The evening of the Viking 1 landing, on July 20, 1976 at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory was among the greatest space related cultural events since the end of the Apollo era. Among the celebrities and science fiction authors Carl circulated about, pausing now and then between interviews and congratulations to drink in the sight of the first Martian landscape ever seen. In a photo I made of him then one can imagine the satisfaction of a lifelong dream fulfilled.

During that evening I was interviewed by Jon Lomberg as my voice failed, as he collected impressions for a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio program. Some of his interviews were used in the Visions of Mars CD-ROM, which was originally created by the Planetary Society for Russia's ill-fated Mars 96 mission. Also on this disk was a personal greeting from Carl to the future human inhabitants of Mars. Jon Lomberg, Carl's longtime collaborator and a painter of SETI concepts among other things, graced many of Sagan's books from The Cosmic Connection onwards. Among his collaborations with Sagan was assisting in the design of the phonograph record containing images, sounds, and greetings from Earth carried aboard NASA's two Voyager spacecraft.

In 1975 Carl asked Jon Lomberg to direct the creation of the special effects sequences for a new television series. Jon proceeded to assemble and direct the pool of space art talent that contributed to the classic PBS show Cosmos.

Some of the artists were awarded Emmys for visual effects for their work in Cosmos. To name but a few of the artists involved, Rick Sternbach went on to become a pivotal conceptual artist and designer for Star Trek's various television incarnations. Adolf Schaller continued publishing at a modest but steady pace his fine paintings and has a book out now about Extraterrestrialia. In a real sense, Carl Sagan had a pivotal effect in the vitality and development of space art through the Cosmos experience.

Later the Planetary Society and its magazine was to be a strong publisher of high quality information about planetary exploration and the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI), another of Carl's great passions.

He sought to warn the human race when he saw danger on the road ahead, and he not only wrote of possible climatic consequences of global thermonuclear war, he participated in a demonstration at the Nevada Test site to be joyously arrested with others trying to buck humanity's destructive trend of the times. So much about him I know so little of; that is for others to illuminate.

The love that Carl and Ann had for each other was such that whatever the previous lives both lived before meeting, one cannot imagine them not having always being together. Along with the artists and others who had the pleasure of working with him over the years, I wish I could have known him more and I treasure the memories of what experiences and endeavors we shared.

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PLEASE READ THE ENCLOSED NOTICE-BOARD, AND RESPOND!
Whither the IAAAn?

OK. Even if you normally just glance at Pulsar and then 'file' it, please read this one carefully. Those of you who are on e-mail will already know that the 'phone lines have been red-hot for the last week or so ('I'm writing this on 26 January), so will have to bear with us if you've already read much of what follows. Those of you who aren't will be getting this news some weeks later; the main thing is that all members of the IAAAn know what's under discussion, and can join in.

In the October/November Pulsar I stated that my main aim, as new President, was to strive to make space art better understood, accepted and enjoyed by a wider audience, an aim in which I am sure you would all support me. However, it turns out that I am not the only one with this viewpoint; Kim Poor (our self-appointed loose cannon) has made a number of e-mails to all members from the IAAAn, and those that remain are doing most of their art in-house with uninspired computer graphics.

Here's what I propose we do:

TRAVELLING SHOW

A prime opportunity awaits us with Planetfest 37, with a travelling show there for the duration. We just need a tourmaster. We have two other shows under our belts, museum quality crates, expert framing and presentation materials available. Only one person (Mark Garlick) has stepped up to volunteer, (bravo, Mark!) but he has no experience, and is thousands of miles from where the show needs to tour (the USA). A bonus: money. Money from our current treasury was gleaned from our last touring show, managed by Beth Avary. [There was more here about Beth being out-of-pocket due to this, but Beth has since refunded that.]

BOOK

We need to have a high-circulation pictorial anthology of space art. A coffee-table book or something like that. It has been on the Novographics idea list for a long time, and many of our customers have requested such a thing. Books that have high sales and low-profit, so we're reluctant. Andy Chaikin says he could write the text in his sleep. The Grand Tour is a great start, but it is too small, has no great publicity machine, and only showcases two artists.

THE SAGAN PROJECT

This is the cornerstone of my proposal. Some of you have heard me espouse this before, but the time is ripe, now.

This is not necessarily an homage to Carl Sagan, though it could be. It's the kind of thing he probably would have had a hand in.

