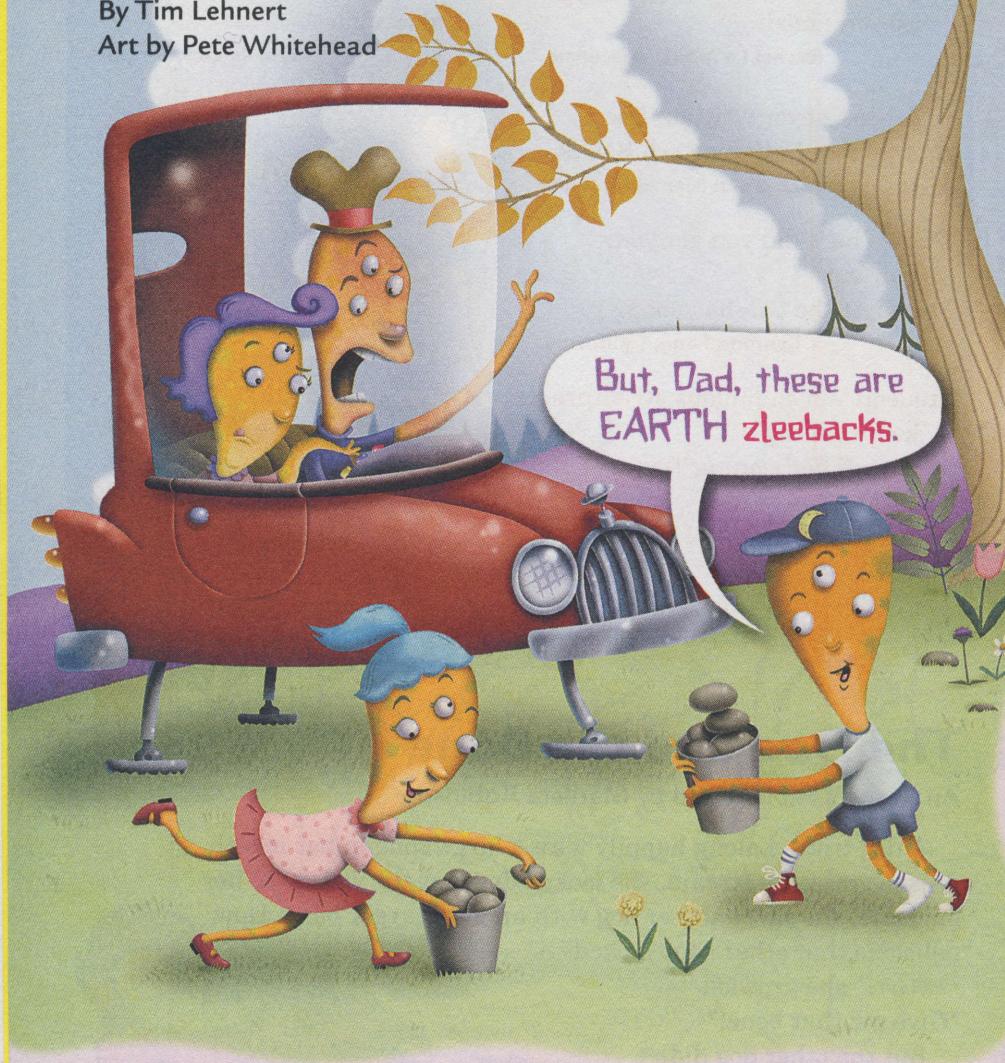


my Vacation on Earth

By Tim Lehnert
Art by Pete Whitehead



"We have to get back to Notsnarc," said Dad. He got into our spaceship and sat in the captain's chair. Mom checked the weather on the dashboard computer. My sister, Okim, and I were picking up the last zleebacks we could carry.

"OK, Dad, we're coming," I said. "Just let me grab one more."

"I hope the two of you aren't planning on bringing all those zleebacks home with us," said Dad.

"Why not? They're cool Earth souvenirs," I said.

"Look," said Dad, "we have plenty of zleebacks on Notsnarc. They're just going to weigh down the ship."

"But, Dad, these are EARTH zleebacks," said Okim.

"I bet we could even sell them on Notsnarc," I added.

**"Let's get moving.
Galaxy traffic
this time of day
is terrible."**

"How about a compromise?" said Mom. "Two small zleebacks each."

"Fair enough. Two each," said Dad. "But let's get moving. Galaxy traffic this time of day is terrible."

Mom looked at me. "Aydan, where's your third zolec?" I'd taken off my zolecs to walk in the sand, and now I had zolecs on two of my pedlox, but not on my middle one.

"I don't know," I said.

"Zolecs cost a lot of *gooblink*," said Mom. "I don't want to have to buy a whole new trio because you left one on Earth." This is when I wished we were like Earth people and had only two pedlox.

Dad put his face in his hands. "We'll never get back to Notsnarc at this rate," he said. "Aydan, please find your missing zolec."

The zolec was right by the tin of *ozmiks* I'd planned on bringing home.

I put on my middle zolec and walked over to the spaceship with the *ozmiks* in one hand and the zleebacks in the other.

"What is that?" asked Dad, looking at the tin.

"Earth *ozmiks*," I said.

