

Donovan B. Hicks
P.O. Box 1590
Granby, CO 80446-1590

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Dear Todd:

I just finished reading "From Jars to Stars". I am not an avid reader but I couldn't put the book down. You have done a wonderful job of capturing the historical chronology, the human joy and sacrifice and the scientific and engineering accomplishments of the "best little aerospace company" in the industry.

I worked for the organization for 35 years and was privileged to lead it for a dozen years or so. I have been retired since 1996 but I was glued to the NASA channel for the impact event and I still had that same emotional high that I did when I was a party to any number of launches over my career. If I was still at the helm I would make your book mandatory reading for all employees. I plan on making that recommendation to Dave Hoover and Dave Taylor.

Although "From Jars to Stars" chronicles the Deep Impact mission it could just as well of been written about almost any of the major scientific missions that Ball Aerospace has developed over its 50+ year history. They all have had a similar scientific genesis, development cycle and human joy and sacrifice. I observed a unique aspect of Ball Aerospace over my tenure. It is a very special place to work. The dedication and commitment of the employees is exemplary and unique in my view. The teamwork fostered by the technical challenges and the cost and schedule driven aspects of the missions is the glue that allows Ball Aerospace to continue to do the difficult on a regular basis and make it the place where most aerospace engineers would love to work.

Around the "red neck" table at the local café here in Granby there is much discussion about almost everything that you can imagine. Things get so intense that we have invoked the "blue flag, red flag" rule. When you speak you raise "red flag" if pure unadulterated opinion follows. If you raise the "blue flag" your comments are based on fact. Given that you footnoted so diligently and based on my tenure at Ball Aerospace, I sensed a great preponderance of "blue flags" throughout the book. Kudos for a job well done!

I wish you the best of luck in all future endeavors and thanks for featuring the “best little aerospace company” in the industry in your work.

With Kind Regards;

Don Hicks