than three years after our first contact that we all met in person for the first time—in October 2001. I live in California but was back east for a conference. Jon lived in West Virginia and Mike in Norfolk, Virginia, and we converged at Mike's parents' house in Richmond, Virginia for a wonderful two days. The three of us have only been together one other time—at Mark Johnson's series book conference in Charlottesville, Virginia in October 2002. However, Jon and I have had several visits, both in Knoxville, Tennessee near where he lives now, and in California.

Here is a photograph of the Starman Team, taken at the time of our first meeting in October 2001. We are, left to right, Jon Cooper, Mike Dodd, and David Baumann. More than fifteen years have passed since that photograph was taken!



4. *What did, and do you, use for inspiration while plotting the series?*

Jon, who is our plotter, can answer this best: “I have absolutely no idea. The ideas just come. I’m going along, minding my own business, and then something catches my eye and pow—an idea springs forth. They come from all kinds of places. *The Runaway Asteroid* was the natural outgrowth of *Assault on Mars*. *Journey to the Tenth Planet* came from an idea David had early on. *Descent Into Europa* came from an early proposed list of titles that we drew up; I just made a story to wrap around the title. *The Lost Race of Mars* was inspired by Bob Janoe, the prisoner to whom the book is dedicated. *The Lost Tomorrow* was inspired by the movie, ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’. *Doomsday Horizon* was inspired by the ending of a Three Stooges movie. There’s no real rhyme or reason to it—the ideas just come, and then boom—there they are.”

My creative part comes in fleshing out the plot summary and ideas into a smoothly-flowing tale. I put in a lot of material that comes from my experience as a martial arts instructor and, even more, as an Episcopal priest who’s done a lot of counseling and general interacting with people in various stages of life. When I write the text from Jon’s summary, I sift through the characters’ motives, ways of thinking and reasoning, how they react to situations—their dreams, hopes, disappointments, and so forth—and put these things into the characterizations as the plot unrolls. Most, if not all, of the major and even minor characters are based either on real people or on amalgamations of personalities—including my own.

5. *Were you satisfied with your initial output for Assault on Mars? Why or why not?*

When we were ready to print up our first effort, we pondered how many books to make. We wondered if 20 would be enough, or even too many. In our most enthusiastic moments we speculated that maybe even 200 would sell. Finally, Fred Woodworth—a series book maven, printer, and personal friend of mine—offered to do the printing and start the binding process. He suggested that we make 500 copies. He said that printing that many was not much more difficult than printing 200, and we could always recycle what didn't sell. With a gulp, we agreed. He hand-bound the first 92 copies, and I did all the rest—eventually with the help of a group of friends.

So in July 2000, *Assault On Mars*, the first volume of the Starman series, was offered to the public. We publicized it through various series book websites and message boards. We were stunned when we had 100 orders in the first two weeks. Its first readers acclaimed it with fervor beyond our brightest hopes. Great as this response was, it also created a problem. Since these books were hardbound by hand, producing them was enormously labor-intensive. For the next two years, except for a huge lull after the terrorist attacks, orders came in faster than we could fill them. Income from sales made it possible for us to self-publish the rest of the books.

Here is what the cover of that first book looked like:

Assault On Mars



Once we'd written six books, developed a dependable fan base, and gained a lot of experience, the three of us looked back and felt that *Assault On Mars* was rather amateurish. Even though our fans liked it a lot, of the six books no readers named *Assault On Mars* as their favorite in the series. By the fall of 2003, we knew we could do better. It was important to us to try since, no matter how much a reader might like the later books, the first book is always the first one he'll read. We wanted what we called "a second chance to make a first impression". In the fall of 2003, we decided to revise and upgrade our first story, both to bring its quality up to the level of the other volumes as well as to update it in the light of events that had emerged as the saga had developed in the later books. It only took me a month to make the revisions. The story was retitled *Mutiny On Mars*, and replaced the first book. *Mutiny On Mars* was the first working title that Jon and Mike had for the book even before I contacted them, so when we reworked the first book we restored its first title. Plot changes made the new title appropriate.

6. How much respect did you gain for series' authors during the plotting and initial authorship stages of the Starman Series?

We quickly learned the difference between writing a book for quality and writing a book for profit. We had chosen quality from the first instant—a good thing, too, because until the very end we didn't make a dime on the books. We put enormous effort into producing the stories, and quality is our top priority, rather than making money—though we hoped not to lose money on the project. None of us has deep financial pockets.

We gained a lot of respect for the really good series authors like the original “Franklin W. Dixon”, “Bruce Campbell”, “John Blaine”, and others. I think our respect went down a bit for authors and publishers who were more interested in profit than the product. We also quickly found out how difficult it is to work with artists and printers, even when everyone is dedicated to a good product. Communicating at a distance with creative people can cause glitches between text and illustration, pagination, and so forth. It is no longer surprising to us at all that the classic series books often had discontinuities between what the text said and what the illustrations showed.

7. And has this experience proved easier or harder than you first imagined?

Both. Easier since the plots seem to come without too much effort, and the writing also. I've never had writer's block, although sitting down to write does sometimes become burdensome. Jon is able to resolve an impasse in a developing plot almost instantly. It is work that we enjoy, but still work. It was also time consuming, which means that a lot of our personal pastimes were set aside for the work we've done. I estimate that

Jon and I have both spent easily at least the equivalent of a year's full-time work on the series, or about 2,000 hours each—and probably a lot more than that! Mike's contributions have been less time-consuming for him, but invaluable to the process, like spice in a stew that turns it from mediocre to delicious. Part of the development of the saga even required me to create a new language, with its own vocabulary and rules. In the entire saga, however, only two written words appear in the created language. They took me about three hours to create, and appear in the short story "The Eight Treasures". There has also been an overwhelming amount of extra work we hadn't anticipated at all in the beginning, such as record-keeping, mailing, research, looking for and working with publishers, and the like.

8. Tell us a little about your relationship with publishers. How did you pick your first publisher, second publisher, etc.? Why did you move on from each one, and are you planning on staying with your current publisher, American Web Books?

We have used seven publishers. Fred Woodworth was our first. Without his gracious donation of labor, we could never have made the series a reality. Fred donated his time of several weeks' full-time labor, and was even willing to donate the materials. We did, however, convince him to accept payment for his out-of-pocket costs. Therefore our initial outlay of money for *Assault On Mars* was minimal, so that the sales of this volume produced some real income. We needed it to pay for the printing of the other books. The only drawbacks to Fred's method were that it required intensive labor over a long period of time, as mentioned above, and the hand-bound books just don't have the quality of a professionally printed volume.

With the income from sales of *Assault On Mars*, we looked for a

“vanity press” for our second book. We investigated several and selected Sheridan Press. This firm printed our second and third books. The quality was acceptable for the price we paid. We had some difficulty with Sheridan over a number of snafus that cost us unanticipated expenses we could ill afford. Then one of our readers suggested a Canadian firm which could do better quality for less cost. Friesens in Manitoba printed our fourth and fifth books. They did a magnificent job in every way, but even at that, the cost of the printing was becoming more than our sales could sustain. We moved on from this fine company only reluctantly.

Solely for financial reasons, *Mutiny On Mars* and *Doomsday Horizon* were published by 1stBooks (later AuthorHouse), a print-on-demand company. Financial outlay was much less, but the company was very difficult to work with, made many errors, took an inordinately long time to publish the books, and could only produce them in one, non-standard size. Howling with dissatisfaction and frustration, we finally moved to American Web Books. The company president, Phil Zuckerman, was accessible, flexible, and very easy to work with. The quality of books was high and the expense was very reasonable. Eventually AWB produced four of our books, including reissuing the two books AuthorHouse had produced. AWB went out of business after our eighth book was published.

Later we published our archival material through Cafepress, a print-on-demand company. Jon took out all the boring parts of our email exchanges and other material, and prepared the result for anyone who might be interested in the background of how the books were written. There is also background material on our newsletters and artwork. We put the material up for easy ordering. Cafepress produces it in large, good quality paperbacks. We are extremely pleased with the quality of the work and the speed of delivery. Because of that we decided to go renew our idea of producing the Starman saga in large paperback format. It is now available through Cafepress in both standard

and annotated formats. Interested persons can find ordering information on our website: www.starmanseries.com.

Our current publisher is Lulu.com. It is a print-on-demand company that we have worked with for several years. They produce high quality books without any initial outlay. They don't make books in standard series book size, which was important to us when we began our project, but we eventually abandoned that ideal, and have now produced the entire Starman series in a trilogy of thick hardback books. We also updated the text and corrected a number of small errors in the original versions. The entire saga can now be ordered for less than a hundred dollars, with all illustrations included.

9. As readers know, Michael D. Cooper is the pen name for three different men living all across the US. Can you describe the authorial process with regards to specific tasks for each co-author?

When the Starman team writes a book, we follow the rules that were used in the age of the classic series books. There will be no foul language, no extreme violence, no exploitative sexual references or subtleties of any kind. In the fight scenes, there is no gore. Only very, very rarely will anyone ever get killed. And no one will go to the bathroom. Of course, all of these things happen in real life, but with only a few exceptions the classic books followed these rules. In short, the classic books were intended to encourage, uplift, and entertain, rather than titillate or shock. We agree with these standards and follow them.

However, we do not hesitate to break new ground if we wish. We are aware that most of our readers are adult collectors of children's books—that means that they are, after all, adults. Although the stories are suitable for and read by children, the

storylines, issues, and events are at an adult level. We do show a little romance and even a kiss or two, at least in the later volumes.

The Starman team believes that a good story will have five ingredients:

THE PLOT—the story line must be exciting and challenging. This is Jon’s primary contribution.

ACCURACY AND PLAUSIBILITY—the science and the course of events must be either true-to-life or exceedingly believable. This is Mike’s primary contribution.

THE WRITING—the words must be poetic, the spelling and grammar correct, and the flow keep the readers’ interest. This is my primary contribution.

CHARACTERIZATION—the characters must be distinct; consistently portrayed; and act, react, and relate in engaging and believable ways. Jon and I do this together.

THEME—the overall message and any submessages should be positive and encouraging to all readers. All three of us see to this part of the saga.

We keep careful records of all plots details, characters, and so forth so that the development of a character, his or her personality and language style, and whatever else is needed to portray a character, is kept consistent.

When we want to write a book, Jon first plots the story in a summary format. The summary is shared with Mike and me for comments. When it is in a form all three of us like, I begin to write the story from the summary. The plot continues to deepen as details develop in the writing. Mike solves scientific problems

that emerge. Jon continually develops major plot ramifications. Minor plot developments emerge as I write, and we work them into the story. This is similar to the method Edward Stratemeyer used with his ghosts, except that we have added a third party for plot tweaking and plausibility, and we can collaborate by email as the book unfolds.

After the fifth book, Mike became very involved in his work and was unable to participate as much as he had. He still takes part in the discussions, however, and selected key elements of the plots in the later books are his contribution. From the fifth book, the task of providing scientific verification and making suggestions was mostly performed by Valerie Kramer, one of our earliest and most loyal readers. Valerie received each chapter as I wrote it and within a day or two sent it back to me with comments.

Sometimes we sought advice from readers who are experts in one field or another. For example, there is a scene in the third book that takes place on Titan, a moon of Saturn, whose surface temperature is about three hundred degrees below zero. One reader, a Ph.D. chemist, answered our question about what “methane rain” would look like on that satellite. The recent landing on Titan verified the information he had provided us a few years earlier. Following is the text that came out the answer to our question. It comes from *Journey to the Tenth Planet*.

Small white dots began to drift downward from the rift above them, looking almost like snowflakes. The group hurried on, but Mark took the time to ask, “What’s that? What are those white flakes?”

“That’s methane snow,” answered Kristina. “Or half-frozen rain, however you want to describe it. It’s one of the most beautiful sights on Titan, but it’s rare! The temperature inside the Gorge is

a little higher than outside, so when it snows outside it's likely to rain inside here."

As they watched, the flakes came down in increasing density from the opening above. They fell as if in slow motion. About fifty feet above the path, the flakes melted into a slush and then transformed into large drops. When they struck the path, they emitted a pale vapor.

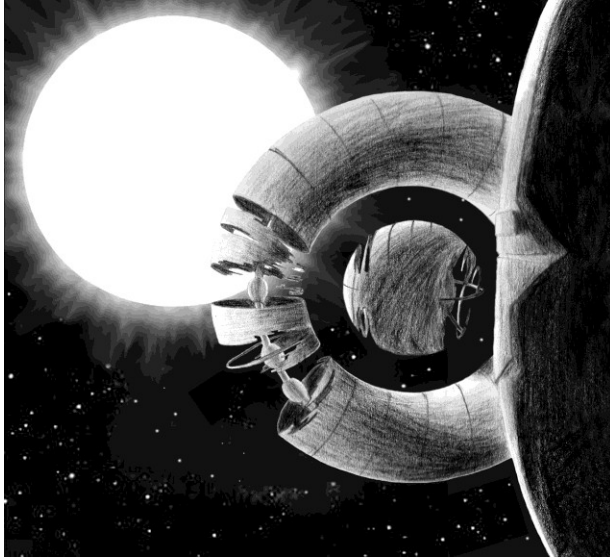
During the writing process, I also read the manuscript aloud a few chapters at a time to a small group of people that met about once a month. This audience made suggestions for improvements in anything from terminology (e.g., "You should use the term 'encryption' rather than 'scrambling'.") and caught glitches in the plot. Reading aloud also made the flow of the writing much smoother, and I made many corrections even while reading to the group.

After the first draft was completed, we sent it to Mark McSherry, another of our most dedicated readers. He read it "cold"—that is, without any advance information on what the story is about—and made comments for improvements. Even as Mark was reading, Jon Cooper was also reading the book straight through. From the comments these two made, I produced the final draft which no one saw until the book was published. From the draft of the first chapter to the final text, the entire process took roughly six months. *The Heart of Danger* took the longest time at seven months; *The Last Command* took the shortest time at just over three months.

During the time of writing, we also arranged for the illustrations. I selected about half a dozen scenes to be illustrated, and worked with the artist as he produced them. After Jon and I were

satisfied with them we put them into the text. We've used a number of different artists for this part of the project.

The artist for the last two books was Josh Kenfield. Here is a sample of his work, one of the illustrations from *The Heart of Danger*.



10. Would you consider branching out into other media, or have you?

Our books have been favorably reviewed in a number of places, including the prestigious *Analog* magazine. The review appeared in the fall of 2002 with a follow-up in 2003. The editor of Americana Publishing, Inc., a “books on tape” company, read the review and approached us with an offer to produce our books in audio format. We reviewed the contract API sent, made a few changes to which API agreed, and fulfilled out part of the

contract: to provide abridged versions of books 1-6 and the novelette. The last two books were not under contract.

After we had provided the abridgements, however, API adhered to the publication schedule but failed to pay the contractual advances or royalties, and only sent the authors' audiotapes to us after repeated calls from Jon or me. In spite of that, API has repeatedly told us that our tapes are among their best sellers. Later, they produced our books on CDs, with boxed sets also planned. Our experience with this commercial publisher has been quite disappointing. The quality of their product is very fine, but the company essentially simply tried to steal our work. After a year of being stonewalled and lied to, in May 2005 we finally received a check for our royalties. The amount, however, was completely dependent upon their unverified sales figures, and only arrived after we had contacted an attorney in their city, who represented our interests with the company. After the settlement, we offered API the last two books (under different contractual conditions, of course), but got no response. Not longer after that, they declared bankruptcy and went out of business.

Fortunately we were contacted by Roy Trumbull, a hobbyist who likes to create audiobooks. He had found us through a web search. He recorded the last Starman books.

One reason we didn't seek a publishing house in the beginning is that doing so is usually a huge aggravation, even when successful. I've done it once and didn't enjoy the process. We also started out writing the series just as a hobby, and didn't expect it to become popular or, frankly, to turn out as well as it has. We also wanted to retain complete control over the content and appearance of the Starman books. For these reasons, we intentionally began by self-publishing. Nevertheless, two or three publishers asked to look at it on the recommendations of our readers—but no one picked it up. After the eighth book came out and we had rested a little, we sought an agent. We found a

couple that were interested in our books, but neither proved reliable. Following up on recommendations from enthusiastic readers, we also examined the possibility of selling the story to movie-makers. A producer expressed fervent interest in the project, but his labors also were fruitless. We are rather soured on our experience with commercial publishing. Being commercially published was never a main goal for us, so we're not too disappointed.

11. The authoring of the Starman series quite obviously requires a broad and, at times, specific scientific background and education. Do the authors rely on their own knowledge base for technical points? If not, what sources do you use for information?

For an amateur, Mike has an extensive and expansive knowledge of these matters. Jon also is familiar with much of what we put into the books, just because he is well read. My undergraduate background, although I am a priest, is in mathematics and physics. We are all fairly well conversant with what it takes to write plausible science fiction. Valerie Karmer provides invaluable input on scientific matters for correction or refinement of the text. For our last book, *Master of Shadows*, another fan, Charlie Campbell, provided invaluable scientific commentary.

We have often found that our writing has anticipated a discovery or announcement. We have a file we call "Science Validates Starman Series". There are at least a dozen to fifteen items in it in which something we have put into the books appears a year or two or three later in a scientific journal or newspaper article.

There are a dozen or more fight scenes in the saga. I have more than twenty-five years experience as a martial artist, including nearly twenty as an instructor. The scenes are carefully planned, choreographed, tested, and sometimes even photographed, both still and video, to make sure that they are true to life.

Here is one that was carefully choreographed, practiced, filmed, and studied before the final text was written. It is from the short story, "A Matter of Time".

Toby strode ahead confidently, grabbed Sarah by both shoulders, and pulled her forward a few feet until they were opposite a closet door. Still holding her firmly with his meaty right hand he reached over with his left and pulled the door open, then began to push her into it.

Suddenly a loud, throaty groan burst from his vocal chords, like a large animal in pain. Toby collapsed into himself, both hands grabbing his groin. With her eyes flashing, Sarah reached up with both hands and pulled his head down and to her right. Her left leg bent upward and with her knee she walloped him with enormous force on the right side of his head. The big man went down in a heap and lay on the floor whimpering.

The faces of Link and Sledge showed sudden surprise and then outraged anger. They both leaped at Sarah, clutching hands outstretched.

As they rushed toward her, Sarah jumped at the one on her right, the bigger of the two assailants. With a piercing

guttural yell, she lifted her left leg into the air almost as if she were stepping onto an invisible stair and let fly a crushing kick with her right leg. The ball of her foot slammed into Sledge's solar plexus. The air whooshed out of his lungs loudly, his mouth opened like a fish out of water, and he went down.

Link stopped his rush and glared at the woman with alert wariness, his nostrils flaring with hatred.

"You just made a big mistake, honey." His voice oozed like poison. Slowly, with a lopsided evil grin, he drew his pistol. Before it had cleared the holster, Sarah dropped instantly to the floor and, supporting herself with her left leg, extended her right leg and swung it in a fast arc. She caught the saboteur just at his right ankle. The man's feet flew out from under him and he slammed down hard on the metal floor. The pistol went flying.

With a cry, the man rolled away fast from the Starlight student and leaped to his feet. His eyes glared with red fury. He snarled and charged her, bellowing and aiming a hard punch at her face with his right hand balled up in a tight fist.

Just as he released the blow, Sarah swept her right arm across in front of her head and deflected his attack, then slammed her own fist backwards into Link's face. He howled and closed his eyes, dropped his head, and covered his

face with his hands.

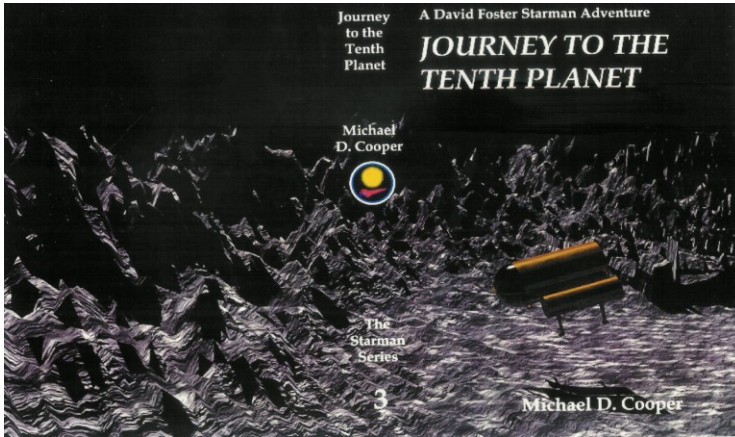
Sarah planted her right foot and whirled rapidly counter-clockwise, leaning away from her attacker. At the height of her spin, she lifted her left leg high and dealt Link a hard blow on the left side of his head. For a quarter turn, his body spun like a propeller as he dropped to the floor. By the time he came to rest, he was out cold.

12. How do you a) decide what to use for cover art, and b) who will design/illustrate the cover?

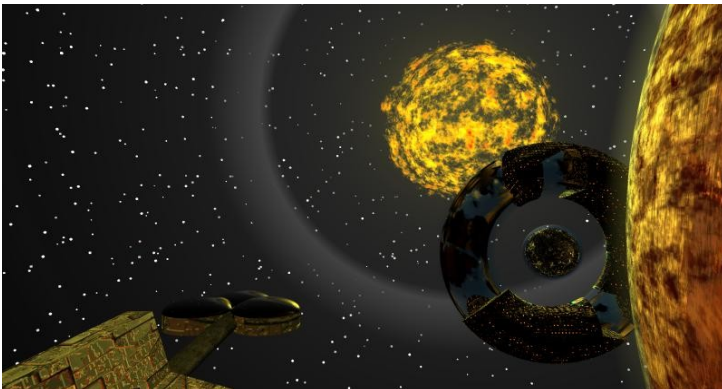
The ideas all came from what we considered are exciting scenes from the books, and each of us had a hand in suggesting the ones we select. Mike designed and painted the covers for *Mutiny On Mars* and *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. Jon designed the cover for *Descent Into Europa*, and a fan, Kevin Anetsberger, created it digitally. I designed the covers for *The Runaway Asteroid* (painted by my son), *The Lost Race of Mars* and *The Last Command* (painted by my father), and *The Heart of Danger* (painted by a friend). I designed and painted the cover for *Doomsday Horizon*. The only disappointment we've had is a magnificent cover scene that Mike designed for *Descent Into Europa*. We wanted very much to use it, but the artistic capabilities we had at the time were unable to provide it. Jon, however, produced it digitally for the cover of the second archival book available through CafePress. We found a new artist to paint the cover of the ninth book, *Master of Shadows*, and provide its internal illustrations.

Once when Jon was experimenting with a digital art program, he designed and produced an alternate cover for *Journey to the Tenth Planet*. I really like it, but it will not replace the one that

Mike painted. He did use it, however, for the first volume of Cafepress version of the Starman saga. We call this book *Quest for the Light*.



The second volume is called *Warriors of the Light*. Jon's first draft of its cover is below. Jon adapted Josh Kenfield's internal illustration (reproduced above) for this rendering.



13. Several months ago, “Michael Cooper” made the announcement that the series would be shortened from a series of over 20 volumes to a series of 8 volumes. Why was this decision made? How will you fit all of your material into the last books?

Simply put, we couldn’t fit all of our material into the last books. Some stories (a few of which have been plotted in detail) are just not going to be told, although the summaries will be made available. Jon has provided downloads called “The Starman Appendix”. They are free for the asking, and provide several hundred pages of background material, including plot summaries.

We decided to trim the title listing down for two reasons: we no longer had enough money or fans to make writing more books feasible, and we simply became too tired to write more of them. Although we thoroughly enjoyed writing the series, doing so has been exhausting. We worked the writing into our spare time, and all of us are busy people with demanding work. We’ve also learned that one phenomenon of series books is that each volume sells fewer copies than the one before, especially if one is telling an ongoing story, as we are. (Much to our surprise, however, the last book sold more copies than the one before.) Since we only started five years ago with about 320 readers, we couldn’t afford to lose too many customers and still keep the project cost-effective.

14. What is the message that you, as authors, try to convey to your readers?

The broad-stroke message in the Starman books is that light will always conquer darkness, good will conquer evil. The message is stated several times in different ways in each of the books. The theme of light shining in darkness is constant, and expressed in many different ways. It is a message common to all people of good will. The fine-stroke theme of the books is to extol basic virtue—true pleasure, honor, integrity, loyalty, patience, respect, endurance, resourcefulness, courage, etc.

It has been made clear from the first advertisements for the Starman series that I am an Episcopal priest, and that Jon Cooper and Mike Dodd are also Christians. It should not be a surprise that there are some Christian images in the books, but they haven't been placed furtively to sneak Christianity into the story. They're there because, as any author should who cares about producing a good book, we draw upon what we know best and use the images and symbols with which we are most familiar. If we wrote about something of which we were ignorant, the book wouldn't be realistic or convincing.

To illustrate this theme, here is a passage from the novelette, *The Lost Tomorrow*.

He became passionate, downright passionate, that we succeed. The night he emoted to us about it nearly broke our hearts.

"You *must* succeed!" he cried out. "It is your world that must prevail! My world should never have existed! It is an *accident*! No more than an aberration! An aberration that prevented the healing

of humanity that came through Thomas and Richard Starlight and the Starmen!

"I sensed it, we all sensed it that foggy morning back in Buckeye the day we flew to Florida. It was Ira who realized it first. It was Ira who said that we had to help you to get back to your own tomorrow, even if it cost us our own existence! Strich and I knew he was right." He spoke mournfully and shook his head in an expression of grief such as I'd never seen before. "We ought never to have existed in our gray, featureless world!" he said huskily and with such passion that we were all deeply moved.

"Roos," said Mark in tones of earnest tenderness and sensitivity. "Roos," he said, "I can't believe that anyone's life is an accident. Whatever is in the scheme of things or the patterns of existence of all the mysteries of time and space, no life can ever be an accident!" He paused and swallowed. "And no sacrifice is without value. Your life and those of your friends are now inextricably bound up with ours, though we are men of different tomorrows. We are products of a shared history and we have a shared humanity. Across the immensities of time and truth, we are brothers. Whatever ultimately happens is out of our control, but the choices we make are always about ultimate truth and goodness—and these things are absolutes not bound by time or history or chance."

It is not our first intention to make the series a subtle tool for “preaching”. Rather it is first of all that the books be enjoyable to people across the spectrum of belief, but we do have something to share. The series is designed to encourage the human mind and spirit and extol the virtues of courage, honesty, and good-heartedness. The lead characters follow a philosophy that life is good, the creation is exciting as well as beautiful, hope is reasonable and worthwhile, and the spirit of adventure is worth pursuing. We are very much directing the books to a general audience.

We’re taking a little-traveled road in the series book field by putting a taste of philosophical matters into the books, but even this has some precedents in the series book world. We believe that putting these issues in our stories rather than ignoring them makes the stories closer to reality. After all, no matter what any given reader’s personal convictions may be, everyone does have some kind of philosophy of life, and each person’s beliefs can be refined by encountering others’ philosophies.

Certainly one constant theme is personal responsibility and having to choose for or against absolute goodness; another is having to bear the burden of others’ evil; yet another is whether to risk a great sacrifice for the greater good; still another is that the virtues of courage, love, patience, goodness, and harmony cannot be taken for granted. I intentionally try to create emotionally intense scenes in the stories—intense for the characters and therefore intense for the readers, so that the readers in some way also have to face the choices the characters face.

One unusual factor in the Starman Series is the emotional and spiritual development of the characters. Very few series, classic or recent, present their stories in chronological sequence. However, most often the characters’ growth in these few series was mostly growth in years—that is, the characters merely “grew

up". In the Starman Series, although the characters do "grow up" in years, of much greater significance is that they also "grow deep". They "mature" emotionally and spiritually. The Starmen, although heroic, are flawed. The three of them came to work together when they found, unconsciously, that the strengths each had balanced out the flaws of the others. Yet the flaws remained and, as the saga continued, continually cried out to be acknowledged and addressed.

In the past year or so, we have wondered seriously whether there really is a market for the Starman series and its message of hope, virtue, and responsibility. The themes we set out so earnestly just seem not to be generally valued or wanted in today's culture. When the publishers of the old series of the early twentieth century advertised their products, they appealed to "good clean adventure" and the encouragement to build virtue in young people. It seems to us that in the early twenty-first century, these qualities are not even much understood, much less valued.

We were taught as children that a virtuous life is a pleasure all its own, working hard will get you ahead, honesty will be rewarded, and integrity is the way to go. We carried these convictions into our adulthood, but our experience has shown that in real life these qualities are the exceptions. Very often, in the corporate world honesty and integrity are threatening rather than admirable. Making money is of highest importance, and is to be made not by producing dependable or worthwhile products or services but by finding clever ways to extract it from the public. Very often people who work hard lose their jobs because they threaten the status quo.

We've learned that there are fortunes to be made by thinking for the short term and not having much regard for customers or employees. Those who are honest will often be taken advantage of, and it is understood that the corporate office expects an employee to lie when necessary. If you want to be promoted you

have to play “the game”. No doubt it has always been this way, but these standards seem to be a lot more accepted today than in previous generations.

The Starman Series is an anomaly. It simply does not fit into the modern world. Many of our few fans are intensely dedicated to the series, but there are others who have sampled it and shaken their heads in bewilderment. Nevertheless, we are heartily convinced that our message is not only based on a foundation of truth but much needed in our culture. In fact, it is a premise in the Starman series itself that greed and dishonesty led to the collapse of Earthly culture, and from that collapse came a renewed sense of wonder and adventure.

The bookflap of *Mutiny On Mars* puts it this way. “At the beginning of the 21st century, the world economy was booming. Within two decades, however, most multinational corporations had overreached themselves and a severe, global depression set in, unprecedented in scope. All efforts to counter it failed. Governments fell and the infrastructure of the planet decayed, initiating the worst period in human history. The age became known as the Collapse, and was characterized by worldwide violence, terrorism, and unrestrained criminal opportunism. But the century ended with a glimmer of hope. The concepts of stewardship, accountability, and mutual responsibility revived. Starlight Enterprise was founded in 2089, committed to rebuilding the Earth and its culture.”

We present a fictional world that is, in many ways, the world the way we wish it were. It bursts with a sense that it is “morning”, fresh, intense, and full of wonder and promise. It is a message we are convinced our world badly needs, but hardly knows how to understand or value. If we are “preaching” anything, I guess that would be it.

Sometimes even this symbolic element is made specific in the

Starman series. This text is from chapter 11 of *The Lost Race of Mars*.

With a sweeping glance Zip took in the staggering sight of a gigantic cliff dropping down abruptly just ahead of them, its ruddy slopes dotted with cedars and stone joints that led down into clefts filled with gray smoke. Far below was a ragged red world of rock, bare and shining wetly in the aftermath of the rain. Spires and domes and crags, clear and strange in the morning light, uplifted from the bottom of the canyon with beauty that seemed more fable than fact.

The vastness and grandeur caused Zip to draw in a sharp breath. Mark and Joe moved up to gaze from the forward window. Looking back toward the sun, the Starmen saw the edge of a dazzling disk of light lift over the distant horizon and radiate brilliant illumination that flowed through layers of saffron mist. Dawnlight touched the topmost parts of the canyon, and the opposite side showed the first trace of gold.

"There's a large overhang on the opposite side of the canyon," pointed out Zip, "and it looks as though there's a cave there, too. That might be just about ideal for our purposes." He eased the *Star Ranger* forward over the edge of the canyon. The rock walls dropped below them in majestic splendor. Zip followed the profile of the cliff down, keeping close to the enormous rocks that shaped the

sides of the chasm. At the bottom he crossed and then ascended past the spectacular rises on the far side.

He lifted up through a shadow-hung gap in the escarpments and found the space he had discerned before. A large hollow, carved over eons out of the soft stone by the powerful winds of Mars, made a concave shelter under the outcropping. He eased the *Star Ranger* onto the ledge, and slowly and carefully brought it as far into concealment as he could. With scarcely a trace of motion, he rested the ship onto its landing gear and shut down the power.

"I'm hungry," announced Joe. "I'll make breakfast. I doubt there's a finer place on the planet for a meal." He set coffee to perking, then gathered up a couple of frying pans and checked the larder for eggs, potatoes, and bacon.

While Joe was preparing breakfast, Zip set the table. Mark secured his helmet and stepped out of the airlock onto the ledge. A stand of hardy fir trees grew on one side. Far off to the east, a vivid rainbow glowed through the mist in a dazzling arc.

15. Do you feel that the elements of the Starman series are equal to those of series books of the past, as far as adventure, mystery, espionage, romance, and excitement?

The Starman team definitely includes all these elements—even a little romance. Are we the equal of the books of the past? I suppose our readers must be the best judges of that, and some of their comments are shared below. We set out to produce stories whose setting and style are similar to those of the Tom Corbett and Dig Allen series. We wanted the stories to have the adventure and intrigue so popular in the Rick Brant series. We wanted to provide the intellectual challenge and intricacy of the Ken Holt series. We wanted to include a little philosophy about life and human endeavor in the same way the Tom Quest series and the books of Capwell Wyckoff did. But most of all, we just hoped that the Starman series would develop its own character—in the style of the classic books without imitating them too much.

I think that other series—at least the top quality ones—may do a better job than we do in some of these areas you asked about, but I also think that the Starman series does excel in other areas these other series did not. Not that the classic series couldn't have done so, but they were aimed at children or teenagers and didn't explore the higher themes. For example we have put a lot of effort into developing a convincing and even chilling picture of evil in some of our characters. Here is one scene from *Descent Into Europa*.

