

# CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>xi</b>
------------------------------	-----------

<b>Part Zero: What's It All About? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
--	----------

<b>Part One: Surges of Public Interest.....</b>	<b>5</b>
---	----------

<b>Chapter One .....</b>	<b>7</b>
--------------------------	----------

The Enduring Mystery of Mars

*The canal controversy, the controversy about the nature of its moons and its impact on science fiction.*

<b>Chapter Two.....</b>	<b>13</b>
-------------------------	-----------

Who Goes There?

*Public interest in the possibility of life in the solar system was sparked by a series of disturbing incidents that took place in 1947. The reality of what was observed is still the subject of heated controversy.*

<b>Chapter Three .....</b>	<b>21</b>
----------------------------	-----------

The Social Consequences

*Whatever the nature and source of the strange sightings one thing is certain: The reports themselves are real and they have had far reaching social consequences.*

## **Part Two: What is it like out there? .....35**

### **Chapter Four .....37**

#### **Our Celestial Neighborhood**

*The possible presence of strange objects in our skies led many to ask about the nature and structure of our solar neighborhood.*

### **Chapter Five .....43**

#### **Time, Light and Distance**

*In order to navigate the world we needed to devise a way to measure the mysterious entity we call time. In doing that we learned something about light.*

## **Part Three: The Matter of Life.....55**

### **Chapter Six .....57**

#### **The Incredible Adaptability of Earth Life**

*Could Earth life, the only life we know, exist elsewhere in the cosmos? The answer depends on whether or not the “stuff” out there is the same as the “stuff” down here.*

### **Chapter Seven .....63**

#### **Life As We Know It**

*All life on Earth distinguishes between certain left and right handed chemicals. This fact might enable us to tell if life found elsewhere had an independent genesis. The importance of water for Earth life leads us to examine temperature and the Goldilocks region around a star.*

**Part Four: Do We Have Neighbors? .....73**

**Chapter Eight .....75**

A New Window Might Show Us

*Electro-magnetic waves and how they led us to the Big Bang.*

**Chapter Nine .....83**

If We Have Them, Can We Find Them?

*Astronomers learned to widen their window of observation giving rise to the science of radio astronomy. On the basis of these developments three men initiate SETI, the scientific search for intelligent life in space.*

**Chapter Ten .....87**

If We Find Them, Should We Call Them?

*What some of the experts say and what others have done?*

**Chapter Eleven .....95**

Cosmic Company: Have They Called Us?

*Strange messages and weird astronomical objects: Neutron stars, black holes and quasars.*

**Part Five: Are There Strangers in Our Skies? .....103**

**Chapter Twelve .....105**

No, Certainly Not!

*A well-known scientist leads a study of the UFO problem and creates a firestorm of controversy.*

**Chapter Thirteen.....111**  
**Yes, And They Are Stranger Than We Ever Imagined!**

*Puzzling sightings over Belgium, England and Phoenix, Arizona have many concerned.*

**Part Six: You Can See A Lot By Looking! .....119**

**Chapter Fourteen.....121**  
**Yes, We Can Understand the World!**

*Our deeper understanding the cosmos begins with Galileo and Newton formulating the laws of motion.*

**Chapter Fifteen .....127**  
**The Secrets of the Solar System**

*The work of Kepler and the insights of Newton concerning gravity give us the laws governing the solar system. They also lead to one of the deepest mysteries in modern astronomy.*

**Part Seven: Strange Stories.....135**

**Chapter Sixteen .....139**  
**The Most Famous Story of All!**

*The alleged crash of one, or perhaps two, flying saucers in the state of New Mexico; what has come to be called the “Roswell Incident.”*

**Chapter Seventeen .....147**  
**What the Witnesses Say.**

*The frustration of one scientist. Stories of close encounters of the third kind.*

**Part Eight: This Is The Way That It Is!.....155****Chapter Eighteen .....157**

Clocks and Rulers and Energy and Mass.

*The strange world of special relativity. The construction of space-time and where that led us.*

**Chapter Nineteen .....165**

Gravity—Geometry in Four Dimensions.

*The slippery concept of curved space-time.*

**Part Nine: At the Limits of Our Understanding .....173****Chapter Twenty.....177**

Another Surge of Public Interest!

*The subject of UFOs takes a very strange and controversial turn.*

**Chapter Twenty One .....185**

Are We Mentally “Linked” to the Cosmos?

*Where are the numbers we count with? Why is mathematics so useful? Is there any reason to think that human mathematics is universal?*

**Chapter Twenty Two .....191**

Quantum Physics.

*The strange world of the very small. Infinite dimensional spaces make their way into physics.*

**Chapter Twenty Three .....197**  
**The Infinite!**

*Is there anything in reality that is truly infinite? Does this concept have any role in science?*

**Epilogue.....207**