Being supplemented by powerful and inexpensive computer graphics programs. 2. Space art as fantasy and as science fiction is no match for Hollywood. 3. Space artists as a group are resistant to artistic innovation and outside influences. 4. This group tends to be too content to remain within their perceived niche. 5. Consequently, space artists have been more or less indifferent to and ignored by the mainstream art world and vice versa. The result being that space art in any form has not become established nor is it considered to be a serious art form in 20th century art - a big mistake.

This last aspect is truly incredible when one considers: A) the breakout into space by life on Earth this century is the most significant single event in human history; B) the appearance of life itself; and C) space resource utilization is the key to the survival of our species as we approach a 8-10 billion population within the next 50 years.

Focusing our art on either or both of these two issues in a concerted and concentrated way should really set us a part from the crowd and at the same time help save humanity's collective but and, by doing so, making us the art world's prophets and the sages in the new millennium.

Additional proposal are included in the separate NOTECARD, enclosed.

There's more, much more, but I can't possibly print every e-mail received. You all have to get on the net yourself! But you can see that much important discussion is taking place. It could still all fizzle out, and it will if everyone waits for someone else to 'do something. We need more members to commit themselves. If only to a few hours a week to help in any of the ways suggested, the Board, officers and myself can do it all, no matter how willing we may be. (I've been the whole of a very sunny Sunday, when Ruth and I would have loved to go for a walk, doing this Pulsar...). But if we can find the time to do what we do, can't you? Think about it - please. It's in your own interest, because we shall all benefit if this comes off...

And now, because Carl Sagan's death is still in our minds and he was an inspiration to all of us, this from Don Davis, with input from Jon Lomberg: For reasons of space I have, reluctantly, had to edit this slighly. For the same reason, I have had to hold over until next time several Artists' Profiles.
never was made) but the people with money never felt it would be popular.

Our planet is in a crisis of faith and spirit, and the loss of market for space art is a symptom. It won't be solved by a space art book. Why was Cosmos so successful? The TV helped (he said modestly) but the truth is that it was Carl's unique abilities, charisma, and star quality. There is nobody on the scene who seems able to fill his shoes.

The string of failures in the planetary program - Phobos, Mars Observer, Mars 96 - hasn't helped either. Russia may be down for the count as far as space goes. Until a really sexy mission like Cassini or the current crop of Mars spacecraft begin delivering results, it will be hard to galvanize people about exploration.

It's interesting how many new members come from Europe. Maybe ESA can start filling the void (no pun intended).

Anyway, those are my thoughts. I'll be glad to participate as far as my other commitments allow, once we get an idea that seems worth doing. By the way, I am helping to plan a memorial for Carl to be held in Pasadena on Feb. 17 (check out TSF for details).

ARTHUR WOODS:

[Arthur's input was, as always, valuable, but too long to include here, but here are some highlights. A full transcript is available on request.]

The discussion initiated by Kim is timely and the need to do something being echoed by some members is appropriate. I think it is quite obvious that all space development has been in a steady decline since the end of the cold war. What is now left over are the just crumbs of earlier visions and these crumbs are constantly being eaten away by other competing hobbies.

The problems of Space Art. Fact - once space has lost its hold on the public's imagination, any interest in space art must also suffer a corresponding decline. As Don Davis pointed out, there is a lot of competition for the public's attention out there from the entertainment media. However, in spite of some of their often exaggerated fantasies, I think we all have to admit that Hollywood and the major networks have made a lot of us see visually interpreting space in images and getting these images to an audience.

But the problems concerning space art are much deeper. They include but are not limited to: 1. Much of what this group does is scientific illustration and that aspect is now

There exists within the IAAA membership a huge pool of talent, equipment, experience, and expertise to put together a first-class production of a dazzling space art feature-length film, video, laserdisc, or most likely, a digital video disk (DVD). Jon Lomborg would be the logical producer/director, having worked with Carl on anything involving space art and guided many of us into his field of vision. We have several other Emmy winners from Cosmos, (also thanks to Jon, who was the chief artist), most of whom are still heavily involved in the entertainment field: Don Davis, Rick Sternbach, etc. Still others are planetarium artists, intimately involved and familiar with production and deadlines. Chula Butler has a degree in film arts.

We have many of the hottest computers and software available, and we know how to use them. Lucas has nothing on us.

We have marketing types, like me, who could sell product to the masses. We also have a lot of contacts in the entertainment field, to debut the production on cable, PBS, or as a movie teaser short subject. We have big name contacts in the SF field. We know astronomers, scientists, writers, We have the World Wide Web.

We also have several artists who may not be able to offer big-time or computer work, but may have great ideas, contacts, and something to offer the project. The IAAA was made for this.