Denn's lips tightened and his forehead creased. "I'll have to radio the *Maiden* and tell them to go back and finish the job."

"No! I order you!" cried Nolan, standing up. "I'm in charge here! I order you to stop them!"

Denn laughed again. "Robert Nolan," he said indulgently. "You're not in charge here. You haven't been in charge for a year. I've been in charge for a long time. Look around you. How many people do you see? We allowed everyone to go home, don't you remember? Who is left aboard? *Only the crew I hired, only the people I picked! I'm in charge, Robert!*"

Robert's face blanched and he rocked on his feet. Beowulf Denn slowly rose, put a large hand on Robert's chest, and pushed him gently but irresistibly down into his chair.

"No," said Robert quietly, as if into the air. "No. It's my plant." He leaped to his feet. Energy surged into him and he screamed. "Get out of my way! I'll give the orders myself!"

Denn pushed him down into the chair again, none too gently this time. Robert jumped up yet again, and Denn struck him down with an open hand. Robert fell over the chair and sprawled on the ground, stunned and still unbelieving. Sudden fury filled him. He crawled forward out of Denn's immediate reach, and scrambled to his feet.

He saw a display case in front of him. He grabbed a dark and pocked iron meteorite the size of a lemon, whirled around, and threw it with all his might at his adversary. The heavy stone struck the large, grinning man on his forehead

with enormous force. Denn expelled a huge blast of air, clutched upward, and fell back to the floor unconscious.

Robert fled from the room. Outside, he composed himself and headed for the shuttleport.

And another from *The Runaway Asteroid*.

"They found us!!" Zimbardo shouted. "They found us! The Earthmen know where we are! They've located the fleet!! The freighters those fools destroyed yesterday were decoys! The Earthmen deployed the real probes and they've already found us! They outsmarted us!" He cursed vehemently, then growled as if his teeth were grinding on gravel. "But I've never been outsmarted! I won't be outsmarted now!"

Zimbardo jumped back into his chair. "Gene! *GENE!!*" He screamed like a man possessed.

"Right here sir," said the young man, coming up quickly to the pirate leader's side.

"Crank up all the power this asteroid can give me! I'm going to create the biggest electromagnetic pulse this Solar System has ever seen, and *BURN every last one of those probes out of the void!!* And then when we are invisible again, we'll move this asteroid to a new course and continue our plan."

"But sir," pleaded Gene, almost desperately. "That would take a lot of power! It would be highly inefficient and

might work against us! I don't know the power capacity of the asteroid! It could very well burn us out!"

Zimbardo stopped moving for a moment, then turned his head very slowly around and stared at Gene. His eyes glinted with an unearthly light.

"Do it," he hissed.

Gene stepped back half a pace, then pivoted swiftly and ran to the power breakers on the far side of the room. He began to pull switches, override safety indicators, and turn power dials to maximum output.

In a little less than three minutes, he turned and looked back at Zimbardo. The pirate leader had not taken his eyes off of his assistant for a second. With his mouth slightly open, Gene looked into Zimbardo's eyes from across the room and nodded with a quick jerk of his head. Zimbardo smiled, inclined his head slowly, and turned back to his console. He laughed out loud and pressed the switch that activated a general direction EMP.

We excel, I think, in the matters addressed in the previous question—briefly, in drawing on cosmic themes and developing the humanity of our characters. And I might go so far to say that I think we have blended the best virtues of the classic series into one set of stories. We also put in a fair measure of sophisticated humor. Several scenes have caused readers to laugh out loud.

Here is a sample of adventure and excitement from the seventh

book, *The Heart of Danger*.

"Jack!" Zip yelled, his bellow fed by intense alarm. A second burst from enemy lasers seared the space where Zip's head had just been and sheered off the end of his laser rifle. With a snarl the Starman flung his useless weapon down and, turning, sped along the right hand passage toward the opposite side of the ship, looking fruitlessly for the shoulder pack. He came to the place where he and Jack had labored at the bottom of the shaft.

"Aayahhh!" he screamed in anger, frustration, and to release the pent-up energy of battle. Weaponless, he saw the pipe he had used to assist Jack to place Karax's device and snatched it up. "Ah, Jack, Jack!" he lamented with teeth-clenching intensity.

As soon as the first Xenobot sidled into sight in the rounded passageway, Zip leaped to the attack with fury, wielding the length of pipe faster than human eye could follow, holding his weapon with both hands in the middle and slamming his attacker alternately with the ends. Six, seven, eight blows hammered the Xenobot in less than two seconds. The laser pistol it held in its wormlike appendage shook with each strike. The metallic casings were too strong for Zip's bludgeon to do any harm to the structure, but the soft gelatinous tissues inside were violently

whipped and shaken.

Sensing an attack from the rear, Zip looked over his shoulder, his face gripped with dreadful passion. Without pausing, shouting a war cry that only he could hear, Zip drove the pipe straight back like a battering ram, its pointed end connecting with the metallic upper body of his second attacker. The force flung the Xenobot backwards into the third that was close behind.

Zip turned forward again and drove the blunt end of the pipe against the first Xenobot, which was still reeling from the vehemence of the Starmen's initial blows. The mollusk-like creature flew off its tripedal supports. With full force, Zip swung the pipe like a pickaxe onto its glassy front. Without pausing to see the result he whirled once again and pummeled the two that had come up behind him.

16. How do you feel your series compares to the series of the '60s and prior - giants of science fiction such as Dig Allen and the ever-popular Tom Swift?

Generally, at the risk of boasting, I think we do pretty well. We were told by one reader, an expert in the series book world, that he considered the Starman series to be better than 98% of the series he collected and read. For me, the top 2% are Rick Brant and Ken Holt, so I took his comment to imply that our books are

close to those two series. It's not exactly what he said, but it's how I took it, and I was greatly pleased.

But we can never do what the classic series did effortlessly—reflect the era of the 1950s and '60s and so connect with the childhood of our adult readers. Our series can never create the same response in its readers as the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, Tom Swift Jr., Ken Holt, or Rick Brant do, or even Tom Corbett or Dig Allen. It is something new. This means that in some ways, the Starman series is a citizen of no world and therefore “homeless”. It reads like the 1950s, but it is a product of the first years of the 2000s. The appeal of the Starman series, when it has any, is complex.

Perhaps the best way to answer your question is to let a few of our readers speak for themselves. Here are quotes from messages we have received.

Jim Ogden

The first book in the Starman series, *Assault on Mars*, is a wonderfully old-fashioned futuristic story. I strongly recommend its purchase. I can't wait for the next book in the series.

Fred Woodworth

I think you've got a winner on your hands. No kidding, this is a fully professional series-type book. I'd have read it and liked it when I was a kid. It has a lot going for it just in the old genre style alone, but I also see things that seem to be more in line with how people think and react today. I see a lot of stuff like this in your book, the kind of thing that could not be reproduced effectually by anyone not part of the series-fan community.

Ed Pippin

In an age where electronic games, Internet surfing and computers compete for the leisure time of young people, the STARMAN series is a welcomed alternative. It is also a great read for “older”

Cadets who remember the TOM CORBETT and RICK BRANT stories. It is a project conducted by fans for fans with a professional result. The style and flavor of the STARMAN series is reminiscence of the book series Robert Heinlein wrote for Scribner in the 1950s. Heinlein never “talked down” to his audience in his series of books and neither do the STARMAN books.

Mike DeBaptiste

The new Starman #1 ASSAULT ON MARS is a really terrific book in the classic space adventure mode with a vast epic sweep. This book is exceptionally well-written. Descriptive passages of space, the Martian landscape, and the city and tunnels are terrific and had me pausing to read them over again. The plotting is excellent with its eerie mystery, twists and turns, and some nice surprises thrown in, and the action and dialogue are crisp and fast, keeping the pace upbeat.

Mike Pahlow

I finished the book. It is really very good!! I’m impressed with the story line and the characters enough to want to continue with each new proposed edition!! It does indeed remind me of the Tom Corbett and Rick Brant series books.

Jim Gaudet

True confession time: my step-daughters’ dad loaned me one of his two copies of *Assault on Mars* and I read it last week. Wow! I am way past being impressed. This book is professionally written but true to the spirit of all those great series books of my youth. Congratulations!

Daniel Routh

I got Starman #2—thank you! I’ve read a good bit of it, and after the first two chapters it really got interesting. I could barely put it down—in fact, I didn’t for a while. I’m sure my homework suffered a little for that. ... This book [#5] flowed marvelously—

I felt as though it was a real magnet pulling me along irresistibly. The plot was always unexpected—a good change of pace. And it kept me constantly thinking and emoting as I followed the varied story lines. Excellent job! ... The Starman series infuses new life into such old clichés as world-destruction. In the authors' world they awake, breathe, and tremble.

Steven J. Servello

The three (known collectively as Michael. D. Cooper) have utilized a plot device that is lacking in most series but very prevalent in other series (Dray Prescot and The Survivalist) which are my absolute favorites in all of literature, though not juvenile in nature. This device is to plant seeds (or mysteries) that will be eventually revealed as the series progresses and with new ones being dispersed throughout the balance of the books. This forms a great feeling of continuity, not usually seen in the genre. My thoughts on the enjoyment factor (the most important) while reading "Assault?" A superb adventure that held my interest throughout.

Valerie Kramer

This series is really pioneering a lot of new ideas in series books! I know everyone wishes the books had a larger audience but you can all be proud of a good job, and just maybe that audience will find you yet. If nothing else, your place in the history of series books is assured.

Dale Ames

This series of books is the best series of Space Adventures to fly into our Solar System. Not since the Tom Corbett series of books have we read and enjoyed books of this high a quality. Great plots and thrills a minute as our Starmen jet thru space, battling space pirates and dangers. I was unable to put my copy of book #1 "Assault On Mars" down until I completed the novel.

Neil Shapiro

The first two books “Assault on Mars” and “The Runaway Asteroid” are now out. I ordered the first one and I knew when I saw it I was in for a special treat. Bound as an old series-style book with a cover from the ‘50s, it was presented as a doorway into the future and yet reminiscent of the past as well. But this NOT a nostalgia book or even something that seems dated. Instead, it is a natural continuation into present day interests and writing style of the old, popular juvenile SF series. If you want to introduce a young teen to SciFi, well, I don’t know a better way right now.

Ed Haser

It is an interesting experience to read today after 40 years of technology advance, books written with a mid-1900s view of technology and society. Darn amazed at how well you guys, especially you “youngsters”, are able to re-create that experience in the books.

Mark McSherry

One of the strengths of the Starman books—in my humble opinion—is the sense of place as well as predicament in the telling of the stories. The Starman Team has enough confidence in their work to take time to leaven the plotting with descriptive accounts of both locale and environment. And by drawing on all five of the reader’s senses while doing so, enriches the tale by adding a depth that lingers in the memory long after the telling.

I knew the Series could be something special while reading *Assault On Mars*. The trek across the Martian landscape to Eagle City, which takes up the middle portion of the book, is exciting in and of itself. But the journey, especially after meeting up with Jogren, takes on a leisurely, almost lyrical quality as the earthmen land-sail across a snowy plain, then work their way on foot through the maze of the mud caves, till finally kayaking the Martian Sea. It is writing such as this, and there are other

examples throughout the entire series, that transcends the boys'-sf-adventure series genre that the Team seeks to emulate and pay homage to.

Laurel Barber Yoshimoto

I had saved the latest Star Man book to read until yesterday as a treat. After MONTHS of waiting to read your book I finally read it and it was FABULOUS! So, I just wanted to say please keep writing! I love stuff like this and you write it really well. The book didn't seem 400+ pages long, and it moved at a good pace.

Tim Parker

Just finished *Doomsday Horizon*! (I tried to stretch it out as long as I could but you guys made it so exciting that I finally had to finish it.) It was a very enjoyable read. I didn't think that you would be able to top *The Lost Race of Mars* but I think that you just may have. It had everything in it that you could ask for in a children's (or adults pretending they're children's) series.

Bert Francis

Recently finished *Tenth Planet*—VERY EXCITING AND VERY GOOD!! It had some really powerful, unexpected parts to it, and it was thoroughly entertaining. I'd have to say that it's my favorite so far in terms of gripping suspense and overall readability, although *Asteroid* comes in a very close second

Tony Baechler

This has to be one of the best series I have read in a long time. It is very addictive and it is hard to stop reading. You have proven that you can tell a good epic without excessive violence. I think this is one of my favorite science fiction series.

17. Do you think there is still room in today's society for series fiction? In a future society?

If you're asking about the series books of the classic era, probably not, though I would be delighted to be proven wrong. The popularity of series book reprints is probably mostly nostalgia more than finding a new audience. The world has changed. How well do children read? When the series book era started a little over a century ago, not even radio was commonplace. There were newspapers and the budding film industry. Reading was a mainstay of popular entertainment. Now there is too much competition, and the competition is widespread and highly influential, although mostly of extremely poor quality. (Gladly, there are some marked exceptions.) That has contributed to changing people's tastes and shortening their attention spans.

In the twentieth century, the popular culture moved from books to radio to movies to television to computers to videogames. The entertainment industry keeps moving faster and faster. Among all the competitors for people's attention, books move the slowest and demand the most from the imagination. When the Stratemeyer Syndicate revised its classic texts beginning in 1959, one criterion seemed to be to remove the parts of the stories that might be called "literature"—an educated vocabulary and the element that featured simple enjoyment of life and descriptions of the terrain and the seasons. In the early 1960s, this was considered "boring" and unnecessary to the adventure. The books became shorter and shorter, slicker and slicker, used a simpler vocabulary, and appealed more and more to excitement rather than to character building and telling a good story. Many people today, including adults, can get by without being able to read very well. Compared to previous eras, today's general culture has become functionally illiterate—communicating a lot by images and voices, not written words. I cannot envision a future society reverting to valuing the printed word by any large

measure.

So although I believe that the Starman series is very good, those features that make it so may ironically also render it unsellable today. In the long run, I think that the Starman series is a project born out of time. It is hard to imagine that it will ever be widely known. The Starman Team knew this when we began our work. Nevertheless, we are delighted that we took it on and gratified that we've done it well—better than we ever guessed we could at the beginning, when an 18-year-old was doing the plotting and the writer hadn't written fiction for thirty years. Even if the series fades into obscurity, and no more than two or three hundred people ever read it, we're very glad we did it. Writing the Starman saga has certainly changed our own lives for the better, and when we think about it, we actually succeeded far beyond our fondest dreams when we first hatched the idea of creating a new series nearly seven years ago.

WHEN WE THOUGHT IT WAS ALL OVER (2005)

The Printing History, Sales, and Royalties

Assault On Mars was first offered for sale in early July 2000. As of 2006, the sales figures were:

Assault on Mars (handbound and AuthorHouse editions)	532
Mutiny on Mars (AuthorHouse and AWB editions)	198
The Runaway Asteroid	420
Journey to the Tenth Planet	379
Descent Into Europa	373
The Lost Race of Mars	324
Doomsday Horizon (AuthorHouse and AWB editions)	335
The Heart of Danger	173
The Last Command	202
Starman Archives, Volume 1	21
Starman Archives, Volume 2	19
Starman Archives, Volume 3	19
Quest for the Light (all versions)	37
Warriors of the Light (all versions)	42
The Seven Starman Chronicles (including 65 complete sets)	461
The Five Inter*Stellars (23 complete sets and 52 incomplete sets)	277
Total number of books sold:	3,074
Total number of fanzines sold:	738
Bank balance as of June 30, 2006:	\$1,701.87

The commercial printers we used required a minimum print run of 500 copies, a number well in excess of our sales. The books published by AuthorHouse—*Mutiny On Mars* and *Doomsday Horizon*—cost more to produce than income we received from the sales. The print run of *The Lost Race of Mars*, so beautifully crafted by Friesens, cost over \$7,000; that was still only about \$14 per book, but sales never came close to covering the expense. There were several times when our bank balance went into the red and we advanced personal money to ensure that a book would be printed; subsequent sales usually brought us back into the black.

Gradually, however, our bank balance remained in the black. This was only made possible when we took advantage of the print-on-demand industry, and no longer had to advance large sums of money to ensure that a book would be printed. Income from the Americana audiobooks was about \$2,500; income from electronic versions was about \$300; income from Lulu versions was about \$200. Net income from all sources from the first sale in July 2000 to early 2017, nearly 17 years, is roughly \$4,700, which has been distributed to the three members of the Starman Team by a formula we had all agreed to early in our partnership. Very rough estimates suggest that our overall earnings came to no more than six cents an hour. As Jon often said, “Now at last we can buy that stick of gum we’ve always wanted.”

When *Master of Shadows* was published in 2011, about eighty-five copies were made for about sixty customers. Income and expenses were about equal; there was neither profit nor loss.

Jon and David still have several cartons of books 2-5 sitting in their garages. We don’t know what to do with them.

MASTER OF SHADOWS (2010)

We deliberately left a number of issues unresolved when we wrote “The End” on the last page of *The Last Command* in the spring of 2005. That book even has an appendix in which we knocked around the issue of who the First Races were and what their history and future were. We also had not explained what the strange planet Larson’s Folly was; we knew ourselves but chose not to put it into a story. We hadn’t given the full history of the Xenobots, nor had we explained the origin and nature of the greegles.

For a while, we thought that leaving these matters unresolved was a way of showing that the boundaries of the Starmen’s World were larger than we could tell, and that there were stories beyond the horizon. We hoped it would present a kind of mystery to the entire saga that would leave readers full of wonder and stimulate their imaginations.

But after a few years, we felt unsatisfied ourselves, and we missed working together. Jon finally suggested that we write one more novel. He made an initial draft, and for a time he was both plotter and writer, and I merely commented. Mike had become less and less involved in the saga after *Doomsday Horizon*, so from that point forward the work was done mostly by Jon and David, although with the participation and assistance of several fans such as Valerie Kramer, Mark McSherry, and Charlie Campbell.

After a while, in early 2010, it became evident that Jon had hit upon a marvelous story that could wrap up the loose ends of the Starman saga while adding some new material. The potential was exciting and stimulating. He and I corresponded a lot about how to take his ideas, and in September 2010 I sat down with his story before me, and

began to work it into what became *Master of Shadows: The Sequel to the Last Starman Book*. The reading group was formed again, with one continuing member and a couple of new members. The creative process that had worked so well 2000-2005 was back in gear, and the last Starman book was under way. Work was completed about seven or eight months later.

WE SAW DEEPER

One of the first things that happened as we were creating *Master of Shadows* is that our vision of the Starman saga deepened. The issues of free will, moral choice, the search for immortality, the nature of evil, and so forth became more complex. The first major change we made was to the nature and even the appearance of the Xenobots. This required going through the entire saga and changing every reference to the Xenobots. When *Master of Shadows* was completed, I wrote the following explanation of what changes were made and why.

Changing the Xenobots

By David M. Baumann
July 11 & 21, 2011

From May 28-July 8, 2011, I read the entire Starman saga for the first time, just for personal enjoyment. Still reading as the author, though, and given the opportunity, I made about a thousand notes²⁹ for tiny corrections which have now been incorporated into the text of the trilogy available on Lulu.com.

²⁹ A second read-through a few years later led to nearly a thousand more corrections.

As I read, it became evident, though, that one big change was needed: I had to alter the appearance of the Xenobots. That conviction became especially demanding when I got to *Master of Shadows* and read the history of the Xenobots. Given who the Xenobots were, it was obvious that our original description of them was far too tame. I've always thought that buckets with slime in them peering out of a window is really not too scary. I came up with that description rather quickly and early in the saga. But now an alteration of their appearance was screamingly required. The Xenobots had to be nightmares.

So I came up with another idea that makes more sense to the Starman story and the whole idea of the Lucian race falling into depravity. When I ran the idea by Jon and sent him the first draft of the rewritten scene when the Xenobots' appearance is first described, Jon wrote back: "I think you've nailed it! Great work. This is a clear improvement over the old Xenobots, and makes a great deal more sense."

So I set out to make the revision. That meant some noteworthy rewriting in several of the books, which I achieved in a couple of days. All those changes are shown below. I also went through the text of the entire saga and changed a few small things that are not in this document, just because they were too small to reproduce—like changing the appellation "buckets" to "metal heads" and so forth. It's possible I missed a few little things but I am hopeful that the changeover is thorough and complete.

So with this document, the Starman Team now introduces the "new and improved" Xenobots. They are now much more fitting for one's nightmares. The text in [blue](#) is new.

JOURNEY TO THE FARTHEST PLANET

FROM Chapter 11: Zimbardo's Superiors

"C'mon, let's see what's waiting for us out there," urged Saunders, herding everyone toward the airlock. When everyone was ready, he opened it. One by one, sixteen people descended the ladder and stepped out onto the surface of the dark planet.

When they had all reached the bottom, they huddled together at the base of the ladder, waiting for their captors to make the next move. Simultaneously, doors at the bottom of the four cylindrical ships opened up. More than two dozen creatures of roughly humanoid shape disembarked and rapidly arranged themselves in a circle around the *Starventure* at a distance of about fifty yards. A few others slowly came into view from the shadow beneath the large overhang.

"Wh—, what are those things?" Kerrel cried out, his voice filled with hysteria and his eyes goggling. No one answered. In the dimness, the creatures were difficult to see. The people from Earth crushed a little closer together so that everyone was touching and no one stood out.

When the creatures that had emerged from the cavernous opening had joined the circle, it began to close very slowly. ~~In the dimness, the creatures were difficult to see, but~~ Gradually the people from Earth discerned that ~~they~~ the creatures were a little more than four feet tall, ~~but their small size did not moderate the sense of dread that was growing in the humans. They were tripedal, and moved with very fluid motions, almost like spilled liquid flowing freely over the ground. Several curling arms that resembled huge worms, rattails, or whips extruded from cylindrical bodies. Overall they were a smudgy gray color, resembling badly tarnished silver, with highlights of cobalt blue.~~ ~~A~~ On the contrary, a feeling of menace grew appreciably as the creatures approached the huddled group of terrorized Earth people. ~~Their captors walked on two legs like men, but there was ungainliness, a deliberation to their pace, and a suggestion of~~

something mechanical in the way they moved.

Derf Bors fought the drug that had interrupted his coordination and thought processes. With a determined shake of his head, he pushed his way to the front of the crowd and stepped forward, facing the creatures that had come from the cavern's mouth. As Bors stepped out, the circle of creatures stopped moving, but those whom ~~Bors~~ he faced continued their approach. ~~When they were about twenty feet away, Bors focused his attention on where their heads had to be. He could tell that there was something different at that place from the rest of the creatures' bodies.~~ As they came closer, he Bors squinted, turned slightly aside, shook his cottony head once again, and stared.

When he finally realized what he was seeing, his head cleared instantly. The rush of adrenaline that surged through him eradicated all ~~traces~~ effects of the drug that had been put into his coffee. He gasped and stared, unable to tear his eyes away from the phalanx of beings that was moving slowly but inexorably toward him.

They were humanoid in shape but with a horrifying mockery of what it meant to have a head, two arms, and two legs. Their legs were made of narrow tubes and rods and links, with ball joints at their knees that appeared able to move in any direction. Their feet were made of close-fitting mesh over long, narrow, jointed tubes like bones, and had long toes that could clutch and grip.

Their arms were multi-jointed, comprised of several linked units connected by rods. Their hands had four overlong central fingers and two opposing thumbs, all made of metal sinews. Bors had the impression that they were strong enough to rip open spacesuits and crush human limbs without effort.

Like the creatures' extremities, their torsos were a smudgy gray color, resembling badly tarnished silver, with highlights of cobalt blue. There were several vents that could open and close like fishes' gills, and a few crystalline portals through which he could see blue lights that brightened and dimmed in a slow pattern like breathing.

Bors saw all this in a matter of seconds. What drew his attention more than anything else was the creatures' heads. They were metal fully encased in clear crystal, with neither mouths nor noses nor ears, but with eyes that stared outward in a ghastly parody of seeing, like living eyes in a skull.

With a jolt of horror and revulsion, Bors realized that there was a living being of flesh inside each metal artifice, a being with only a head and torso, and that the eyes were the only visible part of the actual creature inside the metal casing. He had the impression that the eyes looked upon him haughtily and dismissively, expressing no feeling other than a curious enjoyment of his alarm.

The captain of the *Starventure* suddenly became aware of a chilling wailing noise, and with a prickly feeling up and down his spine, he recognized that it was the panicked shrieks and cries of the fear-crazed humans behind him.

~~“They have no faces!” he thought. He wanted to laugh and shriek at the same time. Inside the viewports were things that looked like the bottom of a snail’s foot. “Like raw liver with some sort of shiny gelatin on it!”~~

The circle began to move in again, and the creature closest to Derf Bors reached out ~~a stunted rattail arm. At the end tiny prehensile fingers opened to clutch at him.~~ **a hand with fingers like thick spiders’ legs, opened to clutch at him.**

FROM Chapter 15: Utterly Alien

“Somebody coming,” said Poppy. Apprehension filled Bors, and he felt his pulse speed up. He looked up as the door opened. Three Xenobots ~~flew~~ **stepped** into the room. Bors shuddered involuntarily when he ~~saw the faceless entities~~ **looked into the soulless eyes.** A mechanical voice spoke.

“Zimbardo come. New leader come.”

“Put on your helmet, Captain,” announced Poppy. “You’re going to meet the head mollusk! Nothing to be afraid of—he’ll just want to get acquainted with his new guests, I imagine.” He went

over to Lurton Zimbardo and helped him to his feet.

"You want me to go with you, Captain?" asked Dennis Bronk.

"Yes, Dennis. Yes, I would, thanks," said Bors. He and Bronk put on their helmets. Tony Stagnum and Poppy put Zimbardo's helmet on him. Zimbardo shuffled his way to the waiting Xenobots, and Bors and Bronk joined him. The Xenobots turned and left the cell with the three humans following. They paused in the airlock as the air was changed to that which the Xenobots breathed, then proceeded when the outer door opened.

They retraced their steps almost back to the main entrance of the Xenobots' compound, but turned off into a side room before reaching the outer doors. A half dozen Xenobots stood in a group in the center of a chamber that had been carved out of the stone of the planet. Several pieces of electronic equipment were scattered at the edges of the room, but there was nothing like furniture—no table or chairs, nothing that could conjure any feeling of familiarity to the humans.

This is beyond foreign, thought Derf Bors. This is utterly alien. I'm facing alien beings, but I can feel in my heart that there cannot ever be any real communication between us. We have nothing in common. I share more with a squirrel or even a pine tree of Earth, than I can possibly ever share with these thinking beings.

His heart quailed, but he stood erect, and kept his head up.

One of the Xenobots herded the three humans over to a bank of machines against one wall. Several loose wires came out of a box. The Xenobot picked up a wire and connected it to Bors' suit, fastening it, apparently at random, on his right arm. The metallic creature did the same with Bronk and Zimbardo.

"Zimbardo." The name burst abruptly into Bors' ears—a mechanical, artificial sound. Zimbardo stiffed with a jerk when his name was spoken.

"Who these humans?" came the mechanical voice.

"Humans?" said Lurton Zimbardo. "They came to find me,

came to capture me and take me back to Earth.” He laughed. His laugh sounded like puffs of air going through a narrow tube. “But they will not capture me. The Superiors will stop them. The Xenobots—”

The computer’s voice spoke again. “New leader.”

Bors could not tell which of the metallic creatures was speaking. ~~He avoided looking at the red, slimy substance that appeared in the faceplates.~~ Bronk, he noticed, was staring at the vile faces ~~faceplates~~ with a horrified expression, as if he had been put under a spell.

~

The Starmen had already seen a few Xenobots as the aliens made their way down a passage or worked at some sort of task. The dragonfly had not picked up any out-of-the-ordinary sounds, not even any alien language.

“Very quiet place,” observed Joe after nearly an hour had gone by.

~~“Those Xenobots are curious little things, aren’t they?” Mark said.~~

“Those metal boys give me the willies. These are the creatures the Benefactors are so afraid of? I wonder what it is that makes them so frightening—besides their repellent looks, that is.”

“I hope we never find out,” said Zip.

~

Twelve Xenobots were assembled in the room where the interview with Derf Bors and the others had taken place. ~~On the planet they had called home for uncounted ages, before they had devised their metallic shells, they communicated with words. the Xenobots could communicate with one another only by contact. Without words, without sound of any kind, when their protoplasmic bodies were touching, they could exchange~~

~~thoughts.~~ Once they developed a metallic exoskeleton, they altered their ability to communicate to electronic means. They did not use a language with words or grammar, but direct communication allowed them to exchange images and concepts. The only evidence that important information was being shared was a higher level of animation than was usual among the metal-hulled creatures.

THE LOST RACE OF MARS

FROM Chapter 20: The Sun Stands Still

The metal-encased bodies of the Xenobots that had been standing in a semi-circle above the mouth of the canyon likewise whirled and tumbled violently across the plateau. ~~A number of artificial wormlike appendages were torn off the exoskeletons, and in many places the barrel-like casings were cracked open. The repulsive, gelatinous creatures inside were exposed to the thin, cold air of Mars.~~ Several of the artificial limbs were torn off the bodies as they slewed over the hard rock, and the long-unmaintained exoskeletons cracked open, exposing the repulsive creatures inside to the thin, cold air of Mars. Unprotected from the hostile environment for which ~~their own ancestors~~ they themselves had been responsible, the Xenobots withered like salted slugs.

FROM Chapter 22: Alliances Against a Common Enemy

Richard had sent a dozen personnel to investigate the wreckage of the Xenobot ships and what was left of the Xenobot casualties. The first report came in as Richard reached a likely location where he could descend the wall of the canyon to the place where the *Star Ranger* had been concealed.

“Mr. Starlight, this is Captain Cave Johnson.”

“Yes, Cave, what is it?”

“We’ve come on the first Xenobot casualty, sir. I haven’t any idea what to make of it.”

“Explain, Johnson.”

“It ~~looks just like a big can,~~ was torn open by a laser strike, apparently. ~~The substance inside is all dried up and hard. It looks frozen. This atmosphere didn’t do it any good.~~”

DOOMSDAY HORIZON

FROM Chapter 8: Shock Upon Shock

After the head of Starlight Enterprise had left his office and the illumination automatically dimmed, there was silence for a long time. Then a set of ripples appeared in the air in the center of the office, like heat waves rising above a chimney. A sphere made of glass and metal materialized. Then, like a large soap bubble, the sphere floated diagonally across the room, tripping no alarms and showing up on no screens.

Had anyone been there to observe, they would have seen a ~~gelatinous mass the color of liver inside the sphere~~ what looked like part of a man inside the sphere—a torso and head without limbs, seemingly made of metal with small sections of crystal. ~~The viscous mass was able to form prehensile appendages from its substance, and manipulate controls inside its container.~~ It came into the proximity of the globe of Mercury and hovered for a moment. An unmarked, unsuspected panel on the base slipped open and exposed a hiding place complete with minimal but precise electronic equipment. The metal and glass sphere elongated into a flat capsule shape, fitting the torso more closely, and slipped into the stand. The panel slid shut.

Only a few Earthmen had ever seen a creature like the one that had secreted itself in Richard’s office. The encounter had taken

place on Nyx, the dwarf planet whose orbit took it farthest from the sun. Those that had seen them would never forget their first sight of a Xenobot. This one had temporarily divested itself of its arms and legs, the better to conceal itself. It was patient, well able to wait in the office of the head of Starlight Enterprise for days at a time if necessary, silent but aware.

FROM Chapter 18: Engagement On Two Fronts

“Here,” said the Ahmanyen. Among the shards was an oblong tube, pure white and thoroughly frosted. They all peered at it closely but could see very little detail inside the quick-frozen block—just the bare outline of a head and torso.

“A Xenobot,” murmured Agena. “It doesn’t look like what I had anticipated.”

~~“They are usually larger,” said Richard. “They must have the ability to compact, at least up to a point.”~~

“Normally they are man-shaped,” said Richard, “about four feet tall, so I’ve been told by those who’ve seen them. This one has divested itself of its mechanical arms and legs so that it could secrete itself in my office. It was a brilliant ploy. I would never have suspected it if we hadn’t had inside information.”

THE HEART OF DANGER

FROM Chapter 18: “Maybe Nothing Outside”

The hatch suddenly slid open, revealing a passageway ceiled with lurid yellow concentric circles. Several armed Xenobots stood ready to pass into the shuttlecraft. Zip fired the instant he perceived their telltale metallic exoskeletons. Taken by surprise, three went down rapidly with smoking holes in their barrel-like dull-gray torsos. The smoke whipped backwards as the atmosphere from the ship Zip had entered surged into the

Xenobots' boarding ship.

"Let's go, Jack!" shouted Zip, and leaped toward the open hatch. For only a second, in the shadows cast by his dimmed suit lights, he saw the yawning passageway of the new ship before his view was obscured by four more of the enemy ~~settling~~ **surging** toward him. He fired again and speared the first one with his weaponlight, but this time his fire was returned. A laser beam shot past his head and skewered the shoulder pack where it attached to Zip's suit. In swift alarm, Zip whirled counterclockwise to present only a side-body target to the Xenobots and to protect Jack from further assault. The shoulder pack, however, had been loosened and flew off Zip's suit as he spun.