"No way," said Mom. "You are not bringing a bunch of *ozmiks* on board this ship. They'll get out and start crawling all over the place."

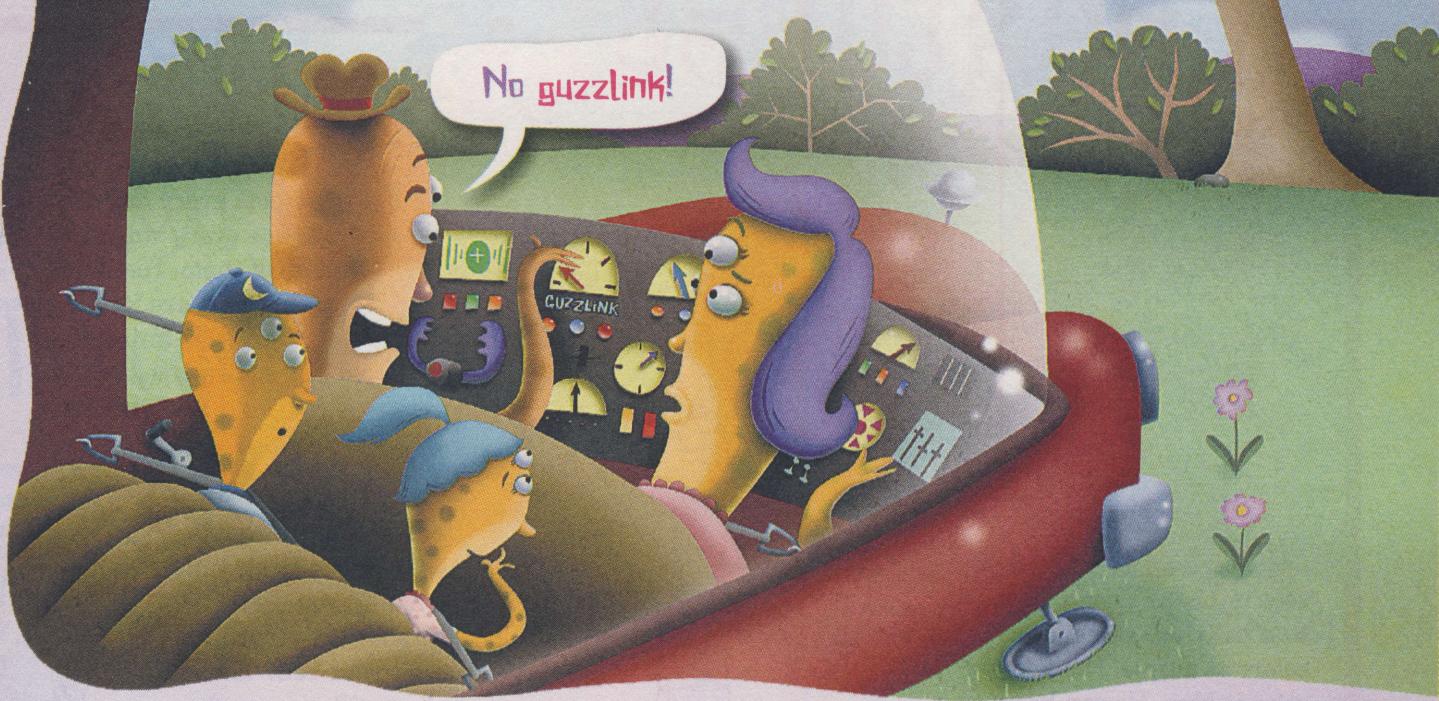
I dumped out the *ozmiks*. This Earth vacation wasn't nearly as fun as Mom and Dad had said it would be.

"OK," said Dad. "Last thing. If you need to use the *zlew*, now is the time. I'm not docking at some oddball planet for a *zlew* break."

"I don't have to go," I said.

"Me neither," said Okim.

"OK, but this ship is not



stopping until we get to Notsnarc," said Dad. We got in our seats and fastened our security stelbs.

"Stelbs on, everyone?" Dad asked.

"Yes, Dad," we answered.

Dad started the ship. There was a *rubba rubba* sound, but it didn't levitate at all. He tried again, but this time there wasn't even a *rubba rubba*.

"What is it?" Mom asked.

Dad looked at one of the gauges on the dashboard. "No guzzlink!" He looked cross. "I guess I was so busy telling everyone what to do, I forgot to turn on the guzzlink generator."

"Looks like we're going to be here for a while," Mom said, taking off her stelb.

"That's for sure." Dad sighed. "If you kids want to look for more zleebacks, go for it," he said to Okim and me.

"Since we're not getting back to Notsnarc for dinner," said Mom, "maybe we should order an Earth *pazump*."

"Awesome," I said, "but no *altons* on mine."

"No *perseps* for me," said Okim.

"First things first," said Dad.

"Let's find out if they deliver, because we sure can't pick it up."

Twenty minutes later, an Earth man arrived with our *pazump*. Earth *pazumps* are very tasty, plus they're shaped like a

circle rather than a rhombus. We sat on the steps of the ship and ate. Afterward, I counted and sorted my Earth zleebacks while the guzzlink generator hummed.

It had turned out to be a pretty good Earth vacation after all. I almost didn't want to go home. 

Earth *pazumps*
are shaped like
a circle.

