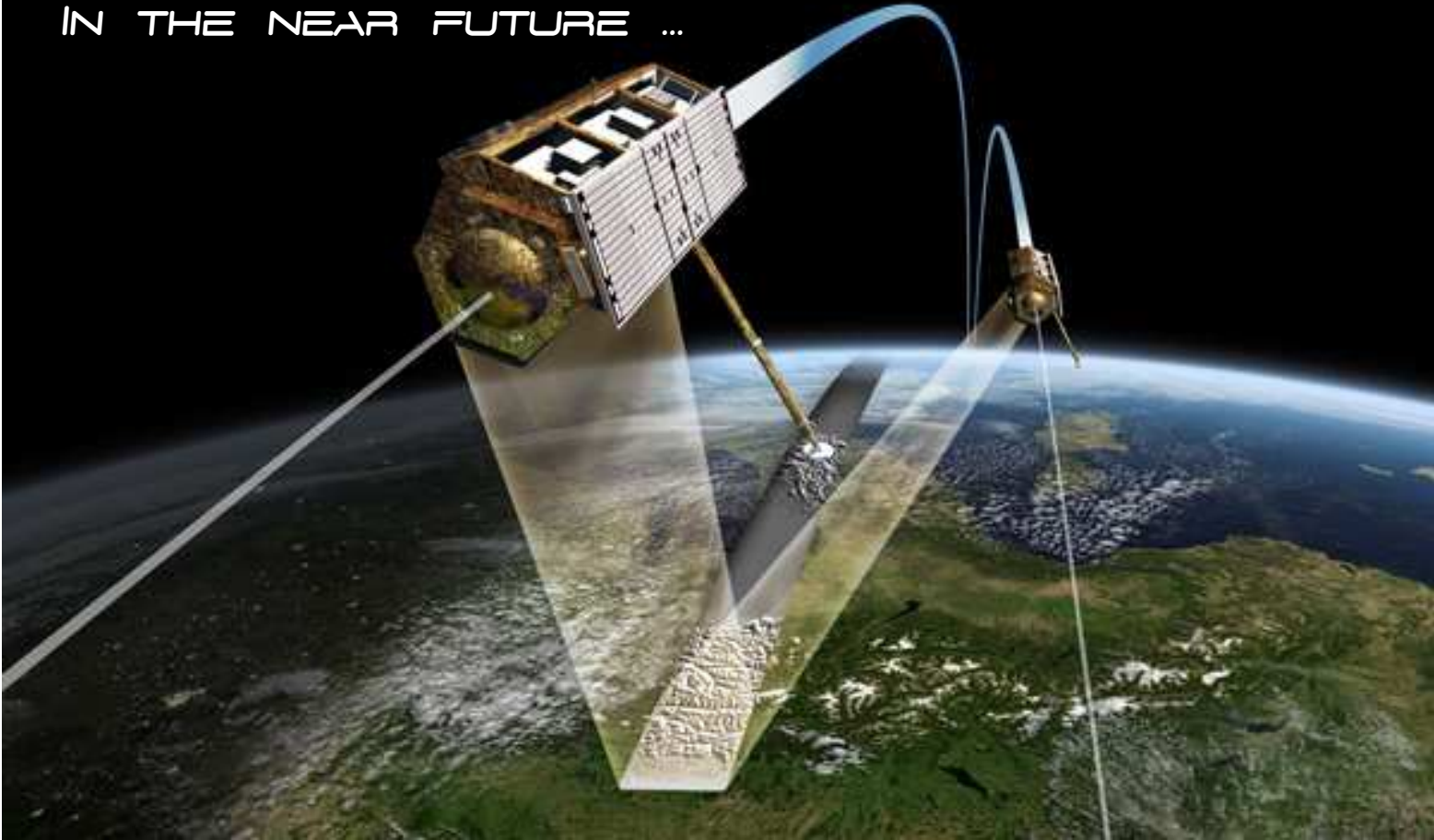


# THE SWAP

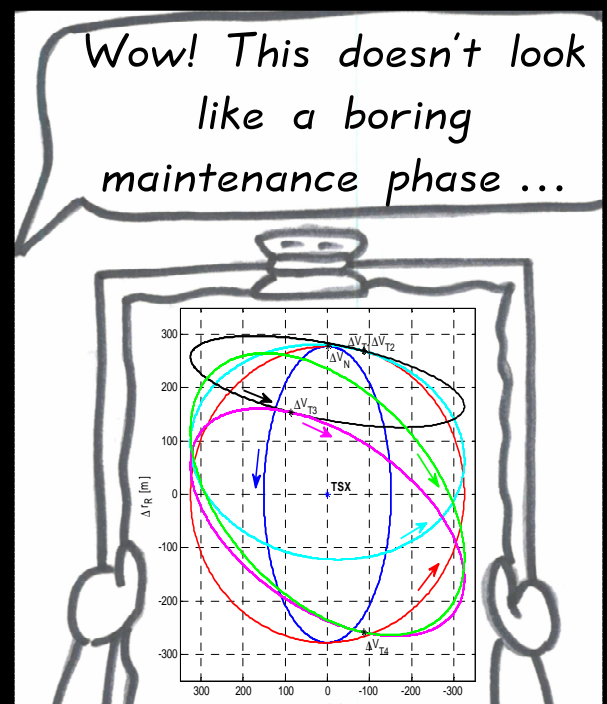
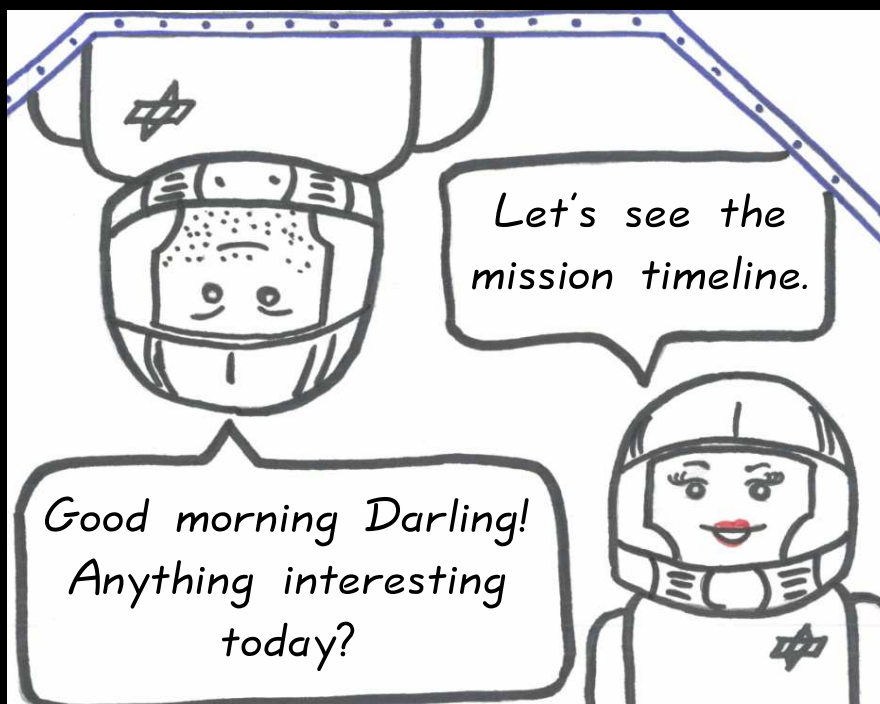
— A RATHER FICTITIOUS THAN SCIENTIFIC STORY ABOUT THE UPCOMING TANDEM-X MAINTENANCE PHASE (AUG. 6–9, 2013) —

BY RALPH KAHLE

IN THE NEAR FUTURE ...



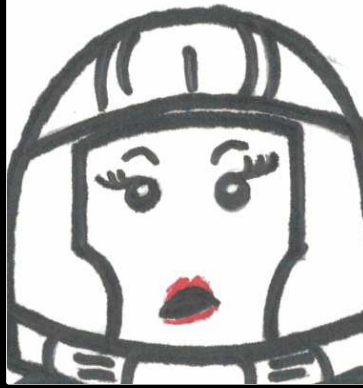
... SOMEWHERE IN THE TDX ON-BOARD COMPUTER ...



... We are going to  
abandon our usual  
formation with TSX!