"Jack!" he yelled, his bellow fed by intense alarm. A second burst from enemy lasers seared the space where Zip's head had just been and sheered off the end of his laser rifle. With a snarl the Starman flung his useless weapon down and, turning, sped along the right hand passage toward the opposite side of the ship, looking fruitlessly for the shoulder pack. He came to the place where he and Jack had labored at the bottom of the shaft.

"Aayahhh!" he screamed in anger, frustration, and to release the pent-up energy of battle. Weaponless, he saw the pipe he had used to assist Jack to place Karax's device and snatched it up. "Ah, Jack, Jack!" he lamented with teeth-clenching intensity.

As soon as the first Xenobot ~~sided~~ **bounded** into sight in the rounded passageway, **its eyes gleaming with hatred and its pistol swinging into position**, Zip leaped to the attack with ~~fury,~~ **wielding reckless fury. He wielded** the length of pipe faster than human eye could follow, holding his weapon with both hands in the middle and slamming his attacker alternately with the ends. Six, seven, eight blows hammered the Xenobot in less than two seconds. The laser pistol it held in its ~~wormlike appendage~~ **slender, black metal fingers** shook with each strike. The metallic casings were too strong for Zip's bludgeon to do any harm to the structure, but the soft ~~gelatinous~~ tissues inside were violently whipped and shaken.

Sensing an attack from the rear, Zip looked over his shoulder, his face gripped with dreadful passion. Without pausing, shouting a war cry that only he could hear, Zip drove the pipe straight back like a battering ram, its pointed end connecting with the metallic upper body of his second attacker. The force flung the Xenobot backwards into the third that was close behind.

Zip turned forward again and drove the blunt end of the pipe against the first Xenobot, which was still reeling from the vehemence of the Starman's initial blows. The mollusk-like creature flew off its ~~tripodal supports~~ feet. With full force, Zip swung the pipe like a pickax onto its ~~glassy front~~ **ghastly forehead**. Without pausing to see the result he whirled once again and pummeled the two that had come up behind him. **The metallic limbs were no match for the speed of Zip's intense, adrenaline-inspired assault. Blow after blow fell on the skull-like heads with such rapidity that the Xenobots had no chance to grapple with the Starman or fall back to safety. For only the first few seconds of the attack, their clutching hands reached forward but were too short to reach their assailant. With each attempt they made, Zip struck downward with the heavy pipe against the multi-jointed arms, knocking them aside before he rejoined his feverish blows on their heads.**

Eventually, both Xenobots fell limply to the deck. When there was no more movement in any of the ~~rattail appendages~~ **hideous metallic limbs**, Zip slammed the pipe down on the deck, yelled to blow off his overflowing energy, snatched at a Xenobot laser pistol, bounded over the two fallen Xenobots, and flew back toward the entry chamber. He almost ran over the shoulder pack, but skidded to a stop and scooped it up before continuing his headlong sprint.

The pack was empty, its connector nearly melted into oblivion by the intensity of the Xenobot's laser attack. "Jack," Zip whispered to himself and he dashed into the second spacecraft. On his way inside, he tucked the shoulder pack between his arm and the side of his body, and in two leaps

jumped over his first four attackers. He snatched up a second laser pistol from where it had dropped and raced down the passage with a pistol in each hand.

Just around the corner he came to the control deck. Two Xenobots were waiting for him. Simultaneously they directed their laser rifles toward the Starman. Zip pointed his pistols at them both and suddenly realized he didn't know how to fire them. They were not designed for a human hand. As a look of alarm spread over his face, the two Xenobots fired their rifles. Both weapons exploded and blasted open the cases that contained the attackers' ~~plasmie~~ **fleshly** bodies. The dark pinkish material suddenly turned light gray in the near-vacuum and severe cold of the interior of the ship.

"Whaa—," said the Starman aloud, amazed that both weapons would malfunction at the same time.

Then he saw Jack emerge from hiding under a bulkhead. "Oh, Jack," said Zip, his eyes misting up. Then he dropped to his knees and began to laugh. He laughed and laughed, uncontrollably. Jack climbed into the blasted shoulder pack that Zip had dropped to the floor and re-pressurized it.

"We somewhere now, Zip," said Jack. "I sabotage Xenobot rifles. What is funny?"

FROM Chapter 19: Jack Becomes a Xenobot

While Jack continued his exploration, Zip overcame his repugnance and approached the fallen Xenobots, and knelt down to get a close look. The explosions of the laser rifles had shattered the ~~faceplates~~ **torso casings** of both creatures. The ~~plasmie substance~~ **flesh** inside had turned ~~from a liver-colored ooze to~~ a chalky white and apparently **become** a solid, frozen block. Zip stared closely into one of the shells at the peculiar remains inside. He curled his lip and his nostrils twitched. He recalled the stunning photographs that Mark and Joe had brought back from the gallery on the "moon" where they had been taken the summer of the previous year. He pictured the images of a

beautiful race, and he remembered Mark's innocent question to Jogren and the Ahmanyen's unsettling answer.

What happened to the Lucians? the big Starman had asked.

They still exist. My friend, you have met their descendants. Today we call them the Xenobots.

This frozen, chalky, dead thing inside its broken case was a Lucian, a descendant of one of the First Races, responsible for bringing such evil and pitiless violent death to uncounted planets. A sudden powerful feeling of unease came over Zip as he gazed through the cracked and blasted ~~faceplate~~ casing.

~

As he rounded the narrow walkway in the other ship, he stepped gingerly. With a measure of relief, he saw that the Xenobots had not moved from where he had left them. With trepidation he approached one, alert for the slightest movement, and peered ~~through the faceplate. The plasma was not white, but it was blotchy. Zip rolled the tank-like container and noted that the living substance inside moved with it, as if it were fixed in place and perhaps hardening.~~ into the face. The eyes were clearly dead. The other two Xenobots were in the same condition. The appendages were limp and flexible.

~

"Well," said Zip, "let's see if we can crack the shell of this mollusk." He began by withdrawing an atmosphere tester from his tool kit and placing it against the ~~faceplate~~ side of the skull-shaped casing. "Here goes," he said, and activated the item. It quickly made a tight bond with the plate and then pierced it with a needle. The reading showed a warm, stultifyingly humid, methane-laced atmosphere, thick and heavy. After the reading, the Starman removed the tester without sealing the hole he had made. The atmosphere whistled out. The mottled ~~plasma~~ flesh around the dead eyes, what little of it he could see, ~~inside~~ turned

gray and then white.

Next, ~~Using his atmosphere tester as an awl, he made several dozen holes in the faceplate on a line from below the Xenobot's chin up to the brow, and then over the head all the way to the nape of the neck. Then he employed a small cutter until he was able to pull away a large portion of the clear substance that had protected the living creature inside~~ make a complete incision connecting the holes he had made. Then the Starman leaned back and closed his eyes. He tried to calm himself before making the attempt to remove the Xenobot's head covering.

When he was ready, he swallowed and compressed his lips, then looked downward again toward the body of his enemy. He was more reluctant than he thought he would be to look upon the frozen, dead face of the Xenobot. He stopped a moment and just stared.

"Why you wait, Zip?" asked Jack. "Open like shell," directed the Titanian, back inside the shoulder pack.

Zip reached out both hands and gingerly separated the two sides of the head covering as if it were a walnut. Inside was a withered, white, hairless head. The nose and mouth were only barely recognizable, not having been used for uncounted eons. The eyes were lidded and unevenly open.

The Starman quickly closed his eyes again, turned his face upward, and brought his racing heart and churning gorge under control.

~~With the iron pipe he had used before, he tentatively probed the frozen organism. It had taken on the consistency of soft chalk, easily breaking off into chunks and turning into powder at the fractures.~~

"This is hideously repulsive," said Zip ~~after a moment~~—to break the silence more than for any other reason. "It has to be done, but it's making me nauseated." He reached in and began to scoop out the chalky matter that not too long before had been a living being. Once again in control of himself, he looked back down. On the inside of the now open head-casing he saw ~~Gradually~~ a series of electronic terminals, miniature circuits,

plates, and crystals ~~began to appear.~~

"I understand Xenobot now," observed Jack, watching Zip work ~~from his place inside the shoulder pack.~~

"You understand? What do you mean, Jack?" Zip asked, ~~dropping another handful of crumbling white powder onto the deck.~~

"This being is cyborg. Want never to die. We know Xenobots once look like us. I think long time ago they become part machine so machine help them think and stay strong. Machine not always work enough so they add more machine. Use machine for ~~eyes and~~ hands and feet and ears. Machine always repair itself, so Xenobot stay inside machine, take away living hand and foot. Take away most of living body. Use only machine to work. What wrong, Zip?"

Zip had stiffened up and stopped working. His eyes were gazing into an imaginary distance.

"Jack," he said, his voice taut with stress, "you're right! That explains everything! It's..." The vision of an advanced race that had become so unbalanced overwhelmed Zip with horror. The Lucians had tried to protect and perpetuate themselves at any cost and had become monsters. With his eyes wide open he stared back down at the face of the ~~machine~~ **dead Lucian.**

~~"Is...is that enough, Jack? Can you get inside~~ **connect with those circuits down** there and learn something?"

"Okay, Zip."

The Titanian crawled out of the shoulder pack **and began to examine the circuits on the inside of the Xenobot's head covering. A moment later one of the metallic arms twitched. into the nearly empty cavity of the Xenobot's shell. A moment later one of the rattail appendages wriggled.** Zip leaped back in unthinking alarm. ~~Then the frame of the faceplate released. Zip looked into the cavity. Jack made signs that the Starman should pull the frame out and put the shoulder pack inside the Xenobot's shell. Zip did so.~~

A few minutes later, Jack scuttled back into the shoulder pack.

"Put shoulder pack on top of Xenobot head, Zip," said Jack. "I

connect to Xenobot's electronics."

Zip placed the shoulder pack over the expressionless, dead-white head, more relieved to have it out of sight than he would admit.

FROM Chapter 20: A Knock on the Door

The hatch opened. Two Xenobots were suddenly confronted with the sight of a Xenobot shell ~~with no tissue inside~~ with a strange split-open head. In the split second that passed, Zip hurled himself around the edge of the hatch and fired his two pistols simultaneously. Then he reached in and threw the dead Xenobots outside. He entered the ship, felt the gravity grid take hold, and then sped down the passage, followed closely by Jack.

THE LAST COMMAND

FROM Chapter 11: Battle Without Mercy

He saw the ~~metal buckets~~ Xenobots scurry onto the platforms ~~on their tripod legs~~, their ~~wormlike appendages~~ multi-jointed arms carrying monstrous weapons. With a shock, Zip recognized the superpowered laser rifles that the Xenobots had carried in to the abandoned Ahmanyen base on Nyx. He recalled with a grimace the incredible firepower that they had.

~

The lanky Starman crossed the distance in a matter of seconds. He didn't stop to stare at the remnants of the Xenobots, though the picture of smashed metallic capsules and spilled and splashed ~~gelatinous plasmic material~~ cadaverous flesh impressed itself indelibly on his brain. For just a second his gorge rose, but he controlled himself and grabbed two rifles.

MASTER OF SHADOWS

ADDED TO Chapter 15: Kathy's Training Begins

The next day, Su again took Kathy into the strange mushroom-like forest. They did not talk as they crossed the field, but just as they entered the shadows, Kathy spoke up.

"Su," she began. "Rachel was telling me yesterday what she had learned about the greegles and how they inspired the fall of the Lucians. Can you tell me more? How could they believe that what they chose to become could be better than what they already were? Why did the Lucians desire more than they already had?"

As they continued to penetrate the forest, Su answered.

"You have been musing on this question since your conversation with Rachel. It is good, for learning these things will prove a great advantage to you in your forthcoming encounter with the Lucian. It is of enormous significance that this Lucian did not choose the course his fellows chose. For those who chose to become Xenobots had become depraved even before they laid action to their choice.

"A Xenobot is an artificial construction of metal and crystal that contains the living organism of a Lucian. These Lucians constructed metal bodies for themselves using the same technology that they had used to make the greegles. Then they removed their fleshly parts that they considered extraneous and therefore no longer necessary. The organisms inside the metal, in imitation of the greegles, were fed by quantum energy and no longer needed to eat; therefore no mouths were needed, and the digestive and excretory systems became vestigial and withered. As a by-product, this also made normal 'table fellowship' impossible.

"They replaced their fleshly extremities with powerful metal constructions that were superior to arms and legs, hands and feet, but this made touch and all affection impossible."

This image caused Kathy to shudder involuntarily. She

remembered the grief of her solitude in the *Raptor*, and the poignancy she had felt when she realized that no one had touched her for many months. Su paused for a moment to allow Kathy's feelings to sink into her. Then she continued her explanation, letting her thoughts come into Kathy's mind slowly and with sympathy.

"Since they expected to live forever, there was no need to reproduce, so all organs of procreation became vestigial and withered; there was not even any desire among them to produce children, for newborn Lucians would have required care and, had they grown up, would have become their competitors for the galaxy's resources.

"They retained eyes, for even they could not knowingly choose complete darkness for the hope of enhanced, artificial vision. An auditory system was retained but over time it became barely functional through disuse. Respiration, circulation, and lymphatic systems were retained but adapted to become like lubrication in a machine. The atmosphere that they breathed was correlated to the fuel used by something mechanical.

"In short, everything that a body needs to build and express community and to form relationships was done away with, and each entity cared only for its own personal existence. This was probably not a consequence that they accepted knowingly; rather, it was a by-product of their choice that they became used to, for they had already ceased to value what they had lost.

"For long ages the Xenobots' bodies were nearly invincible and self-maintaining, but they have been wearing out for a long time, like all the rest of their technology. What had once been almost indestructible has now become vulnerable. It was only because of this that your brother was able to defeat Xenobots in hand-to-hand combat."

Excerpts from *The Last Command* Relevant for Plot Development in *Master of Shadows*

*published information about the First Races,
with relevant portions in blue*

When the storyline of *Master of Shadows* was developing, David had to refer back to previous books to recall what had been said about the Xenobots, the Lucians, the greegles, and other elements of the saga to ensure that what was emerging with new significance was consistent with what had already been written. He was pleasantly surprised to find that a number of references in *The Last Command* that had been written almost casually actually prepared the way for the momentous revelations in the concluding book. He even went through portions of *The Last Command* and highlighted the relevant passages. This is what follows:

From Chapter 4: The Secret of the First Races

“I am a Lucian,” explained the man [Saleh] as he picked his way through a tumble of small boulders. “There are only a few of us left in this age. Only a few hundred.”

“The Janitor... he was here...”

“A worthy individual. He is not a Lucian. His is another of the First Races. The Lucians were the first among the First Races. I suppose that those few of us who are left still are the first, though we do not think in those terms any more. Most of the people of the First Races are held captive—captive outside of space and time. Only a few of us remain in this age to see the eons pass. ...

“It is my race that spawned the Xenobots. Once the greatest of the races in all the galaxy, the first among the five First Races, we became masters of space and time. We could bend space and

expand and contract time to our desire. Then the day came, long after our creation but uncountable eons in the past, when many Lucians sought to become masters of all life. One, whose name is now forgotten to all but a few, betrayed his own race and seduced them into a lust for power and endless life. And then even the first of the First Races fell into civil war.

“Alas. Those who chose the evil way prevailed. [The other First Races came to the assistance of the faithful Lucians, but they were overcome.](#) The renegades, masters of space and time, constrained them in the inescapable prison of a stasis. All were caught outside of time. No time passes for them, but they can never fall out of the stasis. They will remain so until the Universe ends.

“[Only a few members of the First Races escaped this fate.](#) The renegades could not capture us all. We fled before their rapacious triumph and they could not find us. [The Janitor is the Connector of the faithful First Races, who now live, and have lived for endless eons, in secret, unassailable refuges of the galaxy—](#)putting off death and invincible to the renegades, yet also not able to conquer them.

“We are not warriors, Montezuma Vly. Most of our technicians are in stasis, unaware that the Universe is aging around them. Undying, yet not in life. Unchanging, yet set amidst the natural decay that is the vital component of the passing of time.

“We are not warriors. Unable to conquer the renegade Lucians, we have waited. Yet, they have conquered themselves. From the time of their rebellion, they have known only gnawing, insatiable hunger that ultimately turns on itself and goes snarling into oblivion when it is thwarted and contained and—at last—conquered. They are always hungry, always consuming, and never satisfied.

“Now the time of their defeat is at hand. Though the First Races who yet live are unable to conquer them, it is your race that can, and will. [We are neither omniscient nor all-powerful,](#)

Montezuma Vly. Only One has those attributes—the One who is the Light.

“But the First Races have a responsibility. In the battle that is to come, your race will prevail—but it is not your place to exact the final sentence. It is for the First Races to speak the last word.” Here Saleh finally released Vly’s eyes from the intensity of his glance. The miner sat down, sapped and exhausted. The Lucian looked about him at [the greegles](#). “And here,” he said, “is [what is needed for that final word to be spoken](#). The greegles have kept that information from the beginning.”

Montezuma raised his head. “But Saleh— couldn’t the Xenobots have destroyed the greegles? Surely they know that they are here.”

“They know. But they do not know what they are. Even if they did, they could not have destroyed them. It is they themselves who made them, but long ago they forgot the knowledge of how to unmake them. And they no longer know how to draw knowledge from them, nor would they understand it if they could.”

“Where is the stasis in which your people are kept? [Cannot the information in the greegles free them?](#)”

The Lucian walked again among the greegles, continuing to touch them. Vly knew that now he was not sorting them or testing them, but merely touching them, almost with affection.

“It is possible that that is so, Montezuma Vly. But the [only Lucians who know for certain are locked in the stasis](#). Oh, the renegades were brilliant in their stratagem. Only those who are lost in timelessness have the ability to effect their rescue. Often I have wondered whether it is they or we who are in the worst state.”

Saleh looked up and stared into unseeable distances. “The stasis is located on a planet that the renegades twisted and corrupted. It is the sixth planet in a dense system, governed by a moderately sized yellow star about two-thirds of the way across the galaxy from here. This unnamed planet, far from any civilization, is incalculably hostile to any sentient race. Its

surface is neither liquid nor solid. The stasis is concealed in a terrain where natural law appears to break down, characterized by inexplicable lights that defy measurement or mapping as they sparkle tantalizingly in the murk of a storm that has raged without end since the renegades ignited it. It is a place of enormous peril.

“Perhaps, perhaps when the Xenobots have been vanquished, the storm’s intensity will diminish. I do not know the extent of their powers. But even if it is so, it will be impossible to release the captives. They must remain caught until time itself ends.”

“Saleh,” said Vly after a long pause. His voice was more tender than perhaps it had been for many years. “You have said yourself that you are not omniscient. Maybe a way can be found to release the First Races.”

The Lucian looked up. “I will not deny it, Montezuma Vly.”

From Chapter 12: The Stakes Get Higher

The Janitor stood off to one side, motionless, as the others were intent on their defense and keeping track of the enemy’s movements. All at once, the Janitor called for attention. His words bore insistently into the minds of all who were in the command post.

“Your attention!” he called out. “[The Lucians](#) have just reported to me that they [are prepared to speak the final word against Luxa!](#)”

“What does that mean?” demanded Richard.

“It means, Richard Starlight, that the planet of the renegades is to be destroyed. [The First Races retrieved the *alzenta*](#), and by using the information they had preserved, [the Lucians have prepared an ultra-weapon](#). They are now going to pronounce sentence against the renegades!”

“Not now!” shouted Richard, heedless of how the Janitor or anyone else might interpret his giving orders to the First Races. “Tell them not to launch that weapon until we can retrieve the

Starmen from Luxa! NOT NOW! Tell them to wait until they hear from us!”

Though Richard didn’t see it, for he had locked his gaze to the Janitor’s face behind his helmet, King Izmaka nodded his support of the command.

After only the slightest of pauses, the Janitor agreed. “Very well, Richard Starlight, though [the delay will put the Lucians in extreme danger. The weapon is frighteningly unstable.](#)”

“Tell them to wait!”

CONCLUSIONS:

- There were five First Races.
- Some of the members of the First Races were not imprisoned on Larson’s Folly. “A few hundred” of the survivors are Lucians, but there are more who are not Lucians. They would be those who did not go to war against the renegade Lucians, being neither warriors nor technicians.
- The survivors live in several hidden places in the galaxy.
- The Janitor is not a Lucian.
- The Janitor is the “Connector” of the surviving First Races. The term is not explained, but I imagine him not to be a leader or governor, but one who ensures that the survivors do not lose track of each other. In the time of the second Xenobot war, it fell to him to be the connector also of the First Races with the human-Ahmanyen alliance.
- It is probable that just as the Xenobots lost their ability to understand their technology, so the surviving First Races, who were never scientists to begin with, have only rudimentary science themselves—still advanced compared to humans and Ahmanyens, but nowhere near what the First Races had known before the First War.
- The Janitor refers in chapter 12 to the “First Races” who had retrieved the *alzenta*, and to the Lucians who had prepared the “ultra-weapon”. I conclude that at this moment in TLC,

all the survivors of the First Races have come together for the conclusion of the second Xenobot war, but it is the Lucians alone who will pronounce judgment upon their own planet, as is fitting; the other First Races will not do so.

- The greegles were needed to create the black hole that destroyed Luxa but cannot provide the information for releasing the captives from Larson's Folly. This implies that the surviving First Races have some science but their ability to understand and use it is limited. The black hole they brought into existence to send to Luxa was highly unstable and they were afraid to hold onto it for any longer than they needed to.

In the reissued version of the saga, some of these plot elements were revised.

The Xenobots' Desperate Grab for Artificial Immortality

By David Baumann
February 2017

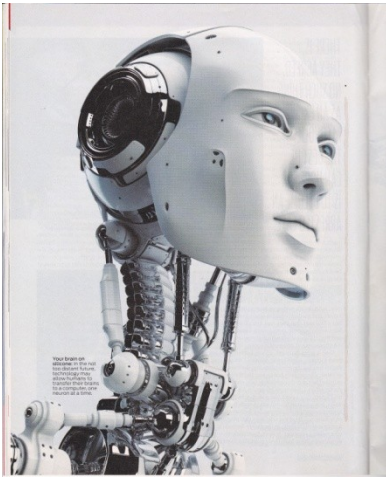
The Starman saga is intended first of all to be a rollicking good adventure story—yet underneath it is a deep and all-important moral dilemma. This “moral dilemma” is itself a true-to-life adventure story and quest, the only one that really has any importance to human life. It is the story of moral choice, the urgent desire for life and finding its meaning, the tragedy of death and mortality, and the power of eternal love. *Any* good story will be about these things.

In the Starman saga, we gradually reveal the history of the Solar System, which focuses around the Xenobots' incursion prior to 10000 B.C. in search of worlds to conquer, races to eliminate, and technology to steal. Their own abilities have been in gradual but irreversible decline since the acme of their culture uncountable eons before.

In the last Starman book, *Master of Shadows*, we reveal what had only been hinted at in the previous books: the full story of how the Lucians, the most powerful of the original five First Races, sought artificial immortality by appropriating their own astonishing technological prowess, by which they had created the greegles (known to the Ahmanyans as the *alzenta* and to the First Races as the *elthen*), to change their own appearance and alter how their organisms worked. They saw the work of their own hands and adored it, and then thought that they would be able to use it to make themselves immortal; it was a catastrophically tragic, misguided expression of self-love. In short, they forsook their own flesh and their lives' already natural amazing longevity and took on mechanical

bodies that were not subject to decay and the vain hope that now they could live forever.

The grasp for artificial immortality is not a new theme in fiction. Robert Heinlein's novel, *Methuselah's Children*, was published in 1941. It is a powerful and imaginative tale in which an experiment in selective breeding by long-lived humans leads to a third-generation character who is 213 years old when the novel begins. The experiment was started in the nineteenth century by the Howard Foundation, and in the early twenty-second century the very long-lived descendents live secretly among normal humans. But when the normal humans find out about them, the Howard people are faced with violence and persecution because they have something that everyone else desperately wants but can't have. But in the end, the people of earth figure out how to extend lifespans indefinitely through technology, and the Howard families are welcomed into society.



When the Starman books were first coming out, we thought that our premise was a good fictional ploy. Yet as our work continued, we noted that a variety of articles was appearing in which the fictional premise showed signs of being taken seriously in our own time.

For example, in the January/February 2016

issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*, a brief article appeared called “Life Without Limits”. It postulates that a moment which some scientists are calling “the Singularity”

will come in about 2045 when computer technology will have eliminated all disease and enable the human race to create a state of youthful vigor throughout life for everyone. A normal life-span will be about 150 years. The photograph on the previous page is a scan of the illustration used for the article. It is chillingly like what the revised Xenobots chose to become. Moreover, the article predicts that people will be able to record their brains on a computer “neuron by neuron”.

A year or two before that, the National Geographic had a short article in which a scientist predicted that a time would come when technology would be able to eliminate death entirely. Regretfully, in spite of a good search, I was not able to find that article so as to quote it accurately. But what I remember is that the scientist postulated that death is merely a “technological problem” that can be solved. This is the closest I have found to the reasoning the Lucians followed when they chose to become Xenobots, and for some it is a serious proposal for today.

The Starman Team and probably most other Christians believe that technology is neither good nor evil; it is a tool. Goodness and evil are in the hearts and souls of people who create and use technology. When it is used to combat disease, alleviate suffering, and so forth, it is mostly good. But people make moral choices about what is good and what is evil, and how to bring their convictions into practice. The Nazi concept of a Master Race and the elimination of lesser lives to achieve it is a glaring example of the perversion of such desires. Nor can we limit such abhorrence to the Nazis, for there are a number of similar atrocities in our own time and culture, some of them as widespread and generally accepted as were the concentration camps and killing centers built and run by the Nazis.

The desire for immortality is at the heart of human existence. At the very least, that desire is evidence that we humans were not made for mortality. The Starman saga deals with the issue in several ways: Starman David “Zip” Foster’s self-sacrifice was one; his sister’s unsought artificial extension of her mortal life was another; the Lucian/Xenobot rapacious search for artificial immortality was another; and the incredibly long-lived First Races with their gift of being able to choose the time of their death was another. These themes were set in the Starman saga with the unspoken but subtle assumption that immortality is found only when it is given in accordance with the will of him whom we referred to in the saga as “The One” or “The Maker”; to seek it in any other way eventually shows itself as a catastrophic failure.

Zip’s self-sacrifice is in accordance with the will of the One, as is shown in the chapter in *The Last Command* we called “Victory Forever”. Zip gave up his life so that others might live. Because of that, Zip appears two more times—to Mark Seaton, whom we present as the “mystical” or “visionary” Starman; and to his sister Kathy at the time of the passing of Olor in *Master of Shadows* in the chapter we called “The Prerogative of the First Races”. We intentionally presented these appearances to show that Zip is still alive. The chapter about his death shows him being taken into the Life of the One who appears in the glory of the star around which the planet of the Lucians orbits. Only Mark, the mystical Starman, is able to see this, and it is a revelation shared with the reader.

It is the conviction of the members of the Starman Team that the immortality for which humans were made and which we all rightly desire, can only be achieved by the gift of God through Jesus Christ: “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall

he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). Any search for immortality in any other way leads to disaster.

C. S. Lewis addresses the issue of the misuse of technology in his prescient work, *The Abolition of Man*, published in 1943. We read the following on page 48:

There is something which unites magic and applied science while separating both from the "wisdom" of earlier ages. For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: the solution is a technique; and both, in the practice of this technique, are ready to do anything hitherto regarded as disgusting and impious.

Even more to the point, regarding the search for artificial immortality, he wrote in his book *Miracles*, published in 1947:

Once man has fallen, natural immortality would be the one utterly hopeless destiny for him. Added to the surrender that he must make by no external necessity of Death, free (if you call it freedom) to rivet faster and faster about himself through unending centuries the chains of his own pride and lust and of the nightmare civilizations which these build up in ever-increasing power

and complication, he would progress from being merely a fallen man to being a fiend, possibly beyond all modes of redemption.

After I read this, I wrote to Jon Cooper

I think he nailed it, and therefore so did we [in our presentation of the Xenobots and what had led to their fall]. We showed in the Xenobots what the real Original Sin is. So did Tolkien; he said that the entire Lord of the Rings saga is really about death and mortality.

And the various news articles that we have noted in recent times about man being able to create immortality through technological means show that we're on the verge of the great evil. Even Peter Kreeft, in his stunning lecture series, says that artificial immortality through technology would be the most abhorrent evidence of the Fall that one can imagine.

We're not there yet, but there are many signs that there are those who'd like us to move in that direction and are working toward it. Note this story:

Professor Lives Life As a Cyborg

Sat Jan 10, [2004] 1:43 PM ET

By BRIAN BERGSTEIN, AP Technology Writer

TORONTO - When you first meet Steve Mann, it seems as if you've interrupted him appraising diamonds or doing some sort of specialized welding.



Because the first thing you notice is the plastic frame that comes around his right ear and holds a lens over his right eye.

But quickly you see that there's more to his contraption: A tiny video camera is affixed to the plastic eyepiece. Multicolored wires wrap around the back of Mann's head. Red and white lights blink under his sweater. Mann greets you, warmly at first, though he soon gets distracted by something on the tiny computer monitor wedged over his eye. In fact, being with Mann sometimes feels like the ultimate, in-your-face version of having a dinner companion who talks on a cell phone. But don't be put off by it.

Someday you, too, might be a cyborg.

Mann, a 41-year-old engineering professor at the University of Toronto, spends hours every day viewing the world through that little monitor in front of his eye — so much so that going without the apparatus often leaves him feeling nauseous, unsteady, naked. While the small video camera gives him a recordable, real-time view of what's in front of him, the tiny screen is filled with messages or programming code fed by a computer and wireless transmitters that Mann straps to his body. He calls the experience “mediating reality” — sort of like having icons from your computer screen transposed onto your regular vision.

Mann manipulates the computer through a handheld key device he invented, though he has experimented with putting electrodes on his skin and trying to control the cursor with brain waves.

If it sounds a bit creepy, consider this: Mann became a cyborg so he could be more human.

To be sure, that runs contrary to the sci-fi movie treatment of cyborgs (short for “cybernetic organisms”) as electronic beasts, like in the “Terminator” movies. It also seems to violate a pastoral sense of what it means to be

human: governed by spirit, reason and instinct, not infused with wires and silicon. But Mann has sensitive and perceptive motives for his electronic immersion, which began 25 years ago. He believes that wearing computers and cameras will give people more power to maintain their privacy and individuality.

There is more to the article, but this gives the point. One may ask whether what Steve Mann [an ironic last name] is doing is a worthy hope for the future, or is it repugnant and terrifying for what it may lead to?

As the article said, “If it sounds a bit creepy, consider this: Mann became a cyborg so he could be more human... Someday you, too, might be a cyborg.” How many Lucians said that to their friends uncountable eons in the past? —in the days when there were such things as friends before communicating solely by technology, and then one’s utter self-absorbtion eliminated the need for friends.

As the writer of the article said, “being with Mann sometimes feels like the ultimate, in-your-face version of having a dinner companion who talks on a cell phone. But don’t be put off by it. Someday you, too, might be a cyborg.” As if that were sufficient reason not to be put off by it.

The Lucians, the highest and best and most gifted and skilled of the First Races fell from the heights when they sought and chose even more. They made themselves into Xenobots, and thereby entered into the long and inevitable decline into depravity, loss of identity, and eventually loss of everything. Heroic self-sacrifice by the protagonists of the Starman saga completely reverses that trajectory.

And that’s what the Starman saga is about.

DEVELOPING THE LAST STORY

Creating the Illustrations in *Master of Shadows*

The illustrator for *Master of Shadows* was Allison Oh, a member of David's church. She produced all the illustrations using a computer. David provided her with the relevant text from the story, a description of what he was looking for in the illustration, and photographs of individuals. Three real people, also members of his church, were the models. Here is the information David provided to Allison, along with the result of her labors.

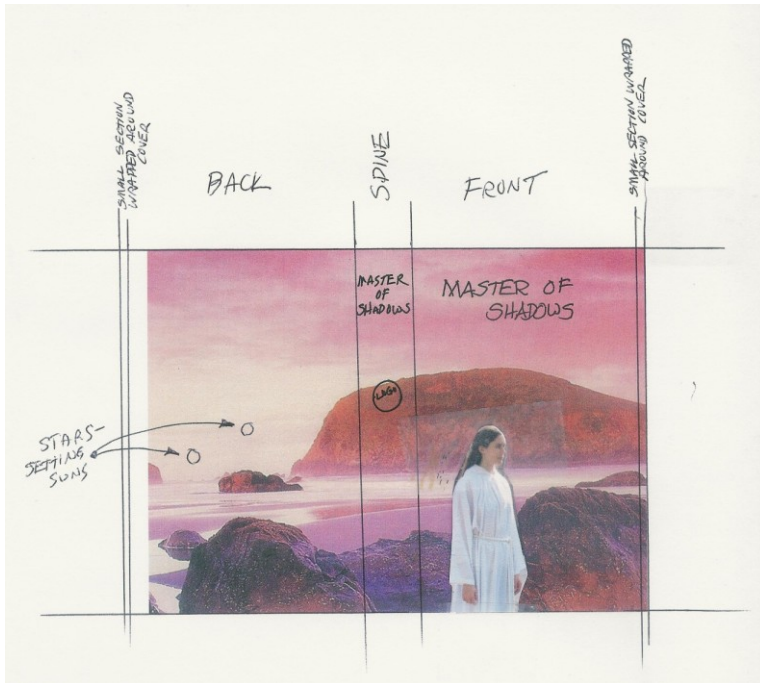
COLOR COVER ILLUSTRATION: Kathy Foster on Aden looks over the bay of liquid tin (chapter 15). This illustration should be in color; all other illustrations will be internals, and should be black and white or grayscale.

