
Subject: Re: Regaining Momentum

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Tue, 24 Jul 2012 00:34:38 GMT

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Monday, October 8, 2068, 2:30 p.m. local time, Parkes Observatory, New South Wales, Australia
(4:30 p.m., Tracy Island)

"Well, looks like this is the place," John said to his companion.

"Feels like it's out in the middle of nowhere," Dr. Amy Fitzpatrick replied. She pulled a brush from her handbag and ran it through her short, red hair. "Took forever to get here."

"But it'll be worth it," John said firmly. "The upgraded array will be something to see." He climbed out of the car and stretched his long legs before circling the sedan and opening the door for Amy. She thanked him with a coquettish smile as she stepped out.

It had been a nearly three hour drive from Sydney to Parkes, but since the observatory's nearest town didn't have an airport, it was a necessary one. The early morning flight from the island had landed him in Sydney near lunch time, and allowed him an opportunity to catch up with Amy, an old friend from Harvard. They'd kept up a correspondence over the years, and had agreed to travel together from the city to the country.

They walked slowly toward the administrative building, joining a few others who had come for the momentous occasion. The Parkes Observatory now had the distinction of being the largest radio telescope in the world. A new dish, bigger by far than any built on Earth before, now dominated the hill where a smaller, but more famous dish still stood.

"I have to admit, John, this is a strange way to celebrate a birthday." Amy commented as he held open the door for her. The air conditioned administration building was bright and modern, and they approached the welcome desk to check in.

"John G. Tracy," he said to the young man behind the desk. Amy stated her name and, after they both had tendered their identifications, each was given a visitor's badge. John tacked his on the lapel of his sports jacket.

"In answer to your question," John said as they moved away and further into the building, following the signs that directed them to the working heart of the observatory, "yes, it is a strange sort of birthday. But I didn't exactly choose the day that the new telescope array would come online, and my father thought it would be best if I represented the Tracy name for the occasion." He smiled and shrugged. "Besides, I had a party last night at home. A luau, down on the beach."

And so he had. The family and the recruits had dined around the pool for a light lunch provided by Emily and Lisa, which allowed Kyrano to outdo himself with the main party: a traditional luau, complete with tiki torches, poi, pineapple, and roasted pig, held on the island's beach. Jeff had insisted that the party be held the night before with this particular trip in mind. John had gotten several nice gifts, including a top of the line laptop from his father and stepmother.

"That's for writing your next book," Dianne had stated. "Maybe you'll keep all your notes in one

place this time!"

"Dad?" John had asked later, after he'd had a good look at the computer. "Where'd you get that program? The star mapping one? I don't think I've seen that one on the market..."

Jeff had just winked at him and said, "It's nice to have old friends at the WSA."

"Mr. Tracy?" A middle-aged woman approached them, smiling broadly and extending her hand. "I'm Dr. Laura Irwin, director of the Parkes project."

"I'm John Tracy. This is Dr. Amy Fitzpatrick." John shook hands with her first, then Amy did.

"I'm so glad you've come, Mr. Tracy. Our project couldn't have done without the financing provided by Tracy Industries. We now have the world's largest radio telescope, and the first one directly connected to a gravitational-wave array." Dr. Irwin sighed, a happy sound. She clapped her dark hands together. "So, are you ready to see what our new telescope can do?"

"We certainly are," John said, glancing at his companion.

"Then, come this way, please." Dr. Irwin gestured toward the observatory labs, and the couple followed her.

Posted by Tikatu on October 23, 2007