We can do this! All we lack is the gumption, and money. As far as money, it could be done on a shoestring, if artists donated some of their time or expertise. (It won't be the first time, huh? and this is for US) Money is the least of our worries for now. We need to get together and decide specifically what we can do, a concept, a distribution plan, future royalties, and assign duties. Once we get a plan and a demo reel, sponsorship should be easy, if we need it.

I suggest we start an email discussion, meet at Planetfest and/or Death Valley and outline a plan and timeline, and get to work in earnest.

Even if you're not involved, you will stand to benefit as a space artist, with renewed popularity of our field of endeavor.

Space art can become a brave new world or a twentieth century footnote.

Let's hear some chatter.

Kim

Well, we certainly heard some chatter! Firstly, let me state that the suggested name, The Sagan Project, is not now being adopted, for reasons which will become clear later (see Jon's letter). But the idea and vision remain the same: as you now, workshops have been proposed, and at least one (Death Valley) looks like happening within a few months. Comments from e-mails:

PAT RAWLINGS:

Your ideas are great and are easily within the capabilities of our organization. I believe an art show linked with a book and a CD rom or video media could do very well. The show could tour worldwide and end its tour in 2001. It probably would be good to have several photographic repro versions of the show for use in lesser markets to enhance coverage. Link it with kids and education if possible for mileage. The show really needs something unique to pique the public's interest.

I also think there is a strong need to jury the show. There are pieces that I have that have no right to be seen by thousands of people. We need to be very conscious if we want to build a good rep.

Thanks for the ideas. I'll be as supportive as I can.

B.E. JOHNSON:

I've often said that there's enough talent here that we could RULE THE WORLD! Problem is, promotion is on the low end of the scale at the moment. We need most of us and getting a bunch of space artists to work together on a voluntary (or only) project is the same as it is with programmers: Herding Cats!!!

There is an awful lot of talent, experience, ingenuity and inventive knowhow pooled in this bunch and it just might be pulled off - if we don't kill each other in the process. From my experience in planetaria and writing a feature film screenplay with Gary Lockwood, it really is a question of how individuals who are in for the long haul that carry the vision from start to finish, no matter where the project turns, 'cuz it normally doesn't end up the way it was envisioned and the players change on a monthly basis. (How's that for a long sentence?) Point is, if we are going to attempt a project of this magnificence, all eyes should be open so we know what to expect.

From the marketing standpoint I'd like to entertain the possibilities of combining the book and DVD either initially as a package, or as a "spoon feed": Do the book, while the book is being launched begin pre-production on the film, complete the film while the book is
released, re-launch an updated book (or Book II) containing the DVD with a separate DVD released within two months made available for those who have the first version book or would only want the film. Multiple market penetration with good product ID due to repetitive exposure. Two year timeline is about right, may extend to three.

Joel Hagen:

I like Kim's itch to get something cooking with a book/DVD/film/something project. BJ's perspective in his response is wise. I'm for a good brainstorm session. My hunch is that Death Valley/Planetest may be the best way to move ahead with face to face discussion (as Kim suggests). I'll bet we can find a good project that can confidently tackle.

Carol Hayne:

Everything you wrote sounds very sensible to me. I like the idea of the book and DVD, and if I were good enough I'd be happy to contribute to anything along these lines. I'm in the process of sending some of my pictures to David Hardy to let him see what I do (work mostly in ink and coloured pencil, so it may not be the sort of things you could use...) — but once all of these ideas you mentioned are more developed there may be "something" that you could do to help on the lines of using my computer at home etc, which I'd be happy to do if it were needed. Anyway I just wanted you to know that you have my support, and I hope that we all will do our best to help to realise some of these great ideas. Cheers!

Ron Miller:

I'm all for promoting space art and stand behind at least the intent of Kim's ambitions, but there are some realities that are not being realistically dealt with. Right off the bat there are a few fundamental flaws in his argument for getting an anthology of space art published – at least published by a commercial publisher. First, it would be preaching to the converted. That is, the major market for such a book would be those very people who are already aware of space art. This would probably make the market far too small to attract a commercial publisher to what would by its very nature be an expensive book.

Second, the track records of the two most recent such anthologies – In the Stream of Stars and Visions of Space – are not such as to encourage self-publishing or for a publisher to take on a similar book. And the third reason develops directly from that word "similar" - any new general book on space art would of necessity be too much like Visions of Space to attract a publisher. A very reasonable reaction would be: "there's already a book out on the subject, why do another?" Another question that we would be asked by a publisher is: "what market do you envision for this book? who is going to buy it?" If the only answer we can come up with is "people interested in space art", then we might as well forget about it.