The illustration will be used for the front, spine, and back of the book, which I hope the sketch makes clear. (See next page.) Someone else will add the lettering and spine logo, so you just need to do the painting.

Note that although the photograph shows a day scene, in the book it is actually sunset with many, many stars above that are reflected in the liquid below, and there are two suns setting whose locations I have marked on the sketch. I've also attached a photograph marked "Center of the Galaxy", which is a rough idea of what the stars look like from where this planet is located. And there are three photographs of Ashley. You can reverse the view so that she is actually looking left if you want, which might be better. She should be looking out over the lake but if possible

I wanted to get her face in the photo.

The ratio of the overall dimensions is about 7 by 11, with the image of Ashley on the right half and the scenery extending over the rest of the image, as the sketch shows. Please don't feel too constrained by what I'm sending you. I want you to feel free to use your artistic license.



Here are a couple of the working photographs David gave Allison.



This is roughly the scene of stars that Kathy sees, i.e. this should be a model for the sky in the above sketch.



THE TEXT:

One evening Kathy took a walk alone. She crossed the meadow that began just beyond her dwelling and bypassed the woods that stretched out to her right, where her training with Su had begun. The meadow rose gently for over a mile to the horizon, beyond which she had never seen. When she came to the top of the rise, Kathy stared out over the view before her with wonderment and delight. There was a broad, bright gulf of a lake made of liquid tin. A few rounded islands lay close to the shore but beyond them was an empty expanse that ran to the horizon. Aden's heavy starlight made a sparkling shield of the liquid, and a sea of stars shone back from the brimming lake. The night was filled with unearthly beauty, showing uncountable points of brilliance at Kathy's feet and over her head. Fingers of mist lay peacefully over the gulf, thickening toward the far horizon where the setting suns colored the vapor with gold and silver and maroon light.

WHAT ALLISON PRODUCED:



From Chapter 3:

ILLUSTRATION: Joi and Joe on the roughly flat surface of the planet setting up equipment. Joi and Joe are in spacesuits.

THE TEXT:

Most of the terrain was solid rock, with pockets of slimy black water. In this setting the reeds and vines that Joe knew so well from his previous landings on the other side of the planet were limp, quiet, and unmoving.

After a quick reconnaissance, Joi unpacked her equipment and began to set it up on a large shelf of rock about thirty feet from the pod. She brought out a small box with adjustable beveled feet to keep it level and a tube of gel to glue it in place; a tripod holding a vertical tube; and various recording equipment with quartz screens.

When it was set up, Joi used the tube in the tripod to burn out a deep hole in the rock. Then she inserted some clear, gummy substance and dropped a small ball into the hole. Then she removed the tripod and inserted a rod with a clear tip. On the opposite end of the rod was a set of small calibrative controls.

WHAT ALLISON PRODUCED:

From Chapter 4:

ILLUSTRATION: an oblique view of the galaxy inside the navigational tank, showing the ring of probability, with Joi, Joe, and Kathryn looking into the tank. Joe and Kathryn have their backs to the viewer, and Joi can be shown in a side view.

THE TEXT:

Joe, Kathryn, and Joi walked up to the rail that surrounded the tank and looked into it. Spread out below them was a stunning array of lights that depicted the portion of the galaxy local to Larson's Folly. In the center of the display was a very bright light orange ball about an inch in diameter that represented Marcanto. Tiny blue lights showed the positions of its seven planets, all of them small and close in to their sun. The sixth planet, Larson's Folly, glowed brightly to distinguish it from its six companions. Throughout the rest of the tank white lights represented the local star systems.

"Joi," said Joe, "feed your data into the system here and show us those rings. Reduce the scale in the tank so we can see where those rings are actually located in the galaxy."

"I'm already at work, Joe. This is exciting! Okay, here."

The scale in the tank became smaller and smaller until nearly a quarter of the Milky Way galaxy showed. The bright core of the galaxy was just below their feet. Joe could see where the Xenobots' home planet had been, but his gaze didn't linger there. He focused on the rings of colored light that spread out from a point in the center of the tank. Beyond that point was a map of the Scutum-Centaurus Arm and the space just before it and beyond. Larson's Folly was located about 50,000 light years from Earth's sun almost precisely on the 330° galactic longitude. The Arm stretched away from the viewers to the left; there was a great space with very few stars just in front of it, and another space beyond it. A light banding of stars like sparkling dust showed where the galaxy ended.

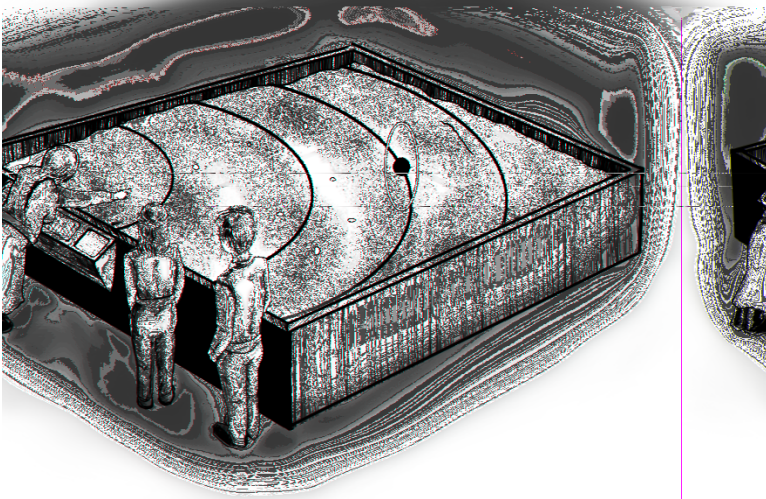
“Now—add a ring. Show us where the ring would have been if the planet had been refueled according to schedule.”

Joi nodded, worked her controls for a moment, and then an orange ring appeared within the sphere. “Orange okay? —to distinguish it from the other lines?”

“Yeah, sure, of course—now presumably that ring shows where the energy source would have been five or six hundred years ago.”

“Naturally. And before you ask...” A few seconds later another ring appeared, bright green. “Here you go. Right at this very minute the source of the energy is somewhere within this ring.”

WHAT ALLISON PRODUCED:



From Chapter 7:

ILLUSTRATION: Kathy Foster and the holocom Rachel talk to one another as they approach a planet for the first time. View of the planet should be shown through the window. Photographs of Rachel (for the holocom) and Ashley (for Kathy Foster) provided.

THE TEXT:

After a brief leap through hyperspace, the *Raptor* was in orbit over the mysterious, weirdly misshapen planetoid that moved in a starless path through the darkness of space. A violet atmosphere, barely visible in the backlighting of a sprinkling of stars, showed in a very thin pale aura. The foreground was entirely featureless in the utter blackness before them.

The sight of the planet took Kathy's breath away. The bridge of the *Raptor* had no windows but it did have a large holoscreen, and the image of the planet was displayed in all of its three-dimensional glory. She had seen the images of it before from what the probe had provided, but there was something about actually being there that gave her chills. *The probe did not do it justice*, she thought.

Every now and then Kathy could see arcs of blue light shimmer in the atmosphere. She asked, "How can the planet have a breathable oxygen atmosphere without plants or large bodies of water?"

"The data are insufficient to answer that question," responded Rachel.

Kathy looked at the image of the planet for a long time and said nothing.



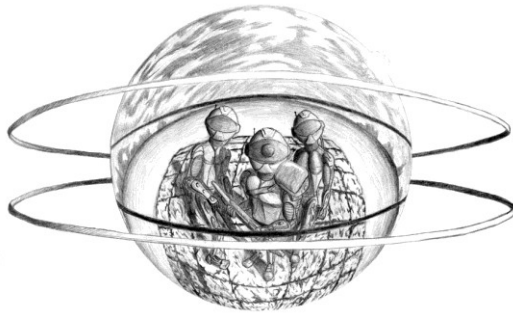
WHAT ALLISON PRODUCED:



From Chapter 7:

ILLUSTRATION: an airbot on the surface of Lemura looking at “a large, irregular mass roughly thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide. Upon closer examination it appeared to be made of some kind of tarnished white metal, but was coated with countless layers of gritty black dust.”

Sample illustration of an airbot by Josh Kenfield for *The Heart of Danger*.



THE TEXT:

Kathy kept the bot in place and studied the screen carefully. “It’s all blacks and grays, Rachel. Even the light appears to be a shade of gray. The ground is as black as charcoal.”

“There are veins of blue in the rock,” Rachel pointed out.

“Yes, I see,” Kathy replied, “but that makes the planet look almost haunted. That blue is *glowing*. Is that the material you were talking about that’s been causing all of the interference?”

“It is. However, I cannot analyze the substance from space. If you could obtain a sample for me I might be able to tell you what it is.”

Kathy gingerly flew the bot still closer to the surface, keeping a careful eye on the signal strength. As the bot got within a few feet of the ground she began to notice that the planet’s surface was strewn with more than just rocks.

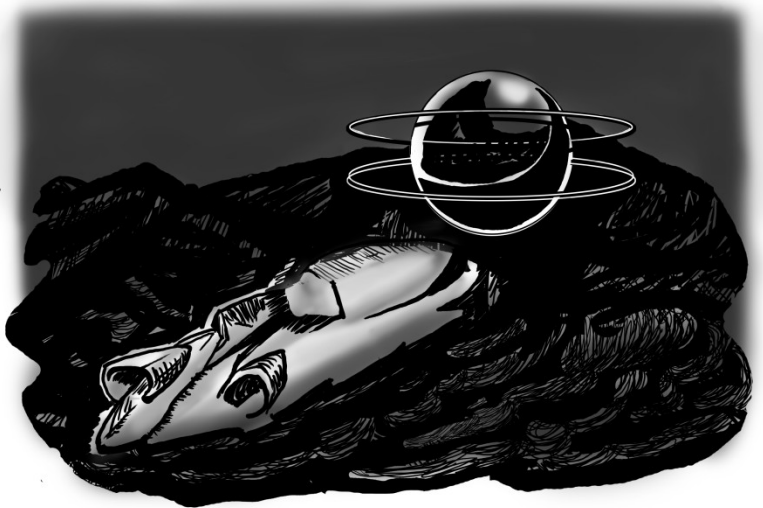
“Look at that!” Kathy exclaimed. “That, right there. That’s

not a rock formation! That's a machine of some kind. Or, at least, it used to be. That's not a phantom or whatever it is we've seen before. That's real."

The object Kathy had pointed at was a large, irregular mass roughly thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide. Upon closer examination it appeared to be made of some kind of tarnished white metal, but was coated with countless layers of gritty black dust.

"I'm seeing a lot of coarse sand everywhere," Kathy commented. As she watched, a gentle breeze came along and stirred up a pocket of sand into little eddies. A small black funnel formed and then settled back onto the ground. "I think it's obscuring everything. There could be all sorts of artifacts hidden down there."

WHAT ALLISON PRODUCED:



From Chapter 9:

ILLUSTRATION: The Janitor and Richard Starlight face one another in spacesuits. They are in a mountain pass on the Moon. The Janitor is about five feet tall and Richard is nearly six. The Janitor's suit is thick, somewhat squat, with a faceplate. Richard's suit is almost body-fitting, and his helmet is entirely clear.

THE TEXT:

Instantly the Janitor and Richard were standing together in an alcove of the Leibnitz Mountains. To one side the mountains sloped away and far in the distance Richard could see the lights of Amundsen City. On three other sides the gray reaches of the mountains rose above them.

WHAT ALLISON PRODUCED:

From Chapter 15:

ILLUSTRATION: Two women, one is Kathy Foster and the other is Su, are talking together in a forest setting whose trees look like large mushrooms. I really like the illustration below as a model.



Su is described earlier in the book as follows:

...shorter than the average human. slender but gave the impression of imposing solidity, as if made of denser substance than mere flesh. bald, yet the shape of their bodies was clearly feminine. Their skin was pale and smooth and their yellow-orange eyes were deep. Their features did not move with as much facility as the faces she was used to among her own people, yet they managed to convey much feeling with economy of movement. They exuded warmth and pleasure.

The model for Su is the woman on the left in this photograph:

THE TEXT:

What the Starman could only think of as trees were plants that clearly were not chlorophyll based, but rather life systems that thrive in the high heat of their native world. Hues of earth and fire surrounded her. The plants, like enormous mushrooms that branched



and connected overhead, were ruddy and ochre. The canopy was thick, but an occasional ray of sunlight penetrated through the interlaced tendrils, showing a cylinder of light in the gloom. Su, still holding Kathy by the hand, led her more and more deeply into the woods. Finally she stopped, released her hand, and turned to face her.

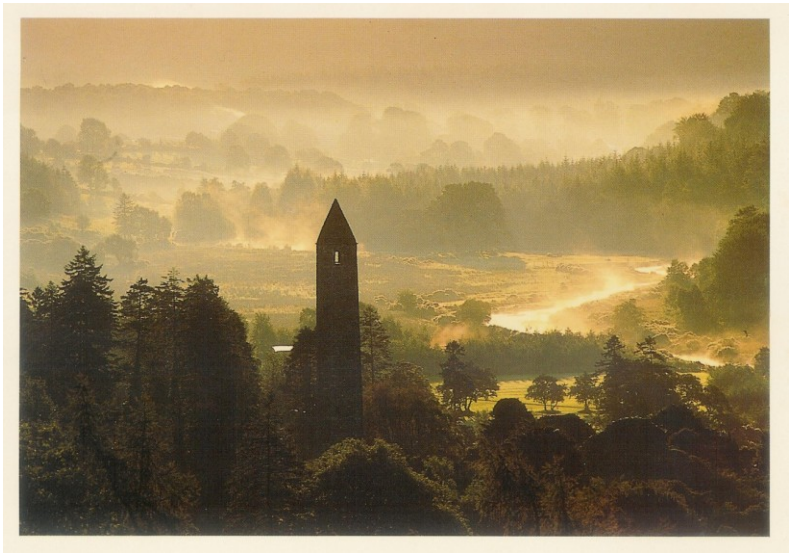
WHAT ALLISON PRODUCED:

The illustration covered two pages.



From Chapter 17:

ILLUSTRATION: There should be no trees in the illustration, but the tower should be surrounded by a number of outbuildings. The tower should be very tall, much taller than the one in this illustration, but the shape can be the same. The terrain can be similar.

**THE TEXT:**

In the center of Smais, the blue tower began to glow brilliantly once again.

In the end, no illustration was produced for this chapter.

From Chapter 21:

ILLUSTRATION: Olor, another member of the First Races, and Kathy Foster are standing in a garden with a rolling field beyond. One of the photographs of Ashley Romero for the cover illustration can be a model for this illustration. For the other two, here is Josh Kenfield's illustration of a man of the same race. He is the one without a helmet. They can be dressed more simply, similar to how Kathy is dressed, but use your imagination.





THE TEXT:

After a time that seemed measureless, they appeared in an open place in a garden behind a simple stone house. It was evening, an hour or so after sunset, and uncountable silver stars shone and sparkled in a lucent, sapphire blue sky. The beauty took Kathy's breath away.

"Kathy Foster," said a voice. Kathy turned and saw Olor standing in the garden. He was surrounded waist deep in orange and yellow blooms, now appearing dark red and brown in the evening light. Olor stepped out of the midst of the flowers into the open place. He approached the Earthwoman with a wide and candid smile. He reached out his hands and she placed her closed hands, palm to palm, between his. Then they dropped hands.

WHAT ALLISON PRODUCED:

Note that Allison mistakenly forgot to give Olor two opposing thumbs. This was not caught until the books were already printed. The illustration of Saleh on the previous page correctly shows the two opposing thumbs characteristic of the First Races.



Author's Reflections on *Master of Shadows*

Shadow versus Reality, Truth versus Falsehood, and

Isolation and Loneliness versus Relationship:

The development of the characters of

Kathy Foster and Olor

By David M. Baumann

February 17-18 and 24, 2011

2,430 words

I have forgotten where this item first appeared or why I wrote it, but it is in my files, and it seems fitting to reproduce it here.

Kathy's training by the First Races consisted of two things:

First, she learned how to recognize and dispel falsity by becoming grounded in what is true and real; this is based on classic spiritual formation in which one learns to conquer sin not by "battling" it directly but rather by cultivating its opposite virtue, e.g. one learns to overcome habitual anger not by trying not to be angry but by cultivating patience.

Second, she learned how to use her mind to a markedly fuller capacity than ever before. In the latter, the skills and capabilities that are natural to the First Races were adapted to her human capabilities. She did not become "like the First Races"; she became a "better human" by learning some of the First Races' skills and adapting them to her own nature. She changed in degree, not in kind.

It is a contention of the Starman series that different sentient peoples can "communicate" in ways that link them more than one might think, far beyond mere exchanges of words. For

example, in *The Last Command* Mark notes that he has come to think “like an Ahmanyen”, and in the same book it is pointed out that new Starman Kathy Foster’s interest lies in learning about Ahmanyen life and culture. When *Master of Shadows* begins, she is already far along in that study, and this is what makes her the ideal candidate for training by the First Races. Richard Starlight’s predictions about what that will mean are intentionally shown to be inaccurate, even though it is stated that he is one of the most experienced humans with the First Races.

In part, Kathy’s desire to learn another culture is an unconscious but real wish to protect herself from the intimacies of her own kind. That is, her pursuit of relationship is academic, not personal. In part, this is because of her grief over David’s death, but also is derivative of how she was formed by her angry and disabled father. Her almost idle musing of wanting to invite Nicholas Xanthakos to a picnic is a huge step for her. It is never stated if that ever happened, or if there is any future between her and Nicholas. A door is left slightly open there. In my own mind, however, I see Kathy as being perpetually virginal, although out of loving choice rather than fear of intimacy, which is where she begins. Her growth in that direction is very strong in *Master of Shadows*.

I hope that the shadow world of the Lucian’s creation, mysterious as it is, comes across as internally consistent. Olor can do three things: he creates images out of “nothing”, i.e. electricity; he has resources from his technology to move things physically, e.g. rocks, pebbles, and even Kathy; and he can enter Kathy’s mind (and presumably the minds of others) to affect their physical selves. What he *doesn’t* do is change real things to make them appear as something else. I suppose he could, for that would fall into the third category, but in his long history of manipulating the environment in which he lives, he has had no need or desire to change the appearance of anything that is real.

The Lucian has lived with shadows for so long that an actual, physical attack against Kathy as she draws near to him is something that almost doesn't occur to him; he can manipulate the environment (raise the heat, throw rocks, fire meteorites, even move Kathy across space to her ship), but when Kathy is fairly adept in those methods and can recognize when such things are happening, she can counter them. His attacks are designed mostly to create physical and emotional reactions in his opponent. In his compound, the only physical item he can manipulate is the heating system, which Kathy counters once she finds the mechanism.

So the Lucian comes up with the "monster" as his final act of desperate defense (meaning it must be the last attack on her), but it is only meant as a distraction to Kathy to break her own concentration. When that happens, he is then able to launch the *real* attack that, for him, is the closest he can conceive of physical attack: the mental invasion intended to stop her heart and breathing. He can only "get into" her by breaking the focus that she has developed through her training.

The presence of the monster was not intended to convince Kathy that it is true—she knows that it is not—but to shock her with its sudden and horrific appearance so that her concentration is broken and Olor has the chance to penetrate her mental defenses and try to stop her heart and breathing. She's not at risk because she thinks a real monster is attacking her; she is at risk because her heart and breathing are stopping, and she is panicking. The monster is simply a horrific image that continues to wreak havoc with her concentration with its gibbering face slaving away inches from hers as she is dying, the way a movie monster creates responses of fright in the viewers even when they're sitting safely in their seats. This is why Rachel urges Kathy to "resist him"; she means Olor, not the monster. Rachel doesn't even see the monster; she knows only what is happening to Kathy's breathing and heartbeat. These are principles that come

from martial arts—how to penetrate one’s opponent’s defenses even when he knows that that’s what you want to do. The entire series of attacks and defenses in Olor’s compound, beginning with the appearance of the predatory animals, is based on martial arts principles. Olor creates panic in Kathy in order to kill her; Kathy, simply by her approach, creates panic in Olor as a necessary prelude to healing him.

Rachel’s “prime directive” is to protect Kathy. Kathy, unlike Rachel, is human and alive, and at the moment of the monster’s attack is focused on being “non threatening” to Olor. This has been one of the major points of her training. She can’t do that if she comes on the scene second. This is why she tells Rachel to become invisible when she comes into Olor’s sanctum. Olor will know that Rachel is there, of course, but he can also detect Kathy’s intentions as peaceful even in his panic. Rachel’s disappearance is the immediate and intentionally powerful contrast to the appearance of the monster. Olor attacks with a visible image of something that is not real; Kathy counters by having something that *is* real forsake its visible image.

Following Rachel’s rescue of Kathy from the monster’s assault, Kathy enters the Lucian’s physical presence, at which time he panics. Olor’s state may be revealed by having him be beyond any speech at all at that point. His projected, artificial monster was gibbering, and now it is the real Olor who becomes the gibberer. Pushed into having no other options whatever, he then launches a previously unthinkable outright physical attack with the leap, followed by swinging the crystal bar. When even those don’t work, all he can do is withdraw into himself and remain there until Saleh draws him out. He works desperately and fanatically to preserve his isolation because, for him, isolation has become identified with safety.

The entire progression of Kathy’s approach, Olor’s defenses, and Kathy’s persistence is designed to create increasing panic in Olor

to the point where he is completely neutralized, because only at that point and in no other way is he able to believe that Kathy's intentions are peaceful—as in martial arts, when your opponent is completely powerless and you are fully in control, and then you treat him gently. And that only happens when Saleh calls Olor by name; this is the first time in the book when the entity known up to that point only as “the Lucian” is given a name—when he is most powerless, when he is “**forlorn**”—this is where his name came from; also the Latin word *dolor*, meaning “pain, ache, hurt, anguish, grief, sorrow”. Saleh obviously knows Olor's name but does not mention it anywhere in the book in any of his conversations about him—until he sees him face to face, at which time the name is used to appeal to Olor himself. That is, the name is never used until it is used first in the vocative. The reader learns his name in the same instant that Olor is called by name—for the first time in uncountable eons.

Olor had identified isolation with safety, which meant that contact with anyone else was, to him, eminently dangerous and even life-threatening. This is why Kathy tells him later that she knew that he did not intend to kill her, but rather to save his life. This was a great insight on her part, and is evidence that she has progressed far in understanding the meaning of relationship. The fact that Olor questions the accuracy of her statement is a sign that he also has come far in understanding the meaning of relationship. It is logical to expect that as both of these lonely people grow in their understanding of relationship, they would grow together in mutual respect and affection. Their journeys are parallel. Their relationship, however, is decidedly not a romantic one. Although one may draw a comparison to the romantic relationship that grew between Mark Seaton and Stenafi, that is not the case here. Humans and Ahmanyans are fundamentally of the same stock; humans and the First Races are not.

Kathy's relationship with Olor grows from their first encounter to the last in a carefully designed progression. Even before they

meet, Kathy's mental anguish in the chapter called "The Burden of Solitude" is meant to anticipate the torments experienced by the lonely Olor. This creates a bond between them that both will come to recognize. This was intended much as David Foster's premature funeral in *Doomsday Horizon* portended his fate in *The Last Command*.

Kathy and Olor have only five meetings:

First, she lands on Lemura and is completely under his control; he "toys" with her, easily manipulating her mind and body and then "throwing" her back into her ship in a contemptuous gesture that demonstrates what he had said to her earlier—that her race is weak and powerless before him. Ironically, it is this meeting that, in some ways, is their most intimate. He is able to invade her mind and body and do whatever he wants.

Second, she returns to Lemura and the tables are turned; she comes right into his personal space, but does so gently even if inexorably.

After that, she only sees him three more times, and each occasion deepens the relationship step by step:

First, at his request, she visits him in his sickroom; as he had said at their first encounter, he is "intrigued" by her; their encounter is friendly, and she convinces him to use the elthen although she's not certain of his ability or willingness to free the captives; her trust in him is very guarded.

Next, at her request, she visits him before the First Races' fleet leaves the Marcanto system, and mutual respect and the beginnings of affection emerge.

Finally, at his request she visits him a year later when he relinquishes his life, and their relationship has come into its fullest state. This is the climactic scene in the book, the reversal of shadows.

Their relationship begins with her approaching him not knowing that he even exists, and with him in control like a bully. Then

later, after her training, he “loses” control. And it ends with him back in control, which is now healthy self-possession; then he leaves her—not so much against her will but in a way that grieves her. And at that point David appears. Throughout the entire book Olor and Kathy have moved from shadow, to reality, to greatest reality. Both go from positions of having little or no real or healthy relationships with other people to becoming healed. Olor has no one at all, and Kathy has only Rachel, a “non-person”, with whom her relationship is decidedly unpleasant in the beginning—even though Kathy created her! And the relationship is probably unpleasant for that very reason. Kathy’s breakthrough with Rachel comes when she realizes that Rachel is actually the creation of many real people who have expressed their humanity in Rachel.

It is explicitly stated that both Kathy and the rebel Lucians (of whom Olor is one) were tempted by the possibility of putting personalities into machines—a supreme avoidance of genuine relationship, an ultimate “me first” action. The rebellious Lucians succumbed and became Xenobots; Olor resisted that temptation, and Kathy was never strongly tempted to do so. On the contrary, her temptation was to hold herself back, out of relationship at all. Which is what Olor did also.

The planet Lemura is not falling apart—just the machines. This is Jon’s original idea, and is the major plot element for the story. If the machines were not failing, Larson’s Folly would continue to be powered up, as would Lemura, and the time stases would not be under threat. Lemura, however (like Olor), has been horribly twisted and thrown into darkness but is itself ultimately still solid. Lemura (like Olor) is brought back to its home system and returned to its place. It will remain scarred and can never be healed in this galaxy, but it is back home. Lemura, being merely an inanimate planet, will remain dark, but Olor, being alive, need not remain dark, though his healing cannot be fulfilled in this galaxy. He moves from Lemura, to a planet of the First Races, to

the world beyond: three steps to healing.

So both Kathy and Olor, throughout the book, learn about the meaning of relationship, and become essential to each other's growth and healing. Olor is bereaved by the loss of his entire race and eventually even his home planet. Kathy is bereaved at David's death at the end of *The Last Command*. At the end of *Master of Shadows* she is bereaved again, but it is a very different kind of bereavement. This bereavement is a genuine healing. In the last scene it is stated that there are impassable barriers between her and Olor and her and David, yet those barriers exist in scenes of the greatest love she has known. The implication is that she can find the fullness of healing and love elsewhere; she is now ready for it.

THE REISSUE (2016)

How the Reissue is Different from the Original Version

The reissued version of the Starman Saga is different in three ways: we fixed typographical errors; we corrected some plot glitches, some of them major; and we added some new material.

From the late spring of 2015 to the end of 2016, we went through the stories carefully and fixed about two thousand typographical errors; that figures to be about one per page. We also corrected a number of inconsistencies, illogical decisions, and outright major errors. Further, we also noted a number of implications that hadn't been properly followed up on that add a great deal to the story; new material has been added to correct these omissions.

the two of them stood in front of the keypad adjacent to the great doors, Joe turned to Mark. Then he shrugged and punched in the code that the man on the holoport had given them.

"July," said Joe as he pressed the zero and the seven; "thirtieth," he said, pressing the three and the zero; "twenty-one fifty-six," he concluded as he pressed those numbers. Almost at once, the great double doors separated and, with a delicate grinding noise, slid apart into the thick walls on either side.

A vast room appeared before the Starmen. It was dim and dusty, and a pale, weak light filtered down from fixtures in a ceiling far above the floor. The air was stale, as if it came from a rarely visited basement or attic. A massive spacecraft was positioned in the farthest part of the cavernous room, its bulk showing little more than a silhouette in the negligible illumination. There were no other craft in the hangar, though workbays were arranged along the walls on the left, and various pieces of large machinery utilized in the maintenance and repair of spacecraft were in place nearby. Bulky tools, gurneys, gantries, cranes, and related items were stored to the right.

At the same time, both Starmen stepped into the hangar. As they passed through the opening, bright lights surged on in the closest portion of the immense room.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mark, shielding his eyes for a moment from the sudden brightness. Joe blinked. After a brief adjustment period, the Starmen continued to walk forward. The sound of their footsteps echoed forlornly in the cavernous, abandoned spaceport. As they reached the end of the illuminated part and passed into the central section of the hangar, a second bank of

Overall, the story is the same, of course, but the novels and short stories were carefully considered to determine the best reading order, so as to develop the plot without providing any spoilers. Some of the stories as placed provide flashbacks, but are spaced so as to extend the story

Age
Winged and

previously told in a novel rather than placed in chronological order, which could either be confusing or risk providing a spoiler. The dates in which the stories take place are clearly marked in the list of narratives, so it can be seen easily which adventures take place when.

The biggest change in determining the order of the stories was to upgrade the status of the novelette, *Paradox Lost*, to a full novel alongside the other nine, and to place it after *The Last Command*. This story, which began as a seven-part serial with whimsical overtones set alongside the main storyline (and therefore optional), over time developed into an important part of the saga. We placed it after *The Last Command* for two reasons: although set earlier, it is told by Starman Joe Taylor in a time after *The Last Command* had taken place. It also brings Zip Foster back into prominence in a story after he had died, thereby softening the blow that his death gave to readers.

There are also at least a couple of dozen new features in the plot. The need for these was found by Jon Cooper when he read through the entire saga in 2015; he made extensive notes and sent them to David for the necessary rewrite. For example:

The nature of the Xenobots was entirely altered and made much more creepy, and therefore consistent with the deeper implications of the saga's exploration into the ramifications of moral choices and the nature of evil. The full impact of this is revealed only in the last book, *Master of Shadows*, but the clues had to be placed from the first appearance of the Xenobots in *Journey to the Farthest Planet*. This required rewriting extensive portions of several books; a complete showing of the changes is provided elsewhere in this volume.

In *Descent Into Europa*, it had to be made clear that the Xenobots did not entirely trust their human collaborators. This explains why some of the things that humans like Beowulf Denn sought, like faster-than-light drive, were not given to him even though the Xenobots had that ability. This required that a different cargo was needed when the Xenobots sent some weapons to the Banjoman, and explained why Denn was trying to steal certain technology from the human-Ahmanyman alliance. Further, when Denn destroyed Nolan Mining Enterprise, the debris had to be disposed of rather than just allowed to drift dangerously in space.

“The Infestation at Sulphur Creek” was a short story written at the request of Mark Zahn, who produced the online mystery magazine “The Mysterious Traveler”. It appeared in the December 2005 issue. Although part of the Starmen’s world, the story was not at first integrated into the rest of the saga. Therefore the story was extended with a new ending that tied the nefarious Waldo in to the overall plans of the Banjoman on Mars.

In *Doomsday Horizon* two plot points had to be corrected. In the original text, Joe wonders if the past can be changed, and finds that hard to believe. However, the events in *Paradox Lost* were fairly recent to him, where the past was changed, so to speak—so Joe not only knows it is possible, but has done it himself. A new text fixes that glitch.

Also, Joe is impressed at the idea of stepping across vast regions of space. However, Joe knows that even the Ahmanyman can do this; he’s seen it done with the tachyon transporter. So this idea shouldn’t be new to him. A revision of text fixes this glitch as well.

In *The Heart of Danger*, we clarified that there are several worlds of First Races, with different ways of doing things; this explains, for example, why the Janitor's space suit is different from Saleh's.

Further, in this story the Starmen go to Starlight Academy and lecture on tachyon transfer. Yet in *Paradox Lost*, Joe's friend Owsley Robbins seemed shocked at the mere mention of the technology. If the Starmen were going around doing lectures on it, then it's surely no secret, and Robbins shouldn't have acted as though Joe had lost his mind.

In the original text, we were told that the Xenobot homeworld is a total mess. Yet we're also told that all of the First Races came from the same world, and the Janitor still lived there and rarely left. We had to make it clear that there are several homeworlds for the First Races, and the Lucians, most (but not all) of whom became Xenobots, had their own world.

In one place, Saadervo proves that he's much stronger than Vly and effortlessly moves a heavy box. But we had established in earlier books that Ahmanyans were much weaker than human beings. Even going to Earth, with its higher gravity field, would have been quite a strain for them—possibly too much for prolonged exposure. Surely Vly, a human used to higher gravity fields, would be much stronger than an Ahmanyman. They're a tall, thin, wispy type of people—advanced in many ways, but not physically. Fixing this glitch would have required major rewriting which, frankly, we thought was not worth the effort, so Saadervo explains how he is able to accomplish impressive physical feats in a way consistent with characteristic Ahmanyman philosophical accomplishments of “mind over matter”. David's skill and experience in martial arts provided the solution to this conundrum.

At one point, Vly and the rest of the group are on Adamant, and Vly calls, “Greegles! Come out!” But Vly and the rest are on an airless asteroid, and they’re all wearing spacesuits. Sound does not carry in a vacuum. It had to be made clear that Vly’s call was made electronically in the same way that the others were communicating.

It is stated at one point that the Starmen had met Roos in an “alternate universe”; they actually met Roos in an alternate *timeline*. There is a big difference, and it is a key part of *Paradox Lost*. This was an easy but very important fix.

