

November 19, 2012

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## I WAS JUST THINKING

In December issue of Discovery, with "THE OTHER EARTHS" on its front cover, there's a great article about William Borucki, the "Planet Hunter" and the man behind Kepler, the planet-finding telescope that's all the astronomical rage right now.

I wasn't surprised to read that my childhood hero had a hand in naming Kepler--and I'm speaking of Carl Sagan, not the Batman or Punisher--whose original name was going to be: FRESIP, Frequency of Earth-Sized Inner Planets.

All sorts of cool things are happening today as far as science is concerned. With things like the Higgs boson and many other important milestones in human history happening around us even as I type these words and then even more so. Things were going on like this when I was a kid, but now it's just all at such a higher level and growing exponentially.

Go to:

[planethunters.org](http://planethunters.org)

This site is recommended by Discover's article for those with a computer, internet, and a desire to look for the next Earth! You get to actually download and use a program that helps sort through all the Kepler data. It was started in 2010 by a Yale University astronomer named Debra Fischer, who says: "Once you know what you're doing, it shouldn't take more than 10 seconds each."

Our galaxy hosts an estimated minimum of 150 billion planets with the chances of you finding one yourself? --much better than a South Carolina Pick 5 lottery ticket.

They just didn't have stuff like that when I was a kid. I wish they did though.

But I'm not complaining. Because if we have that now, it shows me how the world is changing and how today's children have a much better opportunity to broaden their minds. I remember telling other kids--when I was a kid--that there had to be other planets, that there was no really, no question; their existence was a mathematical probability that was undeniable. And boy did I ever catch looks for suggesting such a thing. It's good after all these years to know what I pretty much already in my heart: this is not the only earth, it is not the first earth, and it will certainly not be the last.

Go to the web site Discover suggests, and see for yourself.