

Ryan T. Rebling

Thank you for choosing me to lead the first manned mission to Mars, my crew will be my three best friends. Danny, who I have known since I was five years old. He is fun to be around, and he is good at electrical and mechanic work. Danny says, "He wants to be the first farmer on Mars." Then, I would take my cousin Lane, also known as "Linnerd". Linnerd says, "He's going along so he can be the first person to golf on Mars." Linnerd is the quiet one of the crew and he is the tool fetcher while we are working on projects. Finally, I would take Aer'Ronne, who I met last year at The Midwest Old Threshers Reunion in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. Aer'Ronne says, "He is going so he can be the first black person on Mars." He is the life of the party and he will bring hours of entertainment along with his mechanical capabilities.

To keep us entertained on the seven-month journey to Mars, we will bring a tractor to rebuild and restore. A 1952 John Deere B that was my Great Great Uncle Harold's tractor that he used to farm with. We will start by taking the tractor apart one piece at a time, being sure to lay each piece on a magnetic cart, in rows, to make reassembly simpler. Once apart, we could rebuild the motor, putting in new pistons, rings, bearings, all new seals and spark plugs. I will have made multiple visits to many parts stores before our trip to Mars to be sure all our replacement parts came along with us. When the tractor is apart, we can clean the parts preparing them for paint. Aer'Ronne, Danny and I will wire brush all the pieces before giving them to Linnerd to be painted. Linnerd is very meticulous, so he is perfect for the job. After Linnerd gets all the tractor parts painted, they must dry for 24 hours. We can then reassemble

the tractor. If we realize something is missing, we will have Danny along to make a new one. Reassembling the tractor should take us about five months.

After landing on Mars, we will put up a shop so we can repair and maintain Mars Rovers and build a house to live in for the next two years. We will modify engines to run generators that will work on Mars for when the solar panels are not collecting enough sunlight. Then we can make necessary adjustments on the tractor we restored to run in the Martian atmosphere. About this time, is when Linnerd will probably disappear to golf. While Danny uses the tractor to till the soil, Aer'Ronne and I will gather soil samples to bring back to Earth for testing. The test results will tell us what can be grown on Mars.

Time on Mars will pass quickly. We will pack up all our belongings, load the modified engines, restored tractor and soil samples and head home. For the next few months, we would celebrate our success and feel pretty good about what we had accomplished on Mars. Unfortunately, our ship will most likely be slammed by an asteroid on the way back and all our hard work and discoveries would be lost. Thanks again for choosing me but, I think I'll take my chances at home.