When the people aboard Tharsos find Zip after he’d been missing with Jack, they launch the *Star Ranger* to rescue him. But earlier in the book Tharsos used the wormhole transporter to rescue Mark and Joe off of the neon planet. Why not use it now to rescue Zip? Fixing this scene while retaining the drama of the rescue took some imagination.

In *The Last Command*, Zip asks the Janitor about going back in time, and wonders if the past can be changed. However, he had just lived through something like that in *Paradox Lost*, so he knows that the past can be changed and things can be sent back in time. Zip has had firsthand experience in doing something similar to what he is wondering about.

In a rather complex issue, the matter of the First Races’ sending a superweapon to destroy Luxa was a questionable decision. Could they have destroyed the moon, which was the strategic target anyway? The only reason they didn’t was because Zip was already there. They destroyed Luxa shortly after that with their superweapon, but it was to pronounce a judgment, not to take decisive action in the war. But if they had the capability of destroying Luxa with

the superweapon at that time, why didn't they do so at any other time? Dealing with this issue required a major rewriting of that portion of the story; a few parts were eliminated and an entirely new chapter was created.

Everyone is sad that Zip died, but there were other casualties, and that needed to be acknowledged.

A brand new short story, "Stars of the Deep", has been added; at 10,000 words, it now takes first place as the longest of the short stories.

In *Paradox Lost*, on the trip to Mars, Roos was "rocked" to his core upon hearing about Reuben Ridger's terrorism. But he shouldn't have been, because Zip had already told that part of the story to the group when they were at Ira Crassendoog's home. So Roos wasn't hearing anything he hadn't heard before.

This story began as a fanciful, almost humorous tale, but it became a truly emotional story that packs some impact—yet as the tale developed, we continued to treat it like a joke. Joe's friend Owsley Robbins makes fun of him the entire time, and at the end we leave the reader wondering if it really happened. Telling something emotional and moving, and making fun of it at the same time just didn't work. The point was that we were meditating on the nature of reality and existence, and people who were literally willing to give up *even having ever existed* to fix things. So every reference that made it seem as if this story were a comedy was changed; mostly this meant rewriting the dialogue between Joe and Owsley. Our recognition of this anomaly and its fix led to our promoting the tale to full novel status alongside the other Starman tales, and placing it in the overall saga in a proper place.

In *Master of Shadows*, Joe knows about westerns and gunfights, but in *Paradox Lost* the whole concept of guns and gunfights took him completely by surprise—he acted as if they were completely alien, unknown things. This part of *Master of Shadows* required some rewriting in *Paradox Lost*.

It appears that Kathy Foster is the only person sent to find the power source for Larson's Folly. However, it is also made clear that when that power source breaks down, it could be a terrible catastrophe—maybe destroying the entire galaxy, and causing all kinds of unbelievable havoc. So it had to be made clear that there were many others looking urgently for the power source to Larson's Folly, and Kathy was merely the one who succeeded.

It suddenly struck us that Kathy Foster's training on Aden had some implications beyond her gaining some new abilities that enabled her to find and overcome the last Lucian. Those implications were never followed up on, but we realized that adding them to the story could make a powerful new ending to the entire saga. So two new chapters were written, taking off from the point where the original version of *Master of Shadows* ended. This made it possible for us to bring the Starman Saga to a fitting end rather than settle for the rather abrupt ending it had in the original version.

Given the opportunity of creating a new version of the saga, Jon Cooper created some brand new cover artwork, giving a new slant and a different emphasis to the look of the stories.

We also published the books in both dust jacket and casewrap (picture cover) versions since there has always been a demand for both formats.

Finally, we added Biblical verses as commentaries on the titles of each of the ten novels. This was, I think, a technique used on rare occasion in novels of several generations ago. The verses were selected to add a bit of mystery yet still be fitting for each story—a kind of “teaser” not to be too specific but rather intriguing. David had thought about doing this for years, and took the opportunity of preparing the reissue to do so. The verses are:

Mutiny on Mars

Such were the deeds of the three warriors. (2 Samuel 23:12b)

The three warriors, of course, are the Starman themselves.

The Runaway Asteroid

They will fight against you, but not prevail over you. (Jeremiah 1:19a)

This refers to Zimbardo’s opposition to the Starmen and their allies.

Journey to the Farthest Planet

Escape shall be cut off from the wicked. (Job 11:20b)

This refers to Zimbardo and his six companions who were pursued to the farthest reaches of the Solar System.

Descent into Europa

They will seek me diligently but will not find me. (Proverbs 1:28b)

This refers to the Starmen’s search for the Benefactors.

The Treasures of Darkness

I will give you the treasures out of the darkness, and riches that have been hidden away. (Isaiah 45:3)

This refers to the hidden communities of the Ahmanyen survivors, and also to the refuges where the

sleeping Ahmanyans are preserved to await their reawakening.

Doomsday Horizon

They looked like a wheel within a wheel. (Ezekiel 1:16b)

Doomsday Horizon is our most complexly-plotted novel; its plot unfolds like “wheels within wheels”.

The Heart of Danger

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:5)

In this book, Zip Foster and Tharsos invade the Xenobots’ home star system. Their invasion, brief as it was, was the first entry of the “forces of light” to the home of “the darkness”.

The Last Command

When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it. (Matthew 13:46)

This refers to Zip Foster’s “selling all that he has”, namely his own life, for the sake of the “pearl of great price”, that is, victory over the Xenobots.

Paradox Lost

If I take the wings of the morning and alight in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand will lead me, and your right hand hold me fast. (Psalm 139:9-10)

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

We long pondered two verses for this book. The first suggests that the Starmen, lost in an alternate timeline, will be able to find their way home. The second refers to the friends they make in that alternate timeline, who are willing to sacrifice their own existence for the sake of the Starmen’s world. Both appealed to us greatly, but

eventually we chose the second because it ties back into the previous book, and could therefore be reminiscent of Zip's sacrifice. It better expresses the theme of the entire Starman saga.

Master of Shadows

It is not good for the man to be alone. (Genesis 2:18a)

This verse refers obviously to Olor, but also suggests the fate of Kathy Foster, who suffers loneliness in her long life, and does so as an unanticipated sacrifice she comes to accept only after struggle.

It was intentional that the Foster children's lives be sacrificial—David by giving his life up, Kathy by receiving a very long life span. They are opposites, but both sacrificial for the sake of others in different ways.

NOW THAT IT'S ALL OVER

Readers' Comments and Reviews

As our reader base grew, the Starman Series received letters from highly satisfied readers. Here is a sampling of what other people thought about the Starman books, sent to us as the books were coming out. Some of this was also published in the previous section.

#1: Assault on Mars

Jim Ogden, Founder of the Rick Brant website: The first book in the Starman series, *Assault on Mars*, is a wonderfully old-fashioned futuristic story. The book tells the story of an invasion of Mars by pirates and the efforts of three Starman to help repel the invasion. The three Starmen are David "Zip" Foster, Joe Taylor and Mark Seaton.

Along the way we meet Jack and Jill, tiny beings from Titan, the great moon of Saturn, Steve Cliff, a kind of Han Solo type character, Richard Starlight, head of Starlight Enterprise and the mysterious Jогren.

There are a crash landing, hidden tunnels, robots, laser weapons and of course secret weapons, all things that make for a great adventure. If there is any downside to the book it is what I call Volume 1 Syndrome. Because the book is volume one of more than twenty planned books the first book has to set the stage for the rest of the series. This includes introducing a lot of characters and alluding to events that cannot possibly be fully explained in under 500 pages. While this is a downside it is not a very big

problem knowing that characters will be fleshed out more in future books.

I can't wait for the next book in the series.

BTW: Listening to the Star Wars soundtrack while reading this book makes for great background music.

Fred Woodworth, Publisher of *The Review*: I'm amazed at the preliminary organization you've put into the project, the historical detail of your summary puts the work on a level of adult TV-level SciFi rather than juvenile (so-called) series-book writing; whereas the actual writing sample was very strongly reminiscent of '50's juvenile-type SciFi. It's not just the ages of the heroes, but their speaking patterns: they remind me of Heinlein's young-people's space stories, or Mike Mars or even Tom Corbett.

Bottom line: I think this is a fine series-book. I'd have gotten hooked on your series and I'd have looked forward to the subsequent books, and would have chopped all the weeds, etc. that I had to do to earn the money to buy 'em.

Ed Pippin, Founder of the Tom Corbett website: The STARMAN Juvenile Book Series is now available. If you enjoyed the TOM CORBETT, RICK BRANT and TOM SWIFT series books, you will be very happy with the STARMAN adventures.

ASSAULT ON MARS is the first book in a proposed series of 23 STARMAN books and has all of the elements of the 1950's space opera that we loved.

In an age where electronic games, Internet surfing and computers compete for the leisure time of young people, the STARMAN series is a welcomed alternative. It is also a great read for “older” Cadets who remember the TOM CORBETT, and RICK BRANT stories. It is a project conducted by fans for fans with a professional result. This type of adventure book disappeared during the 1960’s when NASA’s engineers provided a less than glamorous looking space vehicle for the conquest of space :-)

The style and flavor of the STARMAN series is reminiscence of the book series Robert Heinlein wrote for Scribner in the 1950’s. Heinlein never “talked down” to his audience in his series of books and neither does the STARMAN books. The influences from Rick Brant’s author Hal Goodwin and Tom Corbett’s science advisor Willy Ley are also apparent. The background of the series has a structure and history that has been plotted for each book.

This is the type of project all fans should support. Cadet Ed plans to buy two copies. One for himself and one for his grandson to read and enjoy.

Aside from the great read, the first run of 500 copies is numbered and are sure to be collector’s items in the future. So don’t wait, contact the Starman Team and order your book today!! Tell ’em Cadet Ed sent you. You will be glad you did.

Greg, Who Sent the First Communication After Assault On Mars Was Mailed Out: The Starman book arrived today. It looks like it just came out of a time vault, like those other Dig Allen and Tom Swift books! You certainly captured the look and feel of an old-time series. Thanks very much!

#2: *The Runaway Asteroid*

Dale Ames: Hi Jonathan: Just finished *The Runaway Asteroid* and it is better than the first book. In the first book I found Jack and Jill too far out and was happy they were not in this book. The plot was “Super” and a lot like my favorite space show Babylon 5 and the Shadow Wars — each show stood alone but had an underlying subplot for the five year run... I found the story highly intelligent and liked the fact that the Starmen didn’t save the world alone. Gene, Richard Starlight, Robert Nolan, Denn, Steve Cliff, Jesus Madera all played a role as big as the Starmen played. The inside of the Asteroid was great and who were the “Unknowns” on the Asteroid??? Plots, subplots, and sub-subplots were the best. I have read westerns, novels, mysteries, and much more but these books are right up there in writing skills.

#3: *Journey to the Tenth Planet*

Dan Henton: Thanks for the update, and thanks also for the [copies of *Journey to the Tenth Planet*]! They showed up in the mail today. My son (age 13) was there to see me unwrap them and immediately grabbed one to take to his room to read after he finishes his homework this evening. The cover looks great and I am looking forward to reading it myself as soon as I get a break in our remodeling project. Thanks also for the very nice note regarding my advice on precipitation on Titan...

#4: *Descent Into Europa*

Mark Johnson: I finished reading *Descent Into Europa* this evening. Outstanding. This book takes the Starman saga to new levels and is on par with the finest series book writing.

David, Jon, and Mike have done a superb job. In my opinion each book so far has been smoother and richer than the one before. *Descent Into Europa* had very few, if any, false or sour notes.

The plotting, pacing, and writing come together to form a very cohesive and enjoyable whole.

Most interesting to me is that *Descent Into Europa* is the most original and creative in terms of sci-fi ideas, yet also the most adept at reminding us that humans are human no matter what century they live in.

Take a bow, gentlemen!

#5: *The Lost Race of Mars*

Mark McSherry: Just finished *The Lost Race of Mars* today and found it to be a thrilling break-neck ride that ends on a deeply emotional— and satisfying— note. As with all the Starman books the action set-pieces are riveting fun. The adventures at the ravine and later at Brandow's iron foundry are as exciting— and vivid— as anything in the earlier volumes.

One of the strengths of the Starman books— in my humble opinion— is the sense of place as well as predicament in the telling of the stories. The Starman Team has enough confidence

in their work to take time to leaven the plotting with descriptive accounts of both locale and environment. And, by drawing on all five of the reader's senses while doing so, enriches the tale by adding a depth that lingers in the memory long after the telling.

I knew the Series could be something special while reading *Assault on Mars*. The trek across the Martian landscape to Eagle City, which takes up the middle portion of the book, is exciting in and of itself. But the journey, especially after meeting up with Jogren, takes on a leisurely, almost lyrical quality as the earthmen land-sail across a snowy plain, then work their way on foot through the maze of the mud caves, til finally kayaking the Martian Sea. It is writing such as this, and there are other examples throughout the entire series, that transcends the boy's-sf-adventure series genre that the Team seeks to emulate and pay homage to. It is a style that could almost be called Tolkienesque. Likewise, as an example in 'The Lost Race of Mars', the exotic setting of the villain's desert refuge is visualized in a manner resembling Middle-Earth locales imagined by that inimitable don.

Yes, *The Lost Race of Mars* is filled with great moments of both action and revelation. But for me the highlight of the book is where the action is nothing more than four men sitting on benches under eucalyptus trees watching a fisherwoman casting her net in the middle distance— And listening to one of them reminiscing to the other three about a woman named Rose.

#6: *Doomsday Horizon*

Tim Parker: Just finished *Doomsday Horizon*! (I tried to stretch it out as long as I could but you guys made it so exciting that I finally had to finish it.) It was a very enjoyable read. I didn't think that you would be able to top "The Lost Race of Mars" but

I think that you just may have. It had everything in it that you could ask for in a children's (or adults pretending they're children's) series.

It begins with a calm, relaxing camping trip involving the three Starmen that is suddenly shattered with their abduction by an unknown enemy. Then the scene shifts to somewhere seemingly in the far flung future. Just when the Starmen solve the mystery of where they are they are immediately captured again. The plot twists and turns in this manner throughout the book. Each time that you think you have it all figured out another development occurs that changes your whole perspective on things. Many clues are left along the way but sometimes they can be misleading. You're never really sure of what's going to happen right up to the end. My kind of story!

#7: *The Heart of Danger*

Steve Servello: After reading *The Heart of Danger*, I believe I am looking forward to the last volume, *The Last Command*, as much as most any series finale.

Starting with the 16 page short story, "The Eight Treasures," I was immediately captivated. It deals with the destruction of a planet 12,000 years ago and I must comment here, that Michael D. Cooper may well have written the best, yet heart wrenching pages of the Starman Chronicles.

As for the story proper, the war with the Xenobots continues apace with the civilized races of Sol more than holding their own. From one end of the galaxy to the other, the action is hardly non-stop yet we can pick up most interesting tid-bits of info on the various participants in this war. ...

(Could hardly put down *The Heart of Danger*. It is THAT good!)

David Ethell: I have to agree that this is a great read. I'm only half way through it, but I'm thoroughly enjoying it so far.

I know the Last Command will be a great ending to a great series!

#8: *The Last Command*

Mark McSherry: ... While I feel a sense of sadness, the overriding sensation is one of joy; I believe that reading the Starman Series has made me a better person. That my consciousness has been elevated. And my spirit made more robust. ...

Steve Servello: My plan was to put off reading *The Last Command* because I knew it was the last of this incredible series and I wanted to delay not only the end but the expected joy while reading it. Well, the book arrived on October 5 and I held off until October 28. Such willpower! The truth of the matter was I just "had to know" precisely how the Xenobot wars would end and hopefully learn more of our galaxy's history. As I knew I would, I received giant doses of both. ...

"The Last Command" was the usual Starman page turner that I've come to expect but the most special of all. David Baumann, Jon Cooper and Mike Dodd have added an admirable ending to their magnificent saga, saving some of their best ideas and

writing for last. ...

Lastly, thank you Michael D. Cooper for five years of sheer reading enjoyment. I will echo Mark in his earlier comment, I too believe my life is better for reading the Starman Saga. Certainly it has been uplifted.

#9: *Paradox Lost*

Marge Avery, May 9, 2003: Imagine our surprise and delight, late last night, to discover a copy of the latest STARMAN CHRONICLES, hot off the press, in Richard's box at the church! I read it this morning, first thing, and Richard is deeply into it right now. Thank you for giving us a copy.

It's a great story, a real puzzler. Well written. I couldn't put it down. Now I am thinking it over, and wondering about the story. There is a lot to wonder about. The story tells us that the time of year was late winter or early spring. In Seneca, New York, the winter lasts late. At the beginning of the story, one of the trees is dead and the grass is dry as straw and dead, a foot high and still standing, which seems unlikely after the heavy snows they have in Seneca, but new grass is sprouting. (Image of death and rebirth) When the Starmen are walking through the forest, it seems as if the trees must be in leaf, as they conceal the men from airplanes overhead. The Starmen leave impressions of their footsteps in the lush, new grass. The countryside seems like a springtime place, with fresh, flowing streams. Yet there is something ominous about the place. The Starmen's captors are afraid of something. As they flee, the Starmen encounter the crater of a nuclear explosion, which was quite recent, only about 25 years ago. That introduces a further threatening element of fear and destruction. I wonder why the Starmen aren't concerned about residual radiation. I would have thought that such a recent

nuclear site would still be radioactive. The people of this time and place apparently are able to use nuclear power for destructive, but not constructive, purposes, or they have been the victims of people with nuclear capability. Then there is the peculiar statement of the captors, “You’re lucky that you materialized a week early, but a lot of people remember that you were coming and they are determined to be here at the appointed time.” That sentence seems to mix up the tenses, which adds to the strangeness of the situation, but it also goes to show that the people are familiar with the workings of a transporter. What a curious statement! What curious people! A similar mixture of the tenses is also in your slogan for the Chronicles! “The future - the way it used to be.” I like that. Then there is the building full of dusty artifacts, the wreckage of an old airplane, a village of silent people who seem out of sync with their time, the date on a recent newspaper, all these give the story a rather dream-like quality. It’s a mystery, and I really enjoyed reading it.

Mark McSherry, Thursday, May, 15, 2003: It’s very tempting to set the latest issue of TSC aside for a while and thus shorten the two-month interval between Issues Two and Three. And I did— for a day.

I very much enjoyed reading the 2nd installment of “The Lost Tomorrow.” So far this serial has been a great showcase for Mr. Baumann’s prowess as a writer.

I was particularly interested—and amused—by Joe’s off-hand comments, as he told his tale to Ows, concerning his team-mates. Especially those remarks concerning Zip that were less than laudatory.

My take so far— A parallel universe where there was no Thomas Starlight to pick up the slack after the Collapse? And if the Ahmanyans and Xenobots do exist, along with their intense

rivalry, it certainly looks bleak for the good guys with no SE to counter the Xenobot onslaught. With no help from Earth the Ahmanyans may be forced to hunker down and hope that their archenemy does not discover them. But if they do that there is nothing to prevent the Xenobots from destroying Earth out of spite and for their own amusement.

Could the “hi-jacking” of the tachyon beam be an Ahmanyman gambit to somehow put Earth back on a course of recovery— a last desperate attempt to reverse humanity’s descent into social chaos and technological obsolescence?

Much to ponder over— And lots of time to ponder until the next installment...

#10: *Master of Shadows*

Mark McSherry: I must say that you’ve wrapped up all the threads in the Starman Series very well! ... Chapter Eighteen, “Face to Face”, is just outstanding. A very intense experience with some surprising twists as our duo descends into that heart of darkness. ... Some wonderful writing here... The final chapter captures the emotions of closure for this book, and for the Starman Series, with a potent mix of both autumnal sadness and glory. Thank you!

Charlie Campbell: All in all I think it is a great book. And I hope it ain’t just me talking, but I think it is one of the better, if not the best Starman book. (Except maybe *The Lost Race of Mars*.)

Jonathan Farmer: 30 minutes ago I finished Master of Shadows; it took me quite by surprise.... In a way I am kinda sad that the series is finally over. .. I have been a huge fan of the Starman series from the moment my mother first read me Assault On Mars when I was 7 or 8 years old; in a way it has inspired me to do several things, in a way it is also a part of my life. In a way it has inspired me to seek the true light and has eased me in times of grave distress over matters that I had no control over. Thank you very much for all the work you and the Starman Team have put into the series, and know that someone profited from it.

Montezuma Vly—a Tribute

by David Baumann

The Starman Team dedicated *The Runaway Asteroid* to Fred Woodworth, the designer, publisher, and most prolific writer of “The Mystery and Adventure Series Review”. The first issue of this undeniably peerless fan magazine for series book enthusiasts rolled off his presses in 1980. At the time of this writing (July 2006), Fred has produced 39 issues in 26 years.

With the concurrence of Jon Cooper and Mike Dodd, I wrote the dedication to Fred in the second Starman book. The dedication also appears in this book on page 130. We lauded this amazing person as

a rare and gifted individual who practices
generosity in a world of acquisitiveness,
courage in a world of indifference,
honesty in a world of opportunism, and
personal responsibility in a world of buck-passing;
an artist and craftsman
few in this era know how to appreciate;
who has done as much as any and more than most to
advance the cause of series books;
and whose genius has abundantly proven that the
books deplored by librarians of a previous age
are treasures that shaped several generations and
made their readers better people.
To Fred Woodworth of Tucson, Arizona,
the series book world owes a debt
that can never be paid.

I first wrote to Fred in October 1996 on the recommendation of an acquaintance, thus beginning a correspondence that now fills more than eight inches of space in my filing cabinet—with letters that have made me laugh out loud or on rare occasion moved me to tears. They are evidence of a friendship that I value more than I can describe. Knowing Fred has changed my life very much for the better—not just because I have enormously benefitted by our series book contacts, but much more because Fred is a man of principle and... well, because he's the kind of person I described in the dedication above.

Fred was more than pleased to print our copies of *Assault On Mars*. We were wondering how many copies to make—Maybe 20? we thought, wondering if we had enough family members and close friends to warrant that many copies. Fred said, “Make it 500. It’s all the same to me and you can always recycle what doesn’t sell.” So we agreed. He spent well over a hundred hours printing about 25,000 pages, then collating about 100 books and binding them one by one as described elsewhere in this book. The entire print run filled about eight bankers’ boxes, and weighed David’s car down noticeably when he picked them up and drove them home. A few months later, when we had sold a couple of hundred copies and had some cash in hand, we sent Fred a sizable “thank you” payment—which he returned, saying that he was pleased to do the work.

As anyone who reads the “Review” knows, Fred does not distribute his contact information easily. Nearly everyone who wants to correspond with him must do so through a P. O. Box. In the “Review” he has written,

No telephone, no “e-mail”, so either write or don’t communicate with me at all.

So when it came time to create and develop a character in the Starman series who was somewhat reclusive, highly distrustful of authorities and officialdom and brasshats (and for good reason), and yet incredibly principled and creative, I decided to base him after Fred Woodworth. Thus, in *The Runaway Asteroid*, the character of Montezuma Vly was born. He appears several times later in the series and finally, all unknowingly, plays a critical role in the conclusion of the saga.

There are a good number of characters in the Starman series based on real individuals to one degree or another, but in the case of Montezuma Vly, the identification with Fred Woodworth is as complete as I can make it. After I'd written the first appearance of this character (see *The Runaway Asteroid*, page 211 in *The Dawn of the Starmen*), I sent the first draft of this section to Fred to see if he would object. Fortunately, he didn't. In fact, he was pleased. Gratified by his response, I plunged ahead.

Vly became an important character, playing a unique role in the Starman saga as it unfolded. Many of Fred's virtues became those of Montezuma Vly—a wry sense of humor, a passion for independence, deep loyalty in friendship, broad-mindedness without the slightest compromise of principle, amazing generosity without any thought of personal reward, a dedication to justice, and a scorn for mediocrity shown by his willingness to take on numbing drudgery for the sake of excellent quality in whatever he does.

With a few minor changes, the descriptions of Vly's workshop and Vly himself match those of Fred's printshop in Tucson and Fred himself. Offset printing presses became rock polishing machines, cats became koalangs, Fred's companion Iris became Lily. Just about everything else is

true-to-life: the shelves of books, the boxes of bolts and machine parts, the scarcity of chairs for visitors in a crammed workspace—even the crystal ball.

Even the name “Montezuma Vly” has a real, albeit stretch-of-the-imagination connection to Fred. As one drives south on the state road toward the Anza-Borrego Desert, the site of the actual mud cave, one comes across Montezuma Valley Road. The name of the road is abbreviated Montezuma Vly. A few miles beyond this intersection is where Fred spent the first two to three years of his life. The instant I saw this sign, I knew that I had found the name of the character who operates out of the banana-shaped asteroid not far from Ceres that I called “Montezuma’s Castle”.

Fred himself observed that one could have paid \$100,000 to some think-tank, and not come up with a better name.



In *The Last Command*, Montezuma Vly comes into his own. Although not much recognized by other human

beings, and certainly not credited by them to any extent, the First Races discern the greatness of the man and reward him for services he had rendered simply by operating out of his own high understanding of virtue.

At length, Vly spoke up. "Saleh, if I may ask— why did you bring me here?"

The Lucian turned toward the miner. "I asked you to come so that I may give you a gift." He returned to his examination of the greegles, but his voice continued inside Vly's mind. "You are the friend of the greegles. You are the only friend they have had in the ages of their vigil. Few people indeed have seen them, but in recent times many have heard of them. All but one considered how they may exploit them. Even the Ahmanyans, who found them millennia ago, were interested only in the information they could glean from them. They learned little. You alone accorded them dignity. They are only machines, but you did not know that until recently. Though they did not need it, you protected them. And for that, they protected you once from your enemies."

Vly, stunned with the extent of the Lucian's knowledge, remembered the time he had called on the greegles when Lurton Zimbardo's ships had attacked his crescent-shaped asteroid, and the greegles had sent the pirates scuttling away in short order. Four of their five ships had been cut into scrap. Vly had scavenged many valuable supplies from the debris of that encounter. The miner smiled with the memory. Suddenly Vly was overcome with a sense of overwhelming inequity. A keen discomfort washed through him.

The Lucian, having made his way back toward the entrance to the chamber, turned toward Vly again. For the first time, the two men looked eye to eye. Vly was riveted with

the encounter. "Montezuma Vly," came the Lucian's words, "do not think that, because I am of the First Races, I am exempt from showing courtesy or gratitude. The obligation of virtue is laid upon all sentient beings, the greater and the lesser alike—perhaps the greater most of all. And your race is by no means the least of the creatures." ...

Then Saleh the Lucian explains to Vly the tragedy endured by his own race, that most of his fellows (and the brightest and most courageous of them) had been captured eons before in a time stasis which was itself protected against incursion by an artificial and formidable, endless storm. He ruminates that there is no way to release them. At that time, Vly's empathy emerges. The Lucian concludes,

"Perhaps, perhaps when the Xenobots have been vanquished, the storm's intensity will diminish. I do not know the extent of their powers. But even if it is so, it will be impossible to release the captives. They must remain caught until time itself ends."

"Saleh," said Vly after a long pause. His voice was more tender than perhaps it had been for many years. "You have said yourself that you are not omniscient. Maybe a way can be found to release the First Races."

The Lucian looked up. "I will not deny it, Montezuma Vly." He smiled. "Now I will give you your gift." He looked around. "One of these greegles will become your own. I will prepare it so that it will serve you in many ways for all the time that remains to you. And then, most of the rest of these will accompany me back to the home of the First Races."

The illustration at the end of chapter 4 of *The Last Command* is a rendering of the above scene. The likeness of Montezuma Vly is taken from a photograph I took of Fred Woodworth.



When he saw it, he wrote,

I have to smile
every time I look
at that
illustration you
sent from "The Last
Command". Yes, the
artist has captured
the bulgy eyes and
froggy lips of
yours truly most
aptly. Help! I'm
imprisoned in a
series book! There
are worse fates.



Thanks. Seriously. I'm glad to see that ol' Montezuma Vly comes off so well, too. I'll do my best to model my behavior on his. And no, I have no objections. What a saga!

And so in the Starman saga it was that a humble human being, simply going about his business and interfering with no one and wanting no one to interfere with him, becomes one of the most honored of men. Even then, he is hardly aware of the gift bestowed on him—because he is that true a man.

I can think of no better way to show appreciation to a very good friend whom I admire greatly—Fred Woodworth.

**TO SUBSCRIBE TO
“The Mystery and Adventure Series Review”,
write to:**

**Fred Woodworth
P. O. Box 3012
Tucson, AZ 85702**

Word Count in the Starman Series

Volume 1: The Dawn of the Starmen

Mutiny On Mars	58,130
The Runaway Asteroid	59,123
“The City of Dust”	4,558
“The Flight of the <i>Olympia</i> ”	6,030
“The Caves of Mercury”	6,234
“The Orphans of Titan”	2,779
“A Matter of Time”	3,852
Journey to the Farthest Planet	<u>51,631</u>
TOTAL	192,337

Volume 2: The Search for the Benefactors

Descent Into Europa	51,093
The Treasures of Darkness	98,365
“The Sand Tomb”	6,635
“The Eight Treasures”	4,422
“The Infestation at Sulphur Creek”	4,218
“The Plight of the Bumblebee”	9,441
“The Ultimate Code”	3,909
“Return to Europa”	5,958
Doomsday Horizon	<u>53,786</u>
TOTAL	237,827

Volume 3: The War of the Light

The Heart of Danger	71,077
The Last Command	48,787
“A New World”	3,986
“Stars of the Deep”	10,000
Paradox Lost	33,887
Master of Shadows	<u>69,618 + 702</u>
TOTAL	238,057

GRAND TOTAL	668,221
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For comparison, here is the word count for well-known books:

The seven Chronicles of Narnia	323,503
The Starman Saga	668,221
The Silmarillion	130,115
The Hobbit	95,022
The Lord of the Rings	<u>455,125</u>
TOTAL	680,262
The King James Version of the Bible (with Apocrypha)	773,692 925,877
The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (with Apocrypha)	745,598 907,064
The seven Harry Potter books	1,084,625

The Starman saga is more than twice as long as the seven Chronicles of Narnia, and about 98% as long as the entire saga of Middle-earth.

The Timeline for the Entire Saga

On the first day of the 22nd century, January 1, 2101, throughout all of human civilization the Gregorian Calendar was replaced by the World Calendar. The days of the year are arranged across the months as follows:

January 1-30	July 1-30
February 1-30	August 1-30
March 1-31	September 1-31
April 1-30	October 1-30
May 1-30	November 1-30
June 1-31	December 1-31
Leap Day (every four years)	World Peace Day

The World Calendar consists of four quarters of equal length: thirteen weeks or ninety-one days. There are three months in each quarter; the first two have thirty days and the last thirty-one. January 1 always begins on a Sunday, and every date within the year will always fall on the same day of the week. The four quarters comprise 364 days. The 365th day of the year is called World Peace Day. It belongs to no week, and falls between Saturday, December 31 and Sunday, January 1. In leap years, a second day that belongs to no week, called Leap Day, occurs between Saturday, June 31 and Sunday, July 1.

The World Calendar is used throughout the Starman saga. The Ahmanyans adopted the World Calendar in all their dealings with humans, even though the Ahmanyman year is nearly twice that of Earth's. This is taken for granted throughout the saga. Stenafi, for example, though identified as being about 22 years old at the end of *The Heart of Danger*, is twelve years old according to her own planet's reckoning. Only in the short story, "The Sand Tomb", is the World Calendar abjured and native time is used instead.

The “Great Years” of the Starman saga begin in May 2151 and conclude about twenty years later. The chronological order of the stories is as follows.

THE EIGHT TREASURES

10085 B.C.

Referenced in a story but not a part of it

2014

First manned landing on Mars

2023

Establishment of the first permanent colony on Mars

THE CITY OF DUST

July 30, 2049

Last spaceship leaves Eagle City in era of the Collapse

August 2051

Teagarden settlement establishes Final Illeen

THE SAND TOMB

Summer 2060

THE FLIGHT OF THE *OLYMPIA*

2110

Extra-terrestrial probe enters Asteroid Belt, is destroyed

Young Richard Starlight travels on last flight of the *Olympia*

THE CAVES OF MERCURY

Thousands of years ago

Ahmanyen miners work on Mercury

2030s

Xhosa miners work on Mercury

September 3, 2112

Keerthi Nair calls Thomas Starlight

September 22

Thomas Starlight and Ezra Hill plan venture to Mercury,
devise the name "Starman"

October 19

Starman Ezra Hill departs Amundsen City for Mercury

February 10, 2113

Ezra lands on Mercury

February 29

Ezra Hill begins return trip to Luna

June 24

Ezra Hill lands at Amundsen City

THE ORPHANS OF TITAN

August 2, 2130

Allen Foster, commanding the First Deep Space Exploration,
discovers the Titanians

A MATTER OF TIME

October 12, 2150

Starlight Enterprise's experimental wormhole drive
is sabotaged

The four Starlight children disappear

MUTINY ON MARS (May 19-July 22, 2151)

May 19

Zip, Mark, and Joe wonder if they will be created Starman

May 20

Graduation ceremonies at Starlight Academy

mid-June

Pirates launch their fleet from the asteroid to Mars

June 14

Zip launches from the Moon

June 28

Zip lands in Eagle City, begins to set up the RT experiment

July 4

The assault on Mars
 Zip sends his message via RTT on his compad
 Pirates land on Encke's Comet
 Late night emergency meeting with Keith Seaton,
 Space Command, etc.
 Putnam sends his ultimatum

July 5

Moonbus trip in afternoon
 Briefing in evening with Steve Cliff
 Zip blows the fuel depot up (early morning Mars time)

July 6

Spud Peeler launches at 9 a.m.
 Payload from Encke's Comet arrives in Mars space

July 10

Invasion team parachutes onto Mars

July 12

Jogren rescues invasion team at night
 Zip grazed by laser, found by Tunnel People

July 13

Land-sailing across snow field
 Earth fleet assembles in space and begins journey to Mars

July 14

Putnam sends search ship out
 Invasion team sees field of luminous lichen

July 15

Adventures in the mud cave
 Tunnel people provide feast for Zip after his recovery

July 1

Invasion team reaches mining colony

July 17

Invasion team sails Martian sea
 Commander Lewis takes counsel with Richard and others
 Zip and friends blow up barracks
 Invasion team enters Eagle Crater at night and
 meet up with Zip

July 18

Starmen and friends begin to plan their resistance
to the pirates

July 20

Zip suggests plan for resistance

July 21

Dinner with Tunnel People

Starmen and friends begin their resistance, are captured

July 22

Early morning, Starmen victorious

Earth fleet lands

Zimbardo escapes

THE RUNAWAY ASTEROID

(July 24-September 10, 2151)

July 24

Zimbardo reaches pirates' asteroid

August 3

Starmen visit Montezuma Vly

August 5

Starmen visit Z25

With miners, are captured by Zimbardo's men.