A new space art book is going to have a different "hook" than that of a simple catalog of artwork, especially if we want to get space art out in front of as many people as possible. One of the reasons that The Grand Tour and The Grand Trees of Fire were successful is that they each offered a hook that might not have picked up the book otherwise. That is, someone not otherwise interested in space art will purchase the book because of X (whatever that might be) and will then find him/herself confronted with a lot of wonderful artwork in addition to X. Coming up with a different hook is also going to be of paramount importance, of course, in getting such a book published by a mainstream publisher.

I think that self-publishing such a book would be an enormous mistake. We would be faced not only with the incredible mechanical difficulties and expenses in the physical production of such a book, but also with the problem of advertising and distribution – we lack very publicity machine that Kim complained of in his posting. All we would end up with, given that we could afford to spend the resources for publishing a book of adequate size and quality, would be a self-published catalog mostly available to and of appeal to those of people already aware of and interested in space art. This might be all well and good, but it is not addressing the problem of expanding the audience for space art.

Most of these arguments apply as well to electronic publishing. Especially that if we want to expand awareness of space art, we have to come up with some way of "hooking" non-space art people into buying the product.

One suggestion that I might make – while we are trying to come up with an idea for justifying a general space art book – is for members of the IAAPA to come up with ideas for their own book project, for books to be done by two or three artists in collaboration. While doing this might at first seem to work against the promotion of space art generally, it wouldn't if there were any number of such books appearing more or less simultaneously. Instead of one book, which may or may not attract the general reader, there'd be half a dozen or more, all with different artists. Since each would have its own targeted audience, in addition to any overlapping interests, there would be much greater overall exposure.

One of the secrets for getting a book of any kind published is to try to come up with an idea that will fill an unoccupied niche. If you can do that, then there is an excellent chance that you'll get that book published — and that the book will be successful. (This is, as I've already pointed out, the main obstacle to getting a general interest space art book published: it fills no unoccupied niche.) For example, last November I realised that there were no books for young people on the history of rocketry. I sent off a query letter and a month later got a contract from Groller. See?

Armand Cabrera:

I would like to participate in a project and would be happy to meet in person anywhere BUT having worked on many film and multimedia projects over the last couple of years it's been my experience that there's no money or recognition in it. Unless you have big money backing you the chances of getting the needed distribution is almost impossible. Most art books get remaindered and you would have to create a market for DVD, right now you'd have to make the disk a dozen or more.

People don't read books anymore unless it's some TSR or Star Trek or Star Wars crap, check any bookstore look what the best sellers are. That's your market for a book. Movies are the same way. Everything is a licence to do your deal. I've been working in the entertainment industry for seven years. I make a lot of money, what I don't make is that stuff that's very creative by my standards. So as long as there won't be a push to help the bottom line and add scenes of Michael Jordan in an Xwing I'll be happy to help.

Unless we do everything: marketing, distribution, publishing, control of content, you will have this License problem to contend with.

I'm not saying we shouldn't do this; I think we should. I just have first-hand knowledge of what it's like, and I don't want anyone to think that just because we paint pretty pictures that people are going to roll over for us. They won't budge unless there's money in it for them. And if they can make one percent more money selling bathing beauties of the Empire, they will.

One thing I never hear and everyone seems to ignore is the art. This group is about art, right? What about getting into some art magazines? I have, in the UK! What a concept: we want to be taken seriously as artists don't we? Otherwise we're just paint- ers with a real specialized focus and all that stuff about following Moran and Bierstadt is b.s. An art group recognized by nobody but itself in the art community is nothing. And if we can't get articles in national art publications or nobody is impressed with us except ourselves then maybe we need to reevaluate our abilities as artists.

You may fire at will...

Chris Butler:

I am very enthusiastic regarding Kim Poors suggestions that we stir the market. I hope others in IAAPA will join in the effort. Certainly I am willing to assist a touring show, depending on logistics. I think we all have seen the space art baloon losing a little pressure recently...

and I refuse to paint humpback whales for greeting cards!

Never refuse a combat assignment, so it is said, and this sounds like one to me. Kim, I need more data on what would be required to support the touring show, but consider me very interested. Video and television production are indeed my thing, and I am gearing up for a computer animation workstation.

Jon Lombert:

I have mixed feelings about Kim's idea. Some initial thoughts:

1) We have to be careful about using Carl's name, even internally, for any project. If it is