August 10

Starmen and miners escape.

August 14

Starmen escape from the pirates' asteroid

August 16

First asteroids strike Mars

Zimbardo shifts his asteroid toward Earth.

August 21

Starmen reach SE base on O344

August 23

Starmen leave O344

NME sends out freighters

Prates launch ships

September 1

Pirates' asteroid is revealed to Earth's forces.

September 2

Zimbardo aims asteroid toward Earth,
abandons it for deep space.

September 4

Mark restores power to asteroid

September 5

Asteroid is successfully diverted.

September 9-10

Asteroid passes by Earth in spectacular nighttime show

September 10

Starmen are honored on Earth

JOURNEY TO THE FARTHEST PLANET

(January 1-August 22, 2152)

January 1

David takes Kathy to Armstrong Forest
Dr. O discovers most distant dwarf planet
Starmen meet with Richard Starlight, Dr. O

January 29

Starmen's families enjoy astrogazing

February 2

Launch of the *Starventure*

February 13

Tartarus reaches the dwarf planet

February 17

Starventure's active shielding fails; crew taken to Titan

March 12

Starmen and Kristina Bethany visit Titan's great Gorge

March 15

Starventure launches from Titan

May 9

Starventure arrives at dwarf planet

Starventure's crew imprisoned with Lurton Zimbardo
and his cronies

Starmen resist Xenobots

May 10

Xenobots flee Nyx

May 13

Starventure begins homeward journey

DESCENT INTO EUROPA

(August 7-December 25, 2152)

August 7

Zip ruminates in the *Starventure*

August 22

Starventure returns to the Moon

August 29

Starmen meet with Richard Starlight to discuss
journey to Europa

September 4

Starmen visit Aquapolis

October 9

Starmen test the *Underbird* in Antarctica

October 23

Ortiz Konig contacts Zip about his find on Final Ilien

October 25

Starmen begin journey to Mars in the *Star Ranger*

October 27

Silverfire launches from Moon

November 12

Starmen visit Final Ilien; spend night in Eagle City

November 13

Silverfire launches from Eagle City en route to Europa

November 18

Starmen visit Montezuma Vly

December 4

Silverfire enters orbit around Jupiter

Interceptor ship, the *Iron Maiden*, is launched from NME

December 5

Silverfire lands on Europa

Noah Kitsualuk begins construction of igloo and base

December 15

Underbird makes first descent into European ocean

December 19

Katie Essington sends probe into the ocean

December 24

Underbird begins second descent, enters tunnels

Iron Maiden deploys robotic fighters, destroys igloo

Robert Nolan flees from NME

Denn flees in NME

Iron Maiden renews attack on SE base

December 25

Ganymede ships arrive at SE base

NME satellite is destroyed

Denn and his cronies captured

Starmen make contact with octopi-Europans

Starmen flee robotic attackers; return to base in afternoon.

Christmas dinner on Europa

Yancy Dufaure made a Starman

Referenced in a story but not a part of it

December 28

SE crew leaves Europa aboard the *Michael Adams*

February 8, 2153

Michael Adams lands at Amundsen City

THE TREASURES OF DARKNESS

(March 18-May 6, 2153)

March 18

Starmen camping in Armstrong Forest

March 22

Starmen arrive at the Asteroid just after noon

Zip identifies Ahmanya

March 23

Starmen confer with Richard Starlight

Starmen begin journey to Mars

March 25

Richard Starlight begins journey to Mars

April 17

Starmen land in Eagle City, visit *Wind's End*

Starmen spend night in *Lizard's Watering Hole*

April 18

Starmen learn *Star Ranger* has been wrecked

April 19

Starmen meet Steve Cliff, go to Brandow,
then to Seven Leaves

Starmen flee Seven Leaves under threat of detainment;
chased by police and escape

Richard Starlight lands without announcement in Mars Base
Planetwide manhunt for Starmen begins

April 20

Starmen take refuge in the desert northwest of Eagle City

Richard's public conference in Eagle City

Mayor Warner calls off manhunt under duress

Joe is captured by Banjoman, imprisoned with Steve Cliff

Zip and Mark disable and explore robotic fighter,

are attacked by Xenobots, rescued by Ahmanyans

Richard Starlight attacks Xenobots

April 21

Zip and Mark hear Stenafi's tale

Richard meets Wind People, takes *Star Ranger* to Mars Base

Banjoman takes Joe and Steve to deeper imprisonment

April 22

Zip and Mark return to surface of Mars,
 meet Daniel Teagarden
 Zip and Mark hitch ride on Banjoman's harvester and
 come to Brandow
 Zip and Mark find fillox factory;
 escape pursuit and ally with Teagarden
 Banjoman evacuates his desert base, flees to Brandow;
 after fillox factory is discovered, flees to Eagle City

April 23

Zip and Mark capture Forge's crew in Brandow
 Banjoman and cronies are captured in Eagle City
 Richard and others destroy Banjoman's bomb,
 set out to rescue Joe and Steve

April 24

Joe and Steve brought up from chamber
 Reunion of the Starmen
 Starmen and Steve taken to Bethesda in evening

April 27

Kristina Bethany pays surprise visit to Bethesda

May 3

Kristina Bethany leaves for Earth to visit her family

May 4

Starmen, Richard, and Steve leave Bethesda and
 return to Eagle City

May 5

Steve Cliff takes his leave
 Starmen and Richard go to visit Tunnel People

May 6

Stenafi and Jogren visit Tunnel People
 Saadervo brings Richard and Starmen to see
 the Ahmanyans in hypersleep,
 then go to *Imlah Taltahni* for extended stay

THE INFESTATION AT SULPHUR CREEK

June 1, 2153

Mark investigates firewasp horde in remote Martian village;
Starmen visit Andrew Forge in custody

THE PLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE

June 13, 2153

THE ULTIMATE CODE

September 26, 2153

RETURN TO EUROPA

(October 15-December 31, 2153)

October 15

Starmen begin journey for Europa

November 10

Meet Ahmanyans in Asteroid Belt

December 5

Rendezvous on Europa

December 31

Saadervo announces discovery of hyperspatial apparatus

Referenced in a story but not a part of it

January 4, 2154

Starmen and Ahmanyans leave Europa

January 30

Starmen drop Ahmanyans in Asteroid Belt

February 22

Starmen return to Amundsen City

May 10, 2154

The Starlight children reappear

PARADOX LOST (told by Joe Taylor in summer 2168)**(March 21-April 23, 2155)**

March 21

Tachyon transporter malfunctions

March 23

Starmen launch from Earth to Mars

April 14

Starmen land on Mars

April 23

Starmen fix tachyon transporter in Olovanda,
return to their own timeline**Referenced in a story but not a part of it**

Early 2156

Nyx reaches perihelion, inside Solar System
as far as Asteroid Belt**DOOMSDAY HORIZON****(July 30-August 19, 2156)**

July 30

Starmen are captured in Montana

August 1

Zip escapes his captors in New York

August 3

Mark and Joe wake up in abandoned base

August 5

Mark and Joe witness violated planet, figure out hoax

Mark and Joe captured by human renegades, sabotage ship

Mark and Joe spend two days in hyperspace—

time doesn't pass in normal space

Zip overhears conversation in Eckman Warehouse

August 6

Zip makes a break for freedom; his ship is shot down

August 7

Richard Starlight surveys scene in old New York

Mark and Joe restore Xenobot ship to normal space

August 12

David Foster's funeral in Armstrong Forest

Tharsos assailed

Zip takes Richard Starlight to Tharsos;

Richard takes Zip to his home

Xenobots attack the ship Joe and Mark are on;

Joe takes ship through hyperspace,
crash lands on Mars

August 13

Mark, Joe, Richard Starlight, Mika Watanabe confer

August 14

Disinformational meeting in Richard's office and
subsequent destruction of Xenobot spy

Mark and Joe assailed in Eagle City on way to
Imlah Taltahni; their assailants captured
by Zip and Ahmanyans

August 17

Xenobots attack and are overwhelmed

Humans and Ahmanyans take possession of
Xenobot base in the Asteroid Belt

August 19

Starmen and Ahmanyans camp together,
converse about status of defense against Xenobots

THE HEART OF DANGER

(September 1-November 9, 2157)

February 30

Xenobots destroy brown planet

Awakening of Izmake completed

September 1

Starmen relax on the shore of Starlight Academy

September 4

Council on Tharsos

Tharsos attacked and flees to Asteroid Belt

September 5

Richard Starlight gives the Starmen their assignments

September 6

Mark, Joe, and Saadervo leave Tharsos for Adamant

September 10

Zip begins journey in *Star Ranger* from Mars to Tharsos.

Mark, Joe, and Saadervo land on Montezuma's Castle

Janitor retrieves two greegles from Adamant

September 11

Zip returns to Tharsos in *Star Ranger*

September 14

Mark, Joe, and Saadervo return to Tharsos

September 17

Joe's 23rd birthday

September 22

Star Ranger lands on Titan

September 24

Kathryn Mullaney lands on Titan

September 28

Star Ranger leaves Titan for the rings of Saturn

October 11

Tharsos journeys through hyperspace to the neon planet

September 30

First attack on the sun

October 2

Council on Deck 45 of *Orion*

October 5

Janitor visits Andor Vornado at SE Hawaii;

conference call between Vornado, Hoshino, and Tharuji.

October 6

Sotik makes holographic visits to the neon planet

October 7

First actual landings are made on the neon planet

October 10

Initial report from captured sphere's data leads to
plan for second landing

October 18

Starmen, Jack and Jill, and Raffon Dorn land
on neon planet in the evening

October 19

Zip deploys the robotic insects to the Xenobot base

October 20

Xenobot electronics are penetrated but immediately disable
the Starmen's systems, relay station,
and damage Tharsos

Landing party flees from camp

October 21

Landing party spies ruined city

Mark breaks leg in fall

Zip is taken in Xenobot spacecraft to giant torus,
calls Tharsos to attack

Tharsos destroys torus, then retreats

Zip and Jack hide on Xenobot transport ship

October 22

Zip breaks for freedom from Xenobot freighter
as Xenobot armada jumps to Oort Cloud

Tharsos learns that allies have put hypershield
around Solar System,
jumps to Oort Cloud, finds and rescues Zip and Jack

October 23

Xenobot armada speeds into Inner Planetary system,
is decimated by antimatter shield

Remnants flee back to Omega Centauri, pursued by human
and Ahmanyen warships

November 2

Human-Ahmanyen fleet returns to Solar System

November 9

Starmen's conference with Richard Starlight

Summer 2158

Mark visits Stenafi at the farm outside *Imlah Taltahni*

Zip and Joe visit Dr. Verderber at Mars Base

THE LAST COMMAND
(March 11-May 4, 2160)

March 11

Zip and Kathy on Earth

March 12

Zip's surprise birthday party on Moon

Visit at home with George St. George

Robert Nolan reviews his company's work on Ahmanya

April 1

Robotic probes initiate the attack on Xenobotic holdings

April 2

Tharsos realizes that the Xenobots are building
another wormhole transporter

Saleh visits Adamant and calls Montezuma Vly to join him

April 5

Janitor fails to destroy the Xenobots' weapon
by tachyon bomb

April 6

Janitor visits Tharsos with the bad news

April 7

Starmen begin to look for pocket worlds

April 10

Starmen meet with Richard Starlight

Kathryn Mullaney appears

April 12

Zip and Allen talk in the Olovandan orchard

April 16

Zip, Mark, and Joe begin test their spacesuits

April 18

Starmen enjoy a feast with the closest friends

April 20

Janitor takes the Starmen and transports them
to his own world

April 24

Starmen transport to Luxa, are trapped
Alliance's armada invades the Xenobot system
Second Xenobot War is fought
Zip makes desperate dash to Luxa's moon,
destroys the Xenobot fleet and himself

April 27

Kathy Foster grieves on Mars

May 4

Allen and Elizabeth Foster grieve at home

A NEW WORLD

(March 12-13, 2161)

Dedication of "David Foster Spaceport"

THE LAST COMMAND (continued)

(May-June 2161)

May 20, 2161

Kathy Foster created a Starman, ten years to the day
after her brother

June 2161

Starmen visit Ahmanya

Referenced in a story but not a part of it

Fall 2161

Larson's Folly discovered

July 16, 2162

First crew arrives to take possession of abandoned
Xenobot space station in orbit over Larson's Folly, begins
five year project to make it habitable

STARS OF THE DEEP

October 7-28, 2165

October 7

The Seatons and Taylors enjoy dinner together

October 8

The Starmen visit Tulip Tea in Seven Leaves

October 10

The Starmen visit Mark McSherry in the south of Ahmanya

October 13

The Starmen locate Steve Servello, travel to *Imlah Taltahni*

October 15

The Starmen and Steve descend into the abyss

October 18

The Starmen and Steve find a deposit of jewels

October 28

The Seatons and Taylors enjoy another evening together

Referenced in a story but not a part of it

Summer 2167

Space Station Zane is opened for travelers

Summer 2168

Joe Taylor tells Owsley Robbins the tale of “Paradox Lost”

MASTER OF SHADOWS

(July 15, 2169-June 26, 2170; a spring day in 2171)

July 15, 2169

Joe visits Larson’s Folly, approaches wall of time stasis

July 20

Kathy Foster introduces Rachel to Mark Seaton and Stenafi

July 21

Joe returns to Space Station Zane from Larson’s Folly

July 23

Joi Weaver descends to Larson’s Folly;

Mark and Stenafi take Kathy to dinner at Hidden Garden

July 24

Joi makes her report to the leading researchers

July 25

Kathy departs Ahmanya in the *Raptor*

July 26

Joe confers with Richard Starlight; Richard asks Kathy to search for the energy source for Larson's Folly

July 27

Kathy arrives at Gronburg Refueling Station

July 30

Kathy leaves Gronburg Refueling Station, arrives in the vicinity of the ring of probability

March 12, 2170

Kathy locates and lands on the dwarf planet she names Lemura

March 13

Kathy returns to Ahmanya; dines with Mark and Stenafi at Hidden Garden

March 15

Kathy meets with Richard Starlight in Amundsen City

March 20

The Lucian's remote attack on Eagle City

March 30

Kathy departs from Ahmanya to begin training with the First Races;

Joe and Kathryn Taylor journey to Lemura, begin scrutiny of the planet; attacked and captured

April 4

Process begins of restoring Tharsos to battle capability; Mobilization of Ahmanyman and human warcraft begins

June 3

Tharsos and the battle fleets go to the Marcanto system

June 6

Kathy returns to Lemura, accompanied by many warships; the warships attack Lemura and are captured;

Kathy enters the Lucian's private compound and overcomes him;

First Races move Lemura back to the Marcanto system;

The Lucian is taken aboard the First Races' flagship

June 9

Kathy and Olor converse privately; he asks to see the *elthen*

June 14

With the *elthen*, Olor releases the time stases and frees the captives

June 18

Kathy visits Olor;

The First Races depart the Marcanto system

June 19

Joe and Kathryn, Joi, and Kathy picnic on Larson's Folly

June 26

Tharsos and other warships leave Marcanto;

Joe, Kathryn, and Kathy discuss their futures

Spring 2171

Kathy is summoned to Aden where Olor lays down his life;

Kathy spends two days on Aden;

Kathy spends two days at home in Eagle City;

Kathy meets with her friends and tells them of her new status;

Kathy meets with her parents

Many years pass

Kathy continues her life and work

2567

Kathy sees her first gray hair, decides to retire

April 21, 2585

Starman Katherine Anastasia Foster dies at the age of 442

GLOSSARY

Of Lesser People, Places, and Things

Other than major recurring characters and well-known places, every character, place, or unusual item in the Starman saga is listed in this comprehensive glossary of well over 400 entries. References in parenthesis after each entry are to the novel, novelette, or short story where the item is introduced. References to short stories are indicated by italicized letters.

<i>Mutiny On Mars</i>	MOM
<i>The Runaway Asteroid</i>	TRA
<i>Journey to the Farthest Planet</i>	JFP
<i>Descent Into Europa</i>	DIE
<i>The Treasures of Darkness</i>	TTOD
<i>Doomsday Horizon</i>	DH
<i>The Heart of Danger</i>	THOD
<i>The Last Command</i>	TLC
<i>Paradox Lost</i>	PL
<i>Master of Shadows</i>	MOS
 The City of Dust	 (COD)
The Flight of the <i>Olympia</i>	(TFO)
The Caves of Mercury	(COM)
The Orphans of Titan	(TOOT)
A Matter of Time	(AMOT)
The Sand Tomb	(TST)
The Eight Treasures	(TET)
The Infestation at Sulphur Creek	(TIASC)
The Flight of the Bumblebee	(FOTB)
The Ultimate Code	(TUC)
Return to Europa	(RTE)
A New World	(ANW)
Stars of the Deep	(SOTD)

A

Adamant	Asteroid near Montezuma's Castle, TRA
Adar, Eben	20 th Century electronics genius, THOD
Aden	The Janitor's home planet; Anglicized form of Gaelic word <i>Áedán</i> meaning "fire"; suggestive also of "Eden", MOS
Agrologists	Scientists who study plant growth (<i>TET</i>)
Ahmanya	Benefactors' name for their home planet, DIE
Airbot	Armed, robotic flying sphere for locating fugitives, TRA
Alexandra	Member of the SE production team, JFP
<i>alzenta</i>	Ahmanyan for greegles, TTOD
Amundsen Base	Spaceport in Amundsen City, TRA
Aquapolis	Undersea city off the coast of Florida, DIE
Arachnoid	Spider-shaped robot, TTOD
Aril	The Janitor's proper name; proper term for a pomegranate seed, MOS
Armstrong Forest	Huge tract of forest in Amundsen City, JFP
Arndt, Iris	Navigator of the exploratory vehicle aboard the <i>James Nathan</i> (<i>TOOT</i>)
Astrogazing	Hobby or pastime of viewing the heavens
Avery, Stephen	Asteroid miner who discovered the greegles, DIE
Avidroid	Birdlike semi-intelligent robot, THOD
Aviles, Cambria	Zip's navigator on the <i>Star Ranger</i> on the journey to Mars, MOM
Az	Harvester for the Banjoman, TTOD
Azemir	Ahmanyan name for the original fifth planet, TTOD

B

<i>Balindu</i>	Command ship of the Solar Alliance force that assaulted Lemura; Indian female first name, MOS
Baker, Miss Frouida	Sister to Felicity Tulip (<i>SOTD</i>)
Bando	Communications expert among the renegades, DH
Banjoman	Man in charge of producing flilox on Mars, TRA
Barneveld, Sherry	First baby born in the 22 nd century, JFP

Bartrin, Jemno	Leader of a brutal gang , PL
Bartus satellite	Starlight Enterprise probe in Mercury orbit (<i>COM</i>)
Battlesphere	Ahmanyen two-seater warcraft, THOD
Baumann, David	Assistant custodian at Starlight Academy, MOM
Bayard, Dr. Maxie	Head of exploratory mission to Neptune (<i>FOTB</i>)
Beamscreen	Computer display of pure photons assembled in air, MOM
Bellar, Peter	Forge's second-in-command in the desert, TTOD
Bennett, Benjamin	Captain of the <i>Ignis</i> and commander of a Space Command fleet of twelve, TRA
Bennick, Gray	Mechanical engineer on the <i>Silverfire</i> , DIE
Bethany, Kristina	Cultural sociologist at Earthbase on Titan, JFP
Bethesda	Site of community of herbalist nuns, TTOD
Beulah's Place	Restaurant in Amundsen City, TLC
Big Soup	Joe Taylor's nickname for the largest anomaly on Larson's Folly, MOS
Bishop City	Undersea city near Bermuda, DH
Blake	Pirate crewmember under Lather, TRA
Blaine, Jonathan	Six-year-old boy who asks the Starmen for their autographs, DIE
Bob	Secretary to Mayor Edmund Warner, TTOD
Bolcher	Pirate leader under Lurton Zimbardo; one of the five lieutenants, TRA
Boneyard	<i>See</i> Field of Obsolescence
<i>Bonny Swan</i>	SE spacecraft (<i>RTE</i>)
Boone, Emily	Inhabitant of Final Ilien; married to Gabriel, DIE
Boone, Gabriel	Inhabitant of Final Ilien; married to Emily, DIE
Bors, Derf	Captain of the <i>Starventure</i> , JFP
Bradley	Starlight technician at New Spindrift (<i>FOTB</i>)
Brandow	Small town far northwest of Eagle City, TTOD
Break's Knob	Huge boulder in forest near Mark's grandparents' ranch, DH
Bronk, Dennis	Chemical engineer in charge of the NME exploration team, JFP
Brown	Supervisor in power plant on L5 (<i>FOTB</i>)
<i>Brown Crab</i>	Five-seater spacecraft, DH
Brunelli, Bonnie	Sister of May Wheelwright (<i>TST</i>)
Buckeye	Small town, PL

C

Caidin, Martin	Navigator aboard the <i>Starventure</i> , JFP
Camilla, Sister	Sister at Bethesda, MOS (final chapter)
Cardigan, Ellis	Ship's recorder aboard the <i>James Nathan (TOOT)</i>
Carley	Assistant among the renegades, DH
Cecilia, Sister	Sister at Bethesda, MOS (final chapter)
Chamber	Room in the pirates' asteroid that simulates beautiful landscapes, TRA
Chathna	Ahmanyen warrior from Olovanda, TLC
Chesterton, Miss Xanthea	Cousin to Felicity Tulip (<i>SOTD</i>)
Coaticook	Joe Taylor's birthplace in rural Québec, DH
Cody	Young man who delivers the mail on L5 (<i>TUC</i>)
Cohen, Zadok	Chief assistant of master ioneer Jesus Madera-Cruz, TLC
Collins, Agena	Space Command liaison to SE, DH
Collins, Crag	Starman, MOM
Couper, Aaron	Director of Elijah Base, THOD
Compad	Small personal communications device, JFP
Conrad, Captain	Captain of the <i>Olympia (TFO)</i>
Cooper, Jon	Assistant custodian at Starlight Academy, MOM
<i>Cosmological Reference Book</i>	Book used to locate heavenly bodies, JFP
Coxhead, Ralph Q.	Executive Director of Aquapolis, DIE
Crane, Link	Mechanic at Thomas Outbase (<i>AMOT</i>)
Crass	Pirate leader under Lurton Zimbardo; one of the five lieutenants, TRA
Crassendoog, Ira	Old man in Buckeye; ally of Roos Jones, PL
Crossfield, Scott	Scientist in Aquapolis, DIE
Curry, Elizabeth	Maiden name of wife of Allen Foster (<i>TOOT</i>)
Cynia	Sister to king Izmaka, THOD
Cyragon Data Services	Laboratory at New Spindrift (<i>FOTB</i>)

D

Da	Inhabitant of Space Station Zane, PL
Dan	Crewmember under Derf Bors; killed by Xenobots, THOD

Datatile	Item the size and shape of a clipboard that contains huge amounts of information, MOM
Dathan, Susan	Mr. Forge's secretary, TTOD
Daystorm, Dr.	Official on L5 (<i>FOTB</i>)
De Koven, Quentin	Commander of the flagship <i>St. George</i> of Earth fleet, MOM
Decker, Eleanor	Starman hoping to make first wormhole journey (<i>AMOT</i>)
Deefer, Toby	Mechanic at Thomas Outbase (<i>AMOT</i>)
Denn, Beowulf	Chief Assisting to Robert Nolan, TRA
Dewdney, Derek	Richard's navigator on SE warship, TTOD
Dianda	Daughter of Mark Seaton and Stenafi (<i>DAL5</i>)
Dirk	Friend of the McTaggarts, MOM
<i>Diving Bell</i>	Pod for exploring Larson's Folly, MOS
Doak	Assistant among the renegades, DH
Dodd, Mike	Head of custodial services at Starlight Academy, MOM
<i>Domoli</i>	Abandoned Ahmanyen city on Europa (<i>RTE</i>)
Donna	Crewmember under Derf Bors; killed by Xenobots, THOD
Dufaure, Yancy	Top space pilot for SE; pilot of <i>Silverfire</i> , DIE
Dukas, Dr.	Professor at Starlight Academy, MOM, DIE
Duncan, Frank	SE electronics technician aboard the <i>Starventure</i> , JFP
Dyar, Neal	Starman stationed on Mercury, DH

E

Earth Defense League	Organization formed to fight Xenobots; ploy of enemies, DH
Eckman Warehouse	Criminals' food storage site in New York, DH
EGV	Electric ground vehicle; see also <i>popper</i> , TTOD
Elder, The	Ahmanyen, TTOD
Elijah Base	Base on Titan, named after the spacecraft piloted by Earthmen when they first encountered the Titanians, JFP
Elijah, Father	Priest at Bethesda, TTOD
Elizabeth, Mother	Superior at Bethesda, MOS (final chapter)
<i>Elizabeth Ashlie</i>	Ezra Hill's one-man spacecraft (<i>COM</i>)

Elm <i>elthen</i>	Gunner among the captors, DH First Races word for greegles, known in Ahmanyen as <i>alzenta</i> , MOS
Endra	Ahmanyen word for Earth, PL
Epstein, Benton	Commander of Starlight Academy in 2150, MOM
Essington, Katie <i>Excelsis II</i>	Celestial biologist aboard the <i>Silverfire</i> , DIE Robotic explorer with artificial intelligence (<i>TFO</i>)

F

Farmer, Ben	Master ioneer at David Foster Spaceport, MOS
Final Ilien	Oldest settlement of the Wind People, DIE
Forrester, Evelyn	Chef's assistant aboard the <i>Starventure</i> , JFP
Field of Obsolescence	Plain on Mars where discarded spacecraft are stored, MOM
Final Ilien	Last Teagarden homestead (<i>COD</i>)
Firewasp fighters	Small, very fast and highly maneuverable SE spacecraft, TRA
First Races	First created peoples of the Universe, TTOD
Five Acre Meadow	Site in Armstrong Forest, DH
Fleet of Twelve	Largest normal fleet in the Space Command panoply, TRA
Flilox	Illegal hallucinogenic narcotic made from lichen on Mars, TRA
Folding Jim	<i>See Zeavin, James</i>
Forge, Andrew	<i>See</i> Banjoman
Frost	Foreman; one of Troy Putnam's pirates, MOM
Furman, Gahan	Earthman with specialty in communications, TLC

G

Garrison Building	Building in Eagle City, TTOD
Garvey, Henry, Dr.	Botanist in Sulphur Creek (<i>TIASC</i>)
Gasmen	Nickname for Roos Jones's enemies, PL
Gebbeth, Maury	Pirate leader under Lurton Zimbaro; one of the five lieutenants; pilot of the <i>Tartarus</i> , TRA

Gene Newman	Senior technician in the control center under Zimbardo, TRA
Gerlach, Minda	Commander in Eagle City, MOS
Gibson	Commander of the spaceport in Eagle City, TTOD
Gillian	Owner of <i>Wind's End</i> , TTOD
Glass, Alison	Dispatcher at Starlight Seneca, DH
<i>Gloria</i>	Spaceship that took Lee High Eagle to Mars in 2014, TRA
Gold, Aaron	Ship's physician and medical researcher, JFP
Golden, Mel	Technician in Eagle City flight control tower, MOM
Gordon	One of the Banjoman's security personnel, TTOD
Gorge, the	Vast stone crack on Titan where life-support machines are located, JFP
GR9104	Drone on L5 (<i>FOTB</i>)
Gray Fleet	Elite pirate ship captains, MOM
Grayson radiation detectors	Search instruments that leave atomic residue, TTOD
Greegles	Mechanical dwellers in the asteroids, TRA
Gresham, Dana	Reporter in Eagle City, TTOD
Gripp, Mr.	Pirate official in charge of supply depot, MOM
Gronburg Refueling Station	Way station on small asteroid near Elijah Base on Titan, MOS
Gruffydd, Ceinwen	SE's manager on Tharsos, DH
Gus	Attendant at the Gronburg Refueling Station, MOS
Gyrdsson, Gyrd	Leader of the renegades in old New York, DH

H

Hadley, Melissa	Communications technician at SE Seneca, DH
Hall, Becca	Jeweler in Eagle City (<i>SOTD</i>)
Hall of Crystals	Meeting place in the new Ahmanya, where knowledge is preserved, TLC
Hawks, Luke, Dr.	Geneticist in Sulphur Creek (<i>TIASC</i>)

Heather	Waitress at “The Everglades” restaurant in Flamingo, Florida, DIE
Heflin, Jack	Alias for Steve Cliff, MOM
Henry	Ally of Roos Jones, PL
Herchenroeder, Matthew	Physician aboard the <i>Silverfire</i> , DIE
Hidden Garden	Luxurious restaurant in Eagle City, TLC
Highboy, Alanthus	Chef at Beulah’s Place, TLC
Hilda, Sister	Guestmistress in community at Bethesda, TTOD
Hill, Ezra	First Starman (<i>COM</i>)
Hod	Forge worker in Brandow, TTOD
Hol	Ahmanyen name for Phobos (<i>RTE</i>)
Holoport	“Talking ring”, able to convey messages by hologram, DH
Hoshino, Stephen	Earth’s pre-eminent astrophysicist, TRA
Hoskins, Raymond	Leader in Earth Defense League, DH
<i>hostis</i>	Characteristic tree of the deep forests of old Ahmanyen, TLC
Howard, Fine, and Howard	Armed guards on L5 (<i>FOTB</i> , <i>TUC</i>)
Hroswitha, Sister	Physician in community at Bethesda, TTOD
Huss, James	Pirate patrol leader, MOM

I	
<i>Ignis</i>	Space Command lead warship, TRA
Ilien	Original Teagarden homestead (<i>COD</i>)
<i>illunas</i>	Ahmanyen for the luminous lichen in the wilds of Mars, TTOD
<i>Imlah Taltahni</i>	“Refuge of Twilight”—Ahmanyen city, TTOD
<i>Iron Maiden</i>	NME space craft that secretly followed the <i>Silverfire</i> to Europa, DIE
Izmaka	Prince, later High King, of Ahmanyen, TTOD

J	
Jacksie	Friend of the McTaggarts, MOM
Jam	Another assailant against Mark and Joe, DH
<i>James Nathan</i>	Dumb-bell shaped ship in the Deep Space Expedition of 2130 (<i>TOOT</i>)
Janitor	Guardian, historian, etc. for the First Races in the current age, TTOD

Jantel, Alex	Commander of the Solar Alliance fleet that assaulted Lemura, MOS
Jenner, Jeff	Smuggler in asteroid traffic; partner with Lurton Zimbardo, TRA
Jenny	Kristina Bethany's robotic attendant, TLC
Jett, Major	Retired officer, Space Command (<i>TIASC</i>)
Jewell, Rebecca	Planetary geologist aboard the <i>James Nathan (TOOT)</i>
Jimmy	Local citizen who joined pirates, MOM
Jock	Driver for the Banjoman, TTOD
John	Engine room technician for NME, JFP
John, Father	Priest at Bethesda, MOS (final chapter)
Johnny	Controller among the captors, DH
Johnson, Caleb	Second-in-command to Allen Foster aboard the <i>James Nathan (TOOT)</i>
Johnson, Cora	Chief ioneer aboard the <i>James Nathan (TOOT)</i>
Johnson, Mark	Upright citizen of Eagle City, TTOD
Jones, Frederick	Police captain in Seven Leaves, TTOD
Jones, Mickey	Miner; head of the colony on the western edge of the Martian Sea, MOM
Jones, Roos	Leader of the men who took the Starmen into custody, PL
Jude	Assistant among the renegades, DH

K

Karax	Guardian of Olovanda, THOD
<i>Kathizo</i>	Gemstone native to Ahmanya (<i>SOTD</i>)
Kennatha	Princess of Ahmanya, TTOD
Kerrel, Lee	Rebellious NME employee aboard the <i>Starventure</i> JFP
Ketephtha Tea	Blend of tea created by Felicity Tulip (<i>SOTD</i>)
Kilindra Forest	One of several planted forests in Ahmanya, TLC
Kimball	Smuggler in asteroid traffic; partner with Lurton Zimbardo, TRA
Kinley, Damien	Professor of artificial intelligence (<i>TFO</i>)
Kitsualuk, Noah	Eskimo crewman aboard the <i>Silverfire</i> , DIE
Koalang	Cuddly, koala-like animal; pet for isolated spacemen, MOM
Krafft, Erica	Scientist in Aquapolis, DIE

Kramer, Val	Commander Lewis' chief researcher, THOD
<i>Ku Thixo</i>	One of two African spacecraft on Mercury; Xhosa for "From God" (<i>COM</i>)
<i>Kuznika</i>	Settlers (the Wind People), TTOD
<u>L</u>	
	Space station at the fifth LaGrange point (<i>FOTB</i> , <i>TUC</i>)
Lamdo	Ahmanyen name for Europa (<i>RTE</i>)
Larson, Rafe	Pilot in the first manned expedition to Larson's Folly, MOS
Larson's Folly	Sixth planet in the Marcanto system, PL
LaTanya	Major Jett's daughter (<i>TIASC</i>)
Lather	Pirate leader under Lurton Zimbardo; one of the five lieutenants, TRA
Lawrence, Dwight	Head of security at Thomas Outbase (<i>AMOT</i>)
Lemura	The planet of phantoms; named by Kathy Foster, MOS
Lewis, John	Commander at Space Command in Amundsen City, MOM
Lewis, Matthew	Cryptographic expert on L5 (<i>TUC</i>)
Leyden, Rebecca	NME astrophysicist, JFP
Lily	Montezuma Vly's partner, TRA
Linda	Miner at the colony at the western edge of the Martian Sea, MOM
<i>Lizard's Watering Hole</i>	Saloon owned and managed by the McTaggarts, MOM
Locomotors	Small, self-contained propellers for underwater travel, DIE
Logan Creek	Waterway bordering Five Acre Meadow, DH
Lorry	Smuggler in asteroid traffic; partner with Lurton Zimbardo, TRA
Lowery, Dr.	Head of the data retrieval department of Cyragon Data Services (<i>FOTB</i>)
Lucians	Original name of the race that became the Xenobots, DH
<i>Luna Merchant</i>	Exploratory ship sent to Neptune (<i>TUC</i>)
<i>Lux Mundi</i>	Richard Starlight's personal spaceship, TRA

Luxa Xenobots' home planet when they were the
Lucians, DH

M

Mack Pirate on patrol in Eagle City, MOM
Macmillan, Major Official at Space Command in Amundsen City,
MOM
Madison Symmetric
Torus Device that is used in advanced fusion
research (*TUC*)
Malda Name of the Titanians' home planet, TTOD
Manley, Temple Mark's Seaton's 19th century ancestor (*RTE*)
Marcanto Star about two-thirds of the way across the
Milky Way galaxy from Earth, PL
Marcanto, Luigi Captain of the first manned expedition to
Larson's Folly, MOS
Maria, Sister Mother of the Bethesda community, TTOD
Marks-Owens, Mary Fleet commander of SE ships, TRA
Marston Original name of Eagle City (*COD*)
Masekela, Zenzile Captain of the African venture on Mercury
(*COM*)
Mary Sue One of the rescue ships during the *Olympia*
disaster (*TFO*)
Maura! Supreme Ahmanyen exclamation, THOD
McSherry, Mark Geologist and chemist at Starlight, Eagle City
(*SOTD*)
McTaggart, Donal Proprietor of *Lizard's Watering Hole*;
husband of Doris, MOM
McTaggart, Doris Proprietor of *Lizard's Watering Hole*; wife of
Donal, MOM
McTorney, Paul Captain on the Xenobot ship, DH
Mendoza, Mariano "Manny"; project manager at Thomas Outbase
(*AMOT*)
Mensah, Jack Scientist on Space Station Zane, MOS
Meteorologines Machines that govern weather in
Armstrong Forest, TTOD
Michael Adams SE space craft from Ganymede, DIE
Mike Traitor in the flight tower at Eagle City, MOM

Mikel	Ahmanyman, pilot of the crew that retrieved the sixth Treasure; fiancé of Yenl (<i>TET</i>)
Mitur	An ancestor of Stenafi (<i>SOTD</i>)
Mole	Miner at the colony at the western edge of the Martian Sea, MOM
<i>Molly</i>	Shuttlecraft belonging to Aquapolis, DIE
Montezuma's Castle	Name of crescent-shaped asteroid where Montezuma Vly lives, TRA
<i>moolafentori</i>	Martian plums (<i>RTE</i>)
Moonbus	Motorized vehicle for travel on the moon, MOM
Mooncircle Lake	Small, circular lake near Mark's grandparents' ranch, DH
Morningstar	Community of Wind People (<i>TST</i>)
Morris	Population center in the north of Mars, TRA
Moze	Assailant against Mark and Joe, DH
Mtalan	Ahmanyman name for Nyx (<i>RTE</i>)
Muallem, Tanya	Officer in charge of Tharsos during David Foster's funeral, DH
Mullaney, Kathryn	Starman one year ahead of Zip, Mark, and Joe, TRA

N

Nair, Keerthi	Thomas Starlight's top assistant (<i>COM</i>)
Namon, Dr.	Benefactor on the Asteroid, TTOD
Nathan, James	U.S. President martyred during the Collapse (<i>TOOT</i>)
Needle, the	Observation deck at Starlight Academy, MOM
Nelson, Alfred	Director of the L5 space station (<i>FOTB, TUC</i>)
New Emmaus	Settlement on Mars, TRA
New Ilien	Second Teagarden homestead (<i>COD</i>)
New Spindrift	Floating city off the coast of New Jersey (<i>FOTB</i>)
New Washington	Capital city of the United States, TRA
Newman, Gene	<i>See</i> Gene Newman
Nim	One of the men who took the Starmen into custody, PL
Nolan, Robert	Founder and chairman of Nolan Mining Enterprise, TRA
North, Averette	Retired woman in New Emmaus on Mars; married to Marshal, TRA

North, Marshal	Retired man in New Emmaus on Mars; married to Averette, TRA
North Outpost	Community of Wind People (<i>TST</i>)
<i>Nova</i>	Robert Nolan's personal spacecraft, TLC
Nova, Melissa	Sister of Dr. Maxie Bayard (<i>TUC</i>)
<i>Nsedna Zar</i>	"Diamond of the South"; Ahmanyen city, (<i>TET</i>)
Nskao	Great-grandmother of Stenafi, THOD
Ntini, Oliver	Assistant to Zenzile Masekela (<i>COM</i>)

O

O	Astrophysicist who discovered the most distant dwarf planet, JFP
O'Brian, Beulah	Owner of Beulah's Place, TLC
Oet*	First Races' names for Lemura, MOS
O'Gorman, Eamon	Roman Catholic priest in Ireland, THOD
<i>Olancha</i>	Ahmanyen name for Quaoar (<i>RTE</i>)
Oliver	Communications Officer on the <i>Olympia</i> (<i>TFO</i>)
Olor	Proper name of the Lucian on Lemura, MOS
Olovanda	Ahmanyen name for city inside Tharsos (<i>RTE</i>)
<i>Olympia</i>	Largest luxury space liner in 2110 (<i>TFO</i>)
<i>Omega</i>	NME exploratory ship aboard the <i>Starventure</i> , JFP
<i>Orion</i>	Command ship for the Solar Guard, THOD
Oskay, Mandy	Member of Teagarden's community; medic, TTOD
<i>Ossëan</i>	Ahmanyen name for Tharsos (<i>TET</i>)

P

Paboom, Yarrow	Operations manager at Thomas Outbase (<i>AMOT</i>)
Pallas Avenue	Street on which Starlight Eagle City is located, TTOD
Pan	One of the renegades in Eagle City, DH
Parfitt, Jonathan	NME planetary geologist, JFP
Parker, Timothy	Captain in the Solar Guard section of Space Command, THOD
Pelagia	Koalang belonging to Felicity Tulip (<i>SOTD</i>)
Percival	Koalang belonging to Felicity Tulip (<i>SOTD</i>)
Perpetua	Koalang belonging to Felicity Tulip (<i>SOTD</i>)
Persephone	Koalang belonging to Felicity Tulip (<i>SOTD</i>)

Petrescu, Marian	Technician aboard the <i>James Nathan (TOOT)</i>
Pleera	Ahmanyen commander of <i>Ossëan</i> , THOD
Planetsphere	Xenobot construction for use in gas giants, THOD
Pletcher, Sarah	Navigator aboard the <i>Silverfire</i> , DIE
Plum, Jeremiah	Assistant at the Tulip Tea Company (<i>SOTD</i>)
Pocket world	Large cavity inside an igneous asteroid (<i>RTE</i>)
Popper	Electric ground vehicle; see also <i>EGV</i> , TTOD
Poppy, Gerald	One of six crewmembers on <i>Tartarus</i> , TRA
Potiphar	Koalang belonging to Felicity Tulip (<i>SOTD</i>)
Prester, Marjie	One of the Tunnel People, wife of Richard, MOM
Prester, Richard	One of the Tunnel People, husband of Marjie, MOM
Putnam, Troy	Captain of the pirates, MOM

Q

Qazilbash, Urooj	Classmate of David Foster, MOM
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R

RRFC System	Rapid Random Frequency Change System, used to keep compad transmissions secret and untraceable, JFP
Rachel	Kathy Foster's holocom, MOS
Raffon Dorn	Ahmanyen crewmember on <i>Ossëan</i> , THOD
Randy	Citizen of Eagle City, TTOD
<i>Raptor</i>	Kathy Foster's spacecraft, later renamed <i>Serene Deliverance</i> , MOS
Razzy	Pilot among the renegades, DH
Reconobot	Armed robot used for locating fugitives, TRA
<i>Red Tiger</i>	Passenger shuttle for use in the Earth-Moon system (<i>FOTB</i> , <i>TUC</i>)
Register of Peoples	Listing similar to a census, TRA
Relcon	Small town north of Eagle City, TTOD
Reuel	Pseudonym of Sotik in Starlight Tower, DH
Ridger, Reuben	Leader of nuclear terrorists in 2040s USA, TTOD
Ridger, Rose	Wife of Reuben Ridger, TTOD

Rinda	Woman of the First Races; inhabitant of Aden, MOS
Ripling, Paul	Technician in Eagle City, MOM
Robbins, Owsley	Friend of Joe Taylor, PL
Rockford, Major	Navigational officer on Space Station Zane, MOS

S

<i>Sa Zomne</i>	<i>Bolt of Fire</i> , Saadervo's battlecraft, THOD
Saadervo	Ahmanyen; governor of <i>Imlah Taltahni</i> , TTOD
Sabbath George	<i>See</i> St. George, George
Saleh	Lucian, TLC
<i>Sando Suan Vu</i>	Fortress of Certain Hope; one of the fifteen Ahmanyen refuges (<i>TET</i>)
Sandy	Wife of Thomas Starlight, TTOD
Santilla	High King of Ahmanyen; killed in war, TTOD
Sats	Small, unmanned satellite observers, TRA
Saunders	Rebellious NME employee aboard the <i>Starventure</i> , JFP
Sayer, Michael	One of the Tunnel People, former thief, MOM
Schnorbus, Stephanie	Master Chef aboard Space Station Zane, PL
Seaton, Jenn	Mark's grandmother (<i>RTE</i>)
Seaton, Micah	Mark's grandfather (<i>RTE</i>)
<i>Sentinel</i>	Montezuma Vly's spaceship, TRA
Seran	Ahmanyen physicist on Olovanda, THOD
<i>Serene Deliverance</i>	Kathy Foster's spacecraft as renamed by the First Races, MOS
Servello, Steve	Wind Person and miner (<i>SOTD</i>)
Seven Leaves	Small town on Mars, home of Andrew Forge, TTOD
Sharps Chapel	Town on East Coast of the United States (<i>FOTB</i>)
Shaw, Major Alvin	Official at Space Command in Amundsen City, MOM; Commander in DH
Sheol	"The Pit"; core of Thomas Outbase (<i>AMOT</i>)
Shideler, Fay	Security person in Eagle City spaceport, TTOD
<i>Silver Cloud</i>	One of the ships in Lurton Zimbardo's fleet, captained by Lather, TRA
<i>Silverfire</i>	SE spacecraft for Europa mission, DIE
Sim Sala Bim	SE official in Yellow City on Ceres, TRA

Sione	Ahmanyen woman, on the crew that retrieved the sixth Treasure (<i>TET</i>)
Sisters of St. Hildegard	Monastic order of herbalists, TTOD
Sjaantje	Server at the Hidden Garden restaurant, MOS
Slant, Graham	Pirate leader under Lurton Zimbardo; one of the five lieutenants; one of six crew members on <i>Tartarus</i> , TRA
Slideway	Moving sidewalk in Amundsen City, JFP
Sloan, Vanessa	Cryptographic expert on L5 (<i>TUC</i>)
Smais*	The city on Lemura/Oet, MOS
SmartCard	Method of payment (<i>FOTB</i>)
Snell, Adam	SE planetary geologist, DIE
Solar	Measure of money, TRA
Solar Guard	Space Command's cooperative venture to defend the sun from the Xenobots, THOD
Solar Unit	Measure of distance; diameter of Solar System measured from Plutos' orbit: 7,350,000,000 miles, PL
Sotik	Ahmanyen, TTOD
Space Station Zane	Research outpost and way station in orbit around Larson's Folly, PL
Speed	Pirate on patrol in Eagle City, MOM
Spelford	Pirate crewmember under Lather, TRA
<i>Spud Peeler</i>	Cargo freighter used to enter Mars, MOM
<i>St. George</i>	Flagship of Earth fleet, MOM
St. George, George	Asteroid miner who discovered Tharsos, TRA
Stagnum, Tony	One of six crewmembers on <i>Tartarus</i> , TRA
Stann, Edna	Head of planetary science at Starlight Academy, MOM
Stansby, Charles	Prospector, TTOD
Star Bower	Floral waterpark aboard Space Station Zane, PL
Starhope	Research city in parallel Earth, PL
Starkley, Jonas	Shipbuilder (<i>TFO</i>)
Starlight, Caedmon	Richard and Jan's 19-year-old son (<i>AMOT</i>)
Starlight, Ellarine	Daughter of Caedmon Starlight, PL
Starlight, John	Richard and Jan's 24-year-old son (<i>AMOT</i>)
Starlight, Michaela	Richard and Jan's 17-year-old daughter (<i>AMOT</i>)
Starlight, Veronica	Richard and Jan's 24-year-old daughter (<i>AMOT</i>)

Starman's Privilege	Prerogative of a Starman to take precedence over normal operations, MOM
<i>Starventure</i>	Spacecraft the Starmen take to Nyx, JFP
Stenafi	Ahmanyen, TTOD
Stepanovich, John	Technician in Eagle City flight control tower, MOM
<i>Stoutheart</i>	Henry's spaceship, PL
Stryker Transportation	Commercial supply company for spacecraft, MOS
Stubb	Pirate worker under Lurton Zimbardo, TRA
Sturgess, Wynn	Pirate in charge of the main guard at the control tower, MOM
Su	Woman of the First Races; inhabitant of Aden; Kathy Foster's trainer, MOS
Sulphur Creek	Village in arid portion of southern Mars (<i>TIASC</i>)
<i>Suncatcher</i>	Starlight Enterprise spacecraft, TTOD
<i>Suncrest</i>	Name of an Ahmanyen shuttlecraft based on Tharsos (<i>TET</i>)
<i>Sunis</i>	Northern city on prefire Ahmanyen (<i>TET</i>)
Sweet Bubble	
Tea House, Ltd.	Shop in Buckeye, PL

T

Tandra	An ancestor of Stenafi (<i>SOTD</i>)
TB-9000	Most advanced artificial intelligence system ever made (<i>FOTB</i>)
TDS	Tetrahedral Defense System, THOD
Tanwick VII, Harry	Huge donor to Richard Starlight's Special Projects Discretionary Account, DIE
<i>Tartarus</i>	Lurton Zimbardo's private ship, TRA
Tayan	Ahmanyen child, TTOD, THOD
Teagarden, Amanda	Wife of Colin (<i>COD</i>)
Teagarden, April	Daughter of Colin and Amanda; twin to Renee (<i>COD</i>)
Teagarden, Colin	Early pioneer on Mars, twin to Kevin (<i>COD</i>)
Teagarden, Cristina	Daughter of Kevin and Cynthia (<i>COD</i>)
Teagarden, Cynthia	Wife of Kevin (<i>COD</i>)
Teagarden, Daniel	Wind Person, TTOD
Teagarden, Jenny	Daughter of Kevin and Cynthia (<i>COD</i>)

Teagarden, Kevin	Twin brother of Colin (<i>COD</i>)
Teagarden, Molly	Daughter of Kevin and Cynthia (<i>COD</i>)
Teagarden, Renee	Daughter of Colin and Amanda; twin to April (<i>COD</i>)
Tekakwitha, Kateri	Robert Nolan's second-in-command, THOD
<i>Tempest</i>	Starlight Enterprise fleet ship, TRA
Tetrahedral Defense System	Four-point solar satellite system, THOD
Thalassa, Stavri	One of the tunnel leader, and their unofficial leader, MOM
Tharuji	Ahmanyen chief engineer for the TDS, THOD
Thomas Outbase	Outlying research center for Starlight Enterprise (<i>AMOT</i>)
Thronson, Ingrid	Commander of Space Station Zane in orbit around Larson's Folly, PL
Timon	Ahmanyen child, TTOD
Tintau, Mr.	Pirate official, MOM
Tony	One of the renegades; an Australian, DH
Torbin, Evan	Chief engineer at Mars Base, TTOD
Torrez, Cathy	Cook aboard the <i>Silverfire</i> , DIE
Trandon, "Sledge"	Mechanic at Thomas Outbase (<i>AMOT</i>)
Treadgold, Nicholas	Chef of the <i>Starventure</i> , JFP
Truesilver	Alloy of silver noted for elegance, PL
Tuck	Tuck Woodworth, a Wind Person (<i>TST</i>)
Tulip, Felicity	Owner and manager of Tulip Tea on Ahmanya (<i>SOTD</i>)
Tulip Tea Company	Sole supplier of tea on Ahmanya (<i>SOTD</i>)
Tunnel People	Citizens of the secret tunnels under Eagle City, MOM
Turpin, Randall	"Turp"; free-lance errand runner in New York area, DH

U

Ubuntu, Desmond	Manager of Starlight Enterprise, Eagle City
Uggtaur*	First Races' names for Larson's Folly, MOS
<i>Underbird</i>	Starmen's name for their mantaship, DIE
Uneven Stephen	Stone carver; one of the Tunnel People, MOM
<i>Unicorn's Well</i>	Restaurant and social center in Eagle City near the launching pad, MOM

Usisikelele

One of two African spacecraft on Mercury;
Xhosa for "Bless Us" (COM)

V

Valerie

SE five-seater Martian shuttlecraft, DH

Veloso, Monica

Space traffic controller in Eagle City, DIE

Verderber, Wilbur

Chief Manager of Mars Base, THOD

Vigilant Warrior

Spaceship used by Starmen to explore asteroids,
TRA

Vinta

Squadron leader, Ahmanyen, TLC

Vintager

Experimental spacecraft equipped with
wormhole drive (*AMOT*)

Vixa

Tayan's koalang, THOD

Vly, Montezuma

Reclusive asteroid miner, TRA, DH

Vornado, Andor

Stephen Hoshino's first assistant, THOD

W

Waldo

Assistant to botanist in Sulphur Creek (*TIASC*)

Warren, Keese

Nephew of Hiawatha & May Wheelwright (*TST*)

Warren, Linda

Niece of Hiawatha and May Wheelwright (*TST*)

Watanabe, Mika

Head of SE security at Mars Base, DH

Weaver, Joi

Exo-geologist on Space Station Zane, MOS

Westcott

Population center near the equator on Mars, TRA

Wheelwright,

Hiawatha

Wind person; leader of settlement called
North Outpost (*TST*)

Wheelwright, May

Wife of Hiawatha (*TST*)

Wheelwright,

Regina

Daughter of Hiawatha (*TST*)

Wheelwright,

Stephen

Son of Hiawatha (*TST*)

Will

Technician in the tower of Eagle City, TRA

Wind People

The few people who remained on Mars during
the Collapse, and lived by
harnessing the wind, MOM, (*COD, TST*)

Wind's End

Restaurant in Eagle City owned by Gillian,
TTOD

Withers, Bernard

One of six crew members on *Tartarus*, TRA

Woodworth

Community of Wind People (*TST*)

World Calendar Reformed calendar adopted January 1, 2101, JFP

X

Xanthakos, Nicholas Computer technologist at the David Foster
Spaceport, MOS

Y

Yellow City Major population center on Ceres, TRA
Yenl Ahmanyen woman, on the crew that retrieved the
sixth Treasure; fiancée of Mikel (*TET*)
Yoshimoto, Laurel Starman, MOM

Z

Zack Member of a pirate patrol in Eagle City, MOM
Zane, Space Station *See* Space Station Zane, PL
Zeavin, James Planetary geologist aboard the *Silverfire*;
nicknamed “Folding Jim”, DIE
Zimbardo, Lurton Leader of pirate band after Troy Putnam, MOM
Zootz, Lloyd Crony of the Banjoman, TTOD

* This word was devised by Galileo. When Galileo turned his telescope toward Saturn in 1610, even he was amazed. The planet looked nothing like others in the solar system. Through 17th century optics, Saturn appeared to be one bright star closely flanked by two dimmer ones—a blurry suggestion of the planet’s magnificent rings. What Galileo did next was nearly as unusual as Saturn itself. He wanted to tell everyone what he had seen, but he also wanted to keep his work secret while he studied the puzzling planet. So he published his discovery in code, and wrote *smais mr milnep oet ale umibunen ugttaur as*. It is an anagram that, unscrambled, means, “I have observed the highest planet tri-form.” As a tribute to Galileo, three of the words in his code have been taken as words in the language of the First Races: Oet, Smais, and Ugttaur.

THE DEATH OF ZIP FOSTER

“It is not only an ending;
it is an illumination as well.”
Jonathan Cooper, February 23, 2005

In the many files and folders on the computers of the Starman Team, with plot ideas, drafts, figures, publicity material, biographical information, and many others, there is one called “The Death of David Foster”. It is abridged and reproduced here.

Reflections on the Death of Zip Foster

Here are selected emails between Jon and me when we were ruminating on the end of the Starman series. They were probably sent in March and April 2002.

From Jon

You know, David, I’ve been thinking about how to end the last Starman book, and some thoughts have occurred to me. ... I would like to know what happened to Zip - know how his life ended and why and when, ... I would also like to see Zip’s end as being heroic: something to remember, something fitting for a Starman, something that does great good, a sacrifice reflecting that of Christ’s, something that shows what it means to be unselfish and to love your neighbor.

From David

Sounds good. I like it. I think so too. And if we put together some more Starman books after *The Last Command* but that chronologically take place before that book, it will add real poignancy to the tales we tell, since all the readers will know that his time is limited. I still remember the newspaper front page on

November 23, 1963—the day after the assassination of President Kennedy—with a picture of him waving jovially to the crowd. The caption was “one minute to live.” We can do something similar with Zip Foster. It can be fantastic.

From Jon

Absolutely. I thoroughly enjoyed the last vision of Frodo Baggins in *Lord of the Rings*. That was better than *The Last Battle*. We can do something very similar for Zip Foster. I wish that the last chapter of the Starman Series - the epilogue, maybe, could be a dream. I’ve imagined Mark dreaming after Zip died giving the Xenobots the last blow that ended their threat forever, dreaming of Zip entering a beautiful place and a new life. I really liked the last chapters of the Chronicles of Narnia (*The Last Battle*): they were encouraging. In a very real sense, Zip would not be losing anything: he would be gaining everything, just as we both will when our time comes. There is so much I would like to portray, so much I would like to do with all this.

From David

When *Assault On Mars* was written, we already knew the great scene that would appear in *The Lost Race of Mars*, five books away. Now we’re in the same place. I might even write the last chapter of *The Last Command* in the next month or two, while the image is still sharp and the vision is fresh³⁰.

From Jon

That sounds like a very good idea! We have no urgent deadline to finish *Doomsday Horizon*, so writing the last chapter of *The Last Command* now would be fine and is probably a very good thing to do, before the scene fades. Remember writing the big scene in *The Lost Race of Mars* before book one came out? This is something similar, although much deeper. If you see in your

³⁰ The first draft of the death of David Foster was written in April 2002.

mind how it should work and are gripped with a powerful scene, then by all means take some time to write it and save it: the moment of inspiration is the time to write it. We're not in a hurry.

From David

The Last Command is something that was almost determined from the beginning of our work, though we didn't consciously know it at the time. I tell you, if this really is the direction we go, it'll make my writing much more focused. I know now that I have only four books to prepare Zip for this sacrifice. The whole thing with his sister, coming to grips with his emotions, and all that will have to lead in the right direction now. Perhaps his sacrificial death can effect healing in his father, too—Allen certainly retains a lot of anger over his own radiation damage. There are a lot of loose spiritual ends we can tie up. It can be magnificent—the death of Zip can bring about a lot of healing in various people.

From Jon

Yes, we definitely can, and it will be powerful. The last vision of Frodo is a good model and a powerful scene; that is definitely more along the lines of what we would do in the Starman series. The series is leading up to this event, slowly but surely, and it is definitely worth doing. In some ways I think we are moving series books to a new level: we are adding a sense of depth they did not have before and are grappling with issues that series books generally left alone.

I remember when I first plotted the 23 books and got to the last book, my first inclination was to have Zip die in the last chapter: it seemed like what ought to happen, although I didn't know why. Over the past few weeks all of this has solidified and become more clear, until it crystallized in the e-mail I sent you last night. The series does seem to be moving in that direction and I agree: it would have a very powerful impact and would

definitely focus our efforts.

From David

In a way, we're setting them up for it: in *Doomsday Horizon* we have Zip's death believed and then reprieved. Our readers will be taken by enormous surprise to have it occur again and NOT be reprieved.

From Jon

They will indeed! It will catch them by surprise; in *Doomsday Horizon* we let them off the hook, and in all of series book history the main character had always survived. Yet, I don't think we will be drowned in complaints: Zip's sacrifice is a very fitting ending to the series, and I think we are approaching this correctly and with care.

There are a lot of loose ends to be tied up, and it is amazing that we are thinking about this now, while there is still time to do it and work everything out. We would not be having this discussion if I hadn't been inspired to plot books 6, 7, 8, and 9 and begin work on book ten and then came to the question of how to end it. The inspiration has been very strong recently, and it has been a blessing.

Are we in agreement, then? Shall we proceed? I think this is a powerful thing to do and is exactly the right way to go: it does tie up many loose ends in the series and provide a powerful, moving ending in a way that nothing else could. It will be challenging, but it will be very, very good.

From David

I just thought of something else. Remember it's Mark who peeps in on Lurton Zimbardo at the end of *Journey to the Tenth Planet*, once he is isolated from the others, and is horrified to see the disintegration of a human being. Now the final chapter of *The Last Command* can be a parallel to that, but this time it'll be

vision of the completion of a human being into glory. We've been grooming Mark as the mystical Starman—we've also said, as early as *Assault On Mars*, that he is looking for the uncreated Light. In the last chapter of *The Last Command* he will, at last, see it when he sees Zip enter it.

The following email exchanges came nearly three years later, February 22-23, 2005 when the writing of *The Last Command* was coming to completion.

From David

Well, Jon, so far only you and I know that, with chapter 10, the breaking of the Starman fellowship has occurred. The farewells between Joe and Zip, and later between Mark and Zip, are their last. Joe will never hear Zip's voice again. Mark will hear it only once.

From Jon

Very true! I read this e-mail before I read Chapter 10, so I had your comments in mind while reading it. Knowing what was going on added a lot of depth to the chapter: it really is a sad thing. I don't think I would be expecting what was coming if I was reading the book cold because the scene is so casual: there's nothing in it that would make you think that this is the end. Unless for some reason our readers already think that Zip is going to die (which I strongly doubt) I don't think they will see it coming. It should come as a complete surprise.

From David

I hope so. I still can't read those last chapters without being deeply moved. I hope that our readers will have the same reaction, but I don't think it could ever be quite as intense for them as it is for the authors.

Believe me, it was pretty emotional writing this chapter, knowing that Zip would be dead before noon. In this chapter I presented Zip as almost abrupt in his manner. He is intent upon the task and almost heedless of danger. That will lead right into his impulsive, but necessary, action to fly to the Xenobot moon. TLC is drawing to a close, as is the Starman series. It's bittersweet.

From Jon

It certainly is. I see why Zip is behaving this way and I agree: it makes sense. It is indeed a bittersweet moment – triumphant, and sad, and moving all at once. Yet, at the same time, this is clearly the way the series has to end: it is simply where everything has been leading to, and I think our readers will see that.

From David

Maybe. The members of the Reading Group see that, but I suspect there will be a few readers who will be quite upset and maybe even angry. Maybe our gathering in May³¹ will give us an indication of how people will react. Even if people are angry, I think they'll eventually understand and agree.

From Jon Cooper

I imagine this is so. There may be some people who are upset (and then again, there may not be) but even if they are all upset I wouldn't change it. This is indeed how the series ought to end: it's very fitting and deeply moving. I will be watching with anticipation to see what our readers think of *The Last Command*.

It's hard for me to tell how I would feel about it if I wasn't a part of the process. Had Rick Brant or Ken Holt died at the end of their finale books I definitely would have been moved: those books would have become even more special, and it would have

³¹ The final reading event where the ending of the Starman series would be revealed to those who came together for that purpose

had a big impact on me. Once you become attached to the characters it is hard to see them go. Definitely bittersweet.

From David

Yep, there's a risk. I think we're doing the right thing and it'll be very powerful. The fact that Ahmanya comes back, Mark and Joe end up very well, Kathy becomes a Starman, and Allen is healed of his anger will all be immensely powerful. We've broken new ground in the series book world before, but nothing like this. We're showing that goodness will triumph, but at a price. The title of the chapter in which Zip dies really says it all: "Victory Forever".

From Jon

I really love that chapter title! It does indeed say it all. The ending is immensely powerful. This is one of those series where the last book redefines the series in unexpected ways. It is not only an ending; it is an illumination as well.

This material was first assembled into a single file in the spring of 2003, when *The Lost Tomorrow* was in its earliest stages and *Doomsday Horizon* was less than half finished. It had taken more than four years for the Starman Team to decide that David Foster would die at the end of the saga, yet we also recognized that the implications had been there almost from the very beginning.

The meeting of the Starman Team in Charlottesville, Virginia took place on October 11, 2002, the day before we released *The Lost Race of Mars*. We discussed various ways to end the series and came down to two possibilities. David would be grabbed by wormhole transfer after the Xenobot fleet is destroyed and before the solar power

station evaporates. Or he could die. Having Zip die was obviously risky. We didn't want readers to feel cheated after they had plowed through all the books. Yet it seemed right. Once decided, we never doubted that it was right although it did take several months for the decision to "hit home" for us. Based on an existing rough draft, I wrote the scene in which Zip dies shortly after the decision was made. It was written quickly, almost as fast as the words would come, and after that revised only slightly. It moved me deeply each time I read it aloud or alone.

Authors come to identify with their characters. Killing one off is traumatic. It was especially so for me since all three Starmen are extensions of myself. Yet from *Doomsday Horizon* forward everything pointed toward the ending. David's funeral in *Doomsday Horizon*, his growing solitude and aloofness even as Joe and Mark mature in their personalities and partner up with others. Although the signs were there earlier, Joe finally connects up with Kathryn Mullaney in *The Heart of Danger*, and Mark (who realizes that he "thinks like an Ahmanyman" in *The Heart of Danger*) unconsciously anticipates his eventual, unprecedented human-Ahmanyman union with Stenafi.

Underlying this is the assumption that humans and Ahmanyans are, in fact, one species. Saleh tells Montezuma Vly in chapter 4 of *The Last Command* "Though the First Races who yet live are unable to conquer [the Xenobots], it is your race that can, and will." He uses the term "your race" to refer to both humans and Ahmanyans.

David Foster, however, goes in a different direction. Like Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*, Zip must "give up" in order that others may "own". In the last books Zip was continually burdened, never relaxing, never able to let go.

In the first chapter of *The Last Command*, there is a significant conversation between Zip and his beloved sister Kathy.

"You're not paying very much attention to me, David," Kathy reproved him mildly. "You're preoccupied."

The Starman turned toward his sister and smiled broadly. "I'm sorry, Kathy," he said. "I am preoccupied."

"You're always preoccupied, or something," Kathy complained. "You need to enjoy each day as it comes. Uncle Frank and Aunt Clare went to a lot of trouble for your birthday, and they're so excited to see us! When we leave tonight, they should feel completely happy that we came, and not wondering what's wrong!"

"You're right," David said, looking down at the ground, abashed. He turned back up to look into her grinning face and brushed a snowflake off her cap. "I'm just so tired all the time."

Many scenes in the saga anticipate the final sacrifice. For example, consider what David says to Karax in *The Heart of Danger*:

"Starman," returned the Ahmanyen. "I am not forbidding you to take on this task. I speak merely out of concern for your safety. What you propose is extremely perilous."

"Some would say foolhardy, you dope!" Zip recognized Joe's voice in the

background, and smiled.

"I recognize and am grateful for your concern for my safety, my friends, but now someone must act boldly for the safety of us all."

Consider Zip's reflection later inside the Xenobot ship with Jack in the same book.

He was surrounded by people who were trying to kill him. He felt vulnerable and exposed to the merciless hatred of countless enemies. He shivered. A sharp pang of loneliness and longing came through him. He felt the acute separation from his partners, Mark and Joe, and wondered if perhaps he had let them down by plunging headlong in his determination to board the Xenobot ship.

More than one person had tried to talk him out of it, including Karax. He hadn't yielded, and now he'd put Jack's life at risk.

Consider Zip's desperate need to warn Tharsos of Xenobots' horrific plan in the same story, yet his neglect to think of his own escape until it was too late.

The redheaded Starman's radiation sickness and fear of radiation that stirred up so much controversy on the message board, especially from Neil Lindholm, the scene with Zip's breakdown (much mitigated in the final version from the first draft), and Allen Foster's eruption in *Journey to the Tenth Planet* were all vital for the ending. Neil's cogent observation and the subsequent discussion on the message board led to the addition of chapter one in *Mutiny On Mars*, where reservations are brought up about

David's suitability—all were absolutely essential to leading up to the climactic scene where all finally falls into place. David's sacrifice heals many things, including his own father's hurt and anger.

After Laurel Yoshimoto, who became a member of the Reading Group as *The Heart of Danger* was being written, heard the ending read to her, she said softly: "I knew that someone would have to get hurt. The end would not be happy for everyone."

Kristina Bethany's loss is not spelled out, but is left to the imagination. A suggestion from Jon's sister April led to the scene in the last chapter in which Kristina's robotic assistant Jenny muses on grief and love.

A number of special scenes were introduced into *The Last Command*. As they were being written, Jon and I reflected many times on their significance for the coming climax.

From the first chapter, here is the last time David and Kathy see one another:

"Tell mom and dad hello for me, and have a happy birthday tomorrow, brother," said the Starman's sister, "and you make sure you're here next year when I graduate!" she added with mock sternness. "I'm hoping to be created a Starman!"

David smiled at his sister with fondness and looked directly into her eyes. "You know that even a planetful of Xenobots can't keep me from being here!" he whispered. He kissed her on the cheek and she kissed him back, and then Kathy turned and hurried toward the terminal. She didn't look back. Slowly, almost

unwillingly, David reentered the cockpit of the *Dart*.

David and his father Allen have had a strained relationship throughout their lives. In the beginning of chapter 7, there is a rather feeble but sufficient attempt at rapprochement.

With those words, Zip had expended his reserves of emotional expressiveness. His speech had come out of him without effort or forethought, and now he didn't know what else to say. He felt uncomfortable. He turned his attention back to the boat and glided it into a patch of soft sunlight. When father and son spoke again, long minutes later, it was about mundane things. But both felt better.

Allen's return to space was the only thing that could have led him to see and accept where he had fallen short over the years. Though he actually "did" nothing, his presence aboard Tharsos during the Xenobot War was essential to the story. Significantly, it was Pleera who had the necessary words for Allen.

"I, uh...I have to admit I'm somewhat daunted by the technology of this spacecraft, Pleera. Even the Starlight shuttlecraft that brought David and me here was something new to me." He lowered his voice. "I'm afraid that I won't have much to contribute to the effort."

"Starman Foster," she began.

"Please call me Allen," he

interrupted.

"Very well, Allen," she said. "Don't underestimate yourself. The anticipation of your arrival gave enormous encouragement to us here. We know that you do not have current training, but that can, and will, be overcome. Your presence has already boosted morale. Even before you stepped through that portal, you contributed to the success of this mission."

Again, it is Pleera who provides the bold but entirely fitting and necessary closure to the Starmen's departure from Tharsos—which is also the last time David will see anyone else of his own race—other than his two friends, of course.

Allen Foster had seen fit to say his final words to his son in private, and was not present for the actual departure. Only Izmaka, Richard Starlight, Commander Lewis, and Pleera were with the Starmen.

"Good luck, Starmen," said King Izmaka. He approached the three and, one at a time, laid his hands on their shoulders. His deep eyes looked into those of each of them, conveying courage and confidence.

Commander Lewis shook hands firmly with each one. Richard Starlight similarly shook their hands. He was smiling, but that he could do so only with an effort was evident. He felt keenly that he might be looking at them for the last time.

Finally Pleera approached them. "Peace and wisdom to you," she said in a strong

but quiet voice. "And success." Upon the lips of each she conferred a kiss.

"Well, nothing can top that," said Joe, breaking the over-solemnity of the moment. "I'm ready to go now."

As the tension built, Jon and I took note of the last momentous moments of departure. They were written almost to be understatements so that their poignancy would be recognized only after the fact. Here is the scene in which Joe says goodbye to Zip forever.

"Okay, then. That's our plan," nodded Zip. "The hypershield will be down within an hour, and our fleet will let the Xenobots have it. They'll be in for a big surprise. Their power stations and torus will turn to dust before they know it! And Tharsos can rescue us by wormhole and we'll be in the *Star Ranger* before lunch!"

Mark looked doubtful. "You sound awfully confident, Zip, for one who's been so guarded about the Xenobots up to this point."

"Well... I know it won't be that easy, but I'm hopeful. Besides, I don't see any other way. Do you?"

Mark and Joe both shook their heads. A sudden feeling of dread shot through Joe. *So far it all seems too easy*, he thought. *It can't last.* He shook the feeling off, determined to concentrate on his task.

"Well then, I'm off," said Zip. "Good luck, Joe." They clasped hands. Then Joe opened his toolkit. Mark set his

backpack down next to Joe and accompanied Zip back to the central chamber.

It is a little different when Mark and Zip part. Mark, who is more sensitive to great moments and is sometimes even prescient—at least when it comes to others, not himself—is strangely reluctant to let Zip go quite as easily as Joe did. The actual departure is not out of the ordinary, but Mark can't quite take his eyes off of Zip.

"Good luck, Zip," said Mark as the redheaded Starman began to ascend the steps. In moments he had reached the ledge. Zip stepped gingerly onto the platform of metal set with railings that hovered over the drop. It remained solid as he put his weight onto it. He looked for controls, and found them on a panel set into the railing.

These can't be too difficult to figure out, he thought. He experimented carefully, and in moments felt the slab begin to rise.

"It's working," he said to Mark. "I'm going upward."

Mark continued to gaze after the platform until long after it had disappeared into the darkness, beyond the reach of his light. He turned off his own suit lights and saw a tiny halo of light spilling over the square of metal. As the minutes passed, it became smaller and smaller. Mark lay on his back so he could continue to look upward without straining his neck. When the light vanished, he checked his watch.

Zip had been gone four minutes.

The last communications Zip has with Mark are strained and unclear because of the difficulty of compad exchanges through the narrow shaft, and the exchanges Zip has with the officials on Tharsos are greatly hampered by time delay. Zip's detachment from humanity grows until it is complete. With his customary rashness and lack of attention to his own safety, he leaps into action on a course that he believes—rightly—is the only one that can save the day.

He threw the detector down and raised his compad.

"Starman David Foster calling Richard Starlight!" he nearly shouted. "I have located the Xenobots' solar power station! It is on the Luxan moon! There is no doubt!" His words tumbled out. "I am taking a Xenobot shuttlecraft to the moon where I will disable the power station! The Xenobot fleet will soon be powerless—if I am successful! I will launch in less than two minutes! I will contact you later to tell you where and when to send a hypertransfer beam to bring me back to Tharsos! Foster out!"

The Starman ran to the Xenobot shuttlecraft, selected one, and leaped inside. Within a minute he had blasted off from the surface of Luxa.

"Foster out!" are the last words that Zip speaks to those of his own race.

The First Guess How the Saga Would End

As has been stated several times, Mark McSherry was our “cold” reader for the last few books. That is, once we came to a near-final draft of a book, we sent the entire file to him to read “cold”. He had been given no inkling in advance of what the book was about and could be the first person to read it straight through rather than chapter by chapter over a period of months. Mark’s comments were always extremely helpful.

In the case of *The Last Command*, at first we did not send Mark the dramatic last four chapters. Then we reconsidered that idea and asked Mark if he would indeed like to read the ending before others did. He thought about it for a while and then accepted the invitation. He had already read chapters 1-11.

Before we sent him the last four chapters, Jon sent him this message:

March 30, 2005

One question before you begin: how do you expect the book (and therefore the series) to end? What do you see happening in the last four chapters?

Mark sent us back this astonishing response:

To tell you the truth, I don’t know! It seems as if the Team has written themselves into a box with no way out. :-) The Xenobots appear to have the upper hand and to hold all the cards; to win the War they now just need to play those cards properly. But I suspect the three Starman will somehow find a way to obflisticate, exflunct, and finally ramsquaddle the Xenobots.

But will all the ‘good guys’ survive that final victory? No. This is portended in Chapter One when Zip tells Kathy that “...I just see the utter stupid waste of war, not only material waste but moral and spiritual! It is so staggering to those who have to endure it. It always has been, no matter what the poets say, and always will be, whatever the propagandists tell us!” So even for the victorious, nothing will be the same again... Shades of the Ahmanyen-Xenobot Wars from 12,000 years ago.

The first few chapters of TLC that relate to Zip give the impression of a ‘dead man walking’— a soldier who senses that his days are numbered, who is melancholy and easily distracted by the smallest of details— I’m thinking particularly of the third from last paragraph of the first scene in Chapter Two³². Michael

³² The last three paragraphs of that chapter are:

His gaze wandered around the inside of the viewing room, and he took note of the way the chairs were placed, how his parents sat close together. The gray carpet appeared almost as if he were seeing it for the first time. He observed its texture and the subtle design worked into its threads. Had it always been that way? Of course it had; he had grown up with this carpet. His eyes traced the graceful curves of the legs of the small table that held the teapot and refreshments. How lovely it was. He smiled slightly, and then quickly sobered. The war with the Xenobots would be launched very soon. It was quite possible that this carpet, this table, this house, the entire city could be turned into disconnected atoms by summer’s end.

“What are you thinking, David?” asked his mother, breaking a long silence.

D. Cooper plants the seeds of doubt early; the reader wonders if “The Last Command” could, indeed, refer to David Foster.

Or, perhaps, it could refer to Allen Foster? Either way, I suspect that by the end of TLC the father/son relationship (and conflict) will be resolved— permanently.

So I sent Mark the last four chapters, and said:

The last chapters are attached. I suggest that you find a time, Mark, when you can read all four of them at one sitting where you will not be disturbed.

The next day, Mark had read the four chapters and sent us this message:

April 1, 2005

Dear David and Jon,

Just finished reading the last chapters of “The Last Command”. Right now I don’t quite know what to do or say... Other than to simply stand up and loudly clap my hands in applause.

What to compare the thrill of finishing TLC to? Eleven years old sitting in a theater watching the Star-Child gazing from orbit upon the orb of the Earth with the fanfare from “Also Sprach Zarathustra” blaring in my ears. Or several years later, watching the final moments of “Casablanca”, as Humphrey Bogart suggests to Claude Rains that “...Louie, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.”

“I was just thinking how much I like this house,” he replied. His mother smiled broadly and sat back, content.

Like 2001 and Casablanca, the final chapters of TLC have set up a resonance in my synapses that is still reverberating long after the actual reading. And I won't get much sleep tonight either due to the mental frisson you've induced in my head. :-)

The scene that started my eyes to water was where Kathy tells the Sister that she is going to become a Starman— "I have to now. Next May I will march through the line. I will see the hologram of Starman number 212, my brother, and he will be smiling at me." And tears to flow as she runs through fields and meadows to where "...Richard Starlight is sitting on a bench by the lake, watching the fishermen cast their nets."

While I feel a sense of sadness, the over-riding sensation is one of joy; I believe that reading the Starman Series has made me a better person. That my consciousness has been elevated. And my spirit made more robust.

Thank you!

Mark

The Final Reading Group

Several months of anticipation preceded the fever-pitch caravan to Tapiado Canyon in the Anza-Borrego Desert in southern California for the dramatic reading of the climactic last four chapters of *The Last Command*. It was Thursday, May 19, 2005. (See the photographs of Tapiado Canyon and the nearby area beginning on page 197.)

In the end, ten people were part of the expedition. The previous day Jon Cooper, his sister April and brother Mike, and their cousin Ben Farmer had flown into Los Angeles International Airport where David Baumann met them. Michael Allison, a NASA scientist from New York flew in on a later flight and took a cab to David's home in Placentia where he met the rest of us. The next morning these six were joined by Mark and Benjamin Bennett and Leslie Owens of the Reading Group, and we drove in two cars to the old gold rush town of Julian where we met Diana Lindsay who lives north of San Diego and is one of the most knowledgeable people regarding the Anza-Borrego. She has even written books on the subject.

The ten of us continued the journey for another hour or so, dropping from the mountain range where Julian is located to the desert floor east of Julian, then passed by Ghost Mountain where Marshal South's "experiment in primitive living" took place 1932-1946. We finally arrived in mid-afternoon at the canyon where the large mud cave is found. For Michael Allison, April, and Ben, it was their first visit. Sadly, Valerie Kramer who had had the idea that the reading take place at the mud cave and who had been invited to come down for it, was not able to be present.

Michael Allison provided his take on the experience in the preface to *The Last Command*:

Responding to a notice on their web page of a "major Starman conference" to be convened last May, I found myself invited to David Baumann's reading of the final chapters . . . out under the stars of California's Anza-Borrego Desert! I did not know what I had let myself in for that day . . . climbing the rock-strewn trail of an 800 ft. mountain in bake-oven heat, squeezing by flashlight through the very mud-cave tunnels we read about in *Assault on Mars*, I think I may have qualified for astronaut training. I was privileged to meet, among the other impressive members of this august desert company, a young college student represented in the books by Commander Pleera of the Starship *Ossëan*³³. I did my best to keep up with her as we *charged* a towering hill of slippery granulated mud at about a 70° incline, wondering that I didn't fall and break my fool neck, this to witness the coming desert sunset against the caves. That night, enjoying our fire-roasted wieners and a katabatic rush of refreshing desert wind, we gazed upward at a waxing gibbous Moon high overhead, paired on that date with bright Jupiter no more than 4° away, then gathered round a kerosene lamp in rapt attention to David's reading of the last four chapters of the book you hold in your hands. It is of course not for me to spoil it. But let me assure you that the characters, the ideas, the integrities, and the steadfast hope you'll be reading in this book are as real as those possessed by the writers and their interwoven community . . .

33

 Jon Cooper's sister April: April—plirA—Pleera.

After we set up camp and explored the mud caves, we cooked dinner. When darkness had completely fallen and a moon approaching the full was riding in the sky, the ten of us sat in camp chairs around a low campfire. David lit a kerosene lantern, set up a CD player (powered by batteries), opened a three-ring binder that contained the last four chapters, and began to read aloud. From time to time, following prompts he had placed in the text, he inserted a CD into the player and provided eerie music to accompany the reading.

An hour and forty minutes later, he read, “The End—and the end also of the Starman series”, and closed the binder. For about a minute no one spoke. Jon and David were a little nervous about how the audience would take the account of Zip’s death, but no one objected, and all thought it was fitting.

Surprisingly, it wasn’t until several days later we realized that we had not taken any photographs of the event. Here, however, is a photograph online of the very same setting with others camping at the spot:



Two days later, in a classroom at David Baumann's church, the reading was repeated to an audience of 21, with the same reaction—a rich silence, and then commendation. Reactions from those present eventually inspired a few changes and additions to the chapters, and then the book was sent to the publishers. A few weeks later, *The Last Command* was in the hands of its readers.

We did find out later, though, that one reader at least was so shocked and disappointed that she disposed of her books. A few months later a young couple asked David how they could get copies of the books, and he looked online and found an entire set at a local used bookstore. He went and bought them for the couple. The first editions were all numbered, and David asked Jon who this set of books had first belonged to. Jon looked it up and reported that they had belonged to someone who had been present at the reading at the church some time before.

“It takes courage to face death. Only one who is alive can die. Aliveness is measured by the ability to die. One who is fully alive is fully able to die. In the peak moments of aliveness we are reconciled with death. Deep down within us something tells us that we would die the moment our life reached fulfillment. It is fear of death that prevents us from coming fully alive.”

Brother David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B.
[Order of Saint Benedict]

The Critical Last Minutes in *The Last Command*

The critical “hour and twenty-six minutes” at the climax of *The Last Command* were packed with fast-moving events in at least three different settings, each affecting the other. What happened when, and how the events fit together, are explained in a minute-by-minute listing. As David wrote these chapters, he developed this listing, scribbling and revising as the words unfolded. Every event had to fit with precision into the whole story.

As I was writing the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of *The Last Command*, I kept a notepad handy so I could keep track of the events and time them to the minute. Action was taking place on several fronts: Joe and Mark were battling the Xenobots deep in the well, Zip was on the surface of Luxa, and the fleet of the Solar Alliance was fighting for its existence against the englobement of the Xenobot armada. Zip could communicate only with Tharsos by time delay. With so many things happening at once, it was vital that it all make sense and fit together. Above all, it had to be shown that Zip’s death was absolutely necessary and not just a tragic mistake that could have been prevented had chance worked another way.

The notepad became quickly marked up in a convoluted fashion, but here is the final version:

- 9:00 Zip leaves Mark and Joe, begins ascent to surface of Luxa
- 9:10 Zip reaches surface of Luxa, calls Mark; takes 10 minutes to travel to the well
- 9:11 Zip’s first call to Tharsos, asks for wormhole rescue at 9:50
- 9:12 Hypershield goes down, Tharsos initiates attack

- 9:17 Xenobots begin descent of the well in three stages; ten minute trip
- 9:21 Zip calls Mark to warn him about Xenobots
- 9:21 Tharsos receives Zip's first call
- 9:22 Tharsos responds to Zip's first call, agrees to rescue
- 9:22 Zip's second call to Tharsos, asks for his own wormhole rescue on surface
- 9:24 Hypershield goes back up
- 9:25 Alliance is englobed by Xenobots
- 9:26 Tharsos calls Zip with the bad news about the hypershield
- 9:29 Third platform of Xenobots reaches bottom of well; battle begins
- 9:32 Zip receives Tharsos message agreeing to rescue
- 9:32 Tharsos receives Zip's second call
- 9:33 Tharsos returns Zip's second call, saying they cannot rescue any of the Starmen
- 9:36 Zip receives news from Tharsos that hypershield is back up
- 9:40 First Races deliver message to Tharsos that they are ready to destroy Luxa [\[NOTE: This part of the story was changed in the reissued version of the saga.\]](#)
- 9:43 Zip receives news from Tharsos that they cannot rescue the Starmen
- 9:44 Zip figures out that solar power station is on the Luxan moon
- 9:47 Zip's third call to Tharsos, tells them he's going to steal a ship and go to the moon
- 9:48 Joe and Mark blast hypershield mechanism; hypershield goes down for good
- 9:50 Mark and Joe are rescued by wormhole; one Xenobot comes with them
- 9:51 Battle inside Tharsos' transfer station; Xenobot blasts hypertransfer apparatus
- 9:51 Zip takes off for the moon

- 9:52 Janitor vanquishes Xenobot; Starmen sustain needle laser burns
- 9:57 Tharsos receives Zip's third message, realizes it cannot bomb moon
- 10:00 Izmaka orders two hundred firewasps to the Luxan moon
- 10:02 Battle in the vicinity of the moon begins
- 10:07 Zip reaches the moon
- 10:12 Izmaka gives First Races the "go ahead" on the destruction of Luxa [NOTE: This part of the story was changed in the reissued version of the saga.]
- 10:16 Mark, Joe, and Kathryn launch the *Star Ranger*
- 10:20 *Star Ranger* clears Tharsos' airlock, wormholes to Luxan moon
- 10:20 Zip begins to turn the wheel
- 10:21 *Star Ranger* reaches vicinity of the Luxan moon, sees it disappear.
- 10:26 Hyperbubble arrives near Luxa, disgorges black hole [NOTE: This part of the story was changed in the reissued version of the saga.]

A Response from a Reader to the Death of Zip Foster

From Lettie, January 29, 2008

I am still moderately shocked at the decision to kill Zip. I was so surprised to read it and thought that this could not be the actual ending, that there would be a wormhole that opened up to save him. I am sure that these opinions are nothing new - that you have heard them before - but if you have any response/thoughts, I would enjoy hearing them. I will send more thoughts when I have them.

To Lettie, January 30, 2008

We have an entire section in our “companion” volumes on this decision. It was by no means an easy or obvious decision to come to, and we even produced an alternative in which Zip is saved by wormhole. We even considered publishing TLC with two endings! There’s a novel by Robert Heinlein called *Podkayne of Mars* that does that. In the first version he has the heroine die at the end, and there was so much protest that he wrote a second ending in which she survives after a long bout in hospital. Both endings are now printed in the book. The difference between him and us is that his heroine died for no reason. In our version, Zip is a Christ-figure in a sense who dies to save others. He must overcome his fear of radiation with the grandest sacrifice, and in so doing not only saves his world but heals his father. He is also presented as having come into eternal life.

I have attached a couple of our files on the subject so you can see how Jon and Mike and I worked with the idea of Zip’s sacrificial death. The one called “The Death of Zip Foster” is a lengthy exchange of emails in which Jon and I puzzled through the concept about halfway through our writing—roughly 2003 or so, I think; the other, “Feb 2005 on Zip” was written shortly after I

had started writing TLC

NOTE: The files mentioned in the previous paragraph are reproduced earlier in this entry.

To Lettie, February 7, 2008

Zip was the analytical one. His emotions and innate tenderness only came out in “safe” places like with his young sister and with the handicapped girl (who was based on Jon Cooper’s real-life girlfriend at the time). His brain kept getting in the way of his heart. His fear of radiation, infused in him by his father, was the “block” to his emotional self. He couldn’t overcome that on his own—it needed a “crisis” to blow through his reticence and fear. The option that suddenly confronted him on the Luxan moon forced his powerful self-sacrificial side in service to others to overcome the fear of radiation: “Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” Therefore the love that was inside of him all along but imprisoned by fear, finally conquered the fear when it had to do so in order to conquer the Xenobots. “Perfect love casts out fear.” That is why the title of the chapter in which he dies is called “Victory Forever”. It means not only the victory over the Xenobots but Zip’s ultimate victory over what was blocking his full entry into love. That’s why I described his death twice: once as it happened, and then again through the eyes of Mark the mystic, who could see Zip finally standing up straight and then being lifted into the blazing heart of God with his hands outstretched. The reader knew that Zip was finally made whole. Like Frodo, he had to lose something in order that all others might have it. Death before resurrection.

Mark and Joe were much more “curable” and didn’t need to die to find their healing. I don’t know if it’s significant or not, but both Mark and Joe are only children, though Joe has several cousins he spent time with when he was growing up. This is described in the beginning of *Doomsday Horizon*. Mark was a mystic who shied away from personal relationships, especially

with women, because he did not think that anyone would or could love him. He just took that as a matter of course and accepted it without complaint. Being genuinely loved, however, could, gradually, overcome that flaw.

Joe headed off intimacy with laughter and humor, sometimes inappropriately—yet he could genuinely feel love, although it came out awkwardly. That’s how I described his relationship with Kathryn Mullany. He was clearly drawn to her and a bit awed by her. She was a strong individual who could drag Joe’s humanity and genuineness to the fore without overwhelming him.

Both Mark and Joe were profoundly affected by Zip’s death, in the way that you don’t value something you take for granted until you lose it. Then they were deeply moved in ways they couldn’t have been until that moment. Through Kathryn’s empathetic tears and embracing of him without force, Joe was “cured”—or at least he was pushed past the roadblock of his own fears, though he retained his sense of humor. Similarly, Mark was brought out by Stenafi, although that relationship takes place and develops mostly “off camera”—so that I could spring it as the last great surprise at the very end of the last book. The relationship between Joe and Kathryn was made pretty obvious in part to take the reader’s attention away from what was going on with Mark. There are hints of how Mark and Stenafi were drawn to one another but they are extremely subtle. Their relationship is a kind of symbol of the relationship between Earth and Mars/Ahmanyia. Also, the fact that they can marry and produce children is evidence that humans and Ahmanyans are in fact of the same stock—created by the same God, as believers may conclude.

A Reflection: Alternate Ending to *The Last Command*

Could Zip's Death Have Been Avoided?

In the summer of 2005, the book was finally published and sent to our readers. After a while responses began to dribble in. Much to our surprise, the reactions from readers was minimal. The responses we received were moving, but there were very few of them.

Thayne Harmon, one of our very first readers, wrote:

Was it the only choice David could have made, I don't know.

David responded:

What we had to do in writing this scene was the following: First of all, we had to determine that the outcome was what we wanted to present. We seriously discussed several other options, including a last-second wormhole rescue and even writing two alternative endings and putting both into the same book. When we gulped and said that we really did want the series to end the way it did, then we had to write it in such a way so that the death was absolutely necessary. It had to mean something, it had to be worth something. It had to determine the outcome of the Second Xenobot War—it couldn't be just a tragic mistake. Because of that, I prepared the very detailed timeline of events. It was not easy, and called for some very intricate figuring. The timeline included the time it took to exchange information by compad. Each person making a decision—Zip, his friends, Izmaka, the First Races—had to make the best decision they could given the information they had at the time the decision had to be made.

Everyone knew where Zip was, but only Zip knew that the Xenobots were pounding on the door and that he had only seconds to act before the war would be lost. Even if he hadn't pulled the switch, the Xenobots at the door would have gotten him but then nothing would have been achieved. Everyone else may wonder why Zip made the choice he did and what options he might have had, but Zip himself knew that he had no choice but to do what he did if the Solar Alliance was to win the war. Even the "near miss" in the First Xenobot War was taken into account. The Ahmanyans could have exterminated the Xenobots at that time, but out of pity did not do so. Their extermination this time had to be complete—yet the Lucian said that it was not for the Solar Alliance to enact the final destruction on their enemies. For moral reasons, the First Races had to do so. The First Races played a part in the rise of the Xenobots, as Selah himself said, and therefore they must be the ones to ensure their final destruction.

Here is an undated document that provides one possibility on how David Foster could have survived. It was written by Jon Cooper.

David Foster Lives!

or, how we can save David from the Xenobots

It all boils down to tachyons. RTT allows faster-than-light communication through tachyons; two machines interchange tachyons and bingo: you have communication. Well, suppose someone built a tachyon transporter??

The candidate for building it would be (of course!) Stephen

Hoshino. He would have had a natural interest in tachyons; perhaps he was one of the theorists whose theories led to the construction of RTT. Hoshino might have even begun speculating on other uses for tachyons.

After book #5 when the Martians were discovered, Hoshino took a trip to Mars to talk with the Martians and see what they did with tachyons. Hoshino learned that the Martians knew of tachyons, but they had never harnessed them in any way (their hyperspace radios worked on a totally different principal). Hoshino discovered, however, that the Martians had drawn up plans for a transporter but couldn't get it to work because electrons didn't move fast enough.

Hoshino and the Martian scientists, then, launched on a joint-venture to combine tachyon technology with transporter technology. The experiments did not go well; there were some early successes, but also some dramatic failures. Therefore, when the Martian-Xenobot war was launched there was a tachyon matter transporter, but it was unreliable (especially at such extreme distances as several light-years). They decided to use it when David was in the Xenobot star station – and it worked! David was saved.

Here is how we would work it out in the series:

#4 *Descent Into Europa*: Someone mentions that one of Hoshino's old papers on tachyons led to SE's development of RTT, and that Hoshino is an expert on tachyons.

#6 *Operation Luna*: Someone mentions that Hoshino has gone to Mars for a scientific conference; no one's sure on what but it has something to do with a matter transporter.

#13 *Danger at L5*: Hoshino announces he's working at SE on a matter transporter that uses tachyons. SE is supplying the equipment, etc; Hoshino is supplying the theoretical background and expertise.

#16 *The Rings of Saturn*: At first SE considers using Hoshino's tachyon transporter to move water from Saturn to Venus. However, Hoshino's transporter fails spectacularly in a demonstration. Hoshino and the Martians go back to the drawing board.

#22 *The Return of Mars*: Hoshino and SE finally have a tachyon transporter that works, but it's not reliable. Sometimes it works fine and zaps things across billions of miles instantaneously; other times it doesn't do anything or returns gibberish. SE installs one on Tharsos and one on Mars, but they're too unreliable to use.

#23 *The Last Command*: David is given the order to go to the Xenobot core and detonate it. Earth says they know it's dangerous, but they'll try to use a tachyon transporter to pull him out. David agrees to try it, and makes his way to the core. The date: July 4, 2158.

David pulls out his RTT walkie-talkie, calls Earth, and says he's ready. He ignites the chain reaction, blowing the station – but the tachyon matter transporter pulls him out.

Well, it pulls him out, but the explosion messed up the tachyons and turned his energy pattern into shambles. David's pattern is stored in a computer. It's an absolute mess; they have the readings on the explosion, but they're not sure how to reverse the damage and rebuild David. Time is running low: the pattern can only be sustained in the computer banks for so long before it is lost. Things look bleak: David's pattern has been blown clear to kingdom come.

But they rebuild him. The other two Starmen, with Jogren and Hoshino, team together and manage to reverse the destruction. They test it – and David rematerializes! David is safe, and the Xenobots are gone.³⁴

³⁴ Of course, we decided not to use this scenario.

THE FINAL CHAPTER

David and Jon pondered whether to place this final chapter at the end of *Master of Shadows* as the conclusion of Volume III, but hesitated since *The Last Command* culminates with the death of Starman David Foster and *Master of Shadows* closes with the passing of Olor. We didn't want to conclude our saga with any scene that might be interpreted by some readers as a "downer" no matter how triumphant we tried to make it. So after some discussion, we decided to conclude *Master of Shadows* with Starman Kathy Foster's happy recognition that it is time for her to retire after a very long career. Yet we also felt that the account of her long life needed definite closure, which would also provide closure for the entire Starman saga. So we wrote this chapter but decided to place it at the end of *The Starman Companion*.

The Last Chapter of *Master of Shadows*

Chapter 23: At Bethesda

April 21, 2585

Starman Kathy Foster took out the last weed in her plot of narcissi and tulips and placed it in the bucket with the rest of them. She raked her small cultivator through the dark, rich earth to remove the last signs of her weeding, and left the soil attractively smoothed over. She raised her eyes to take in the whole of the garden plot and saw the thick field of blossoms. The early spring sunlight shone down from a cloudless sky on the extensive gardens and pathways of Bethesda.

She took hold of her cane and with a little effort rose to her feet and dusted off her knees. She recalled how Rachel would

have commended her for her good work in the garden, told her how lovely the flowers looked, and solicitously asked after her health. The Starman had turned Rachel over to Starlight Eagle City years earlier when she had decided to retire to Bethesda. After four centuries of the holocom's companionship it was a difficult decision, but spending her last years in the silence of Bethesda wouldn't have been possible with the holocom constantly at her side. Rachel would be honored as the first holocom, and Kathy was more than content with that. There were hundreds of holocoms now, far more advanced in design than Rachel, but still—Rachel was the first.

I'm feeling a little tired, thought Kathy. *I'll go in and wash up. There's still time for some tea before Vespers.* She turned and made her slow way back to the main house.

When she failed to appear for Vespers, Sister Cecilia went looking for her as soon as the Office had been completed. The Sister, a young woman newly professed, had taken a special liking to the old Starman and enjoyed listening to her talk about her adventures. She knew just how she liked her tea and what she liked best for breakfast, and whenever Kathy went out of the garden to walk or to work, Sister Cecilia watched out for her whenever she could.

Now she knocked on the old Starman's door.

"Starman Foster?" she said. Hearing no answer, she knocked diffidently again and then quietly turned the knob and peered into the room. Kathy had fallen asleep while drinking her tea and reading a book. She lay slumped over the table, and the teacup was on its side. A little tea had flowed over the tabletop and wetted her white hair where it lay spread out.

Sister Cecilia ran to get help.

Sisters Camilla and Cecilia stood on either side of the old woman's bed. It was the room in Bethesda she had occupied more than four centuries earlier, where she had fled after receiving the news of her brother's untimely, sacrificial death.

Then she was only seventeen years old. Now she was 442.

"It is time to call for Father John," said Sister Camilla, the community's physician.

"And Mother Elizabeth, too, I think," said Sister Cecilia.

Minutes later the four of them stood around the bed, and the priest anointed the old woman's forehead with the sacred oil, and pronounced the words of the Last Rites. "May angels lead you into Paradise," he intoned as he came to the end of the prayers, "and Lazarus, who was poor, bless your arrival, where the choirs sing the ending of sorrow, eternal greeting."

Sister Camilla raised moist eyes from the bed to the view outside the window. The garden spread out for acres, and she could see the narcissi and irises and anemones and the other flowers that the old woman had tended for the past eighteen springtimes. They were beautiful. This time of year brought them all up at their best. The timing of the old woman's death was most fitting.

"With her goes the last living memory of the Second Xenobot War," said Mother Elizabeth softly.

Sister Camilla looked back down where the old woman lay, and saw that her breathing had ceased. Her wrinkles had disappeared, and her long, her very long life, had come to an end. Somehow the room and even the gardens themselves seemed both full and empty at the same time.

WITH THESE WORDS,
THE STARMAN SAGA COMES TO AN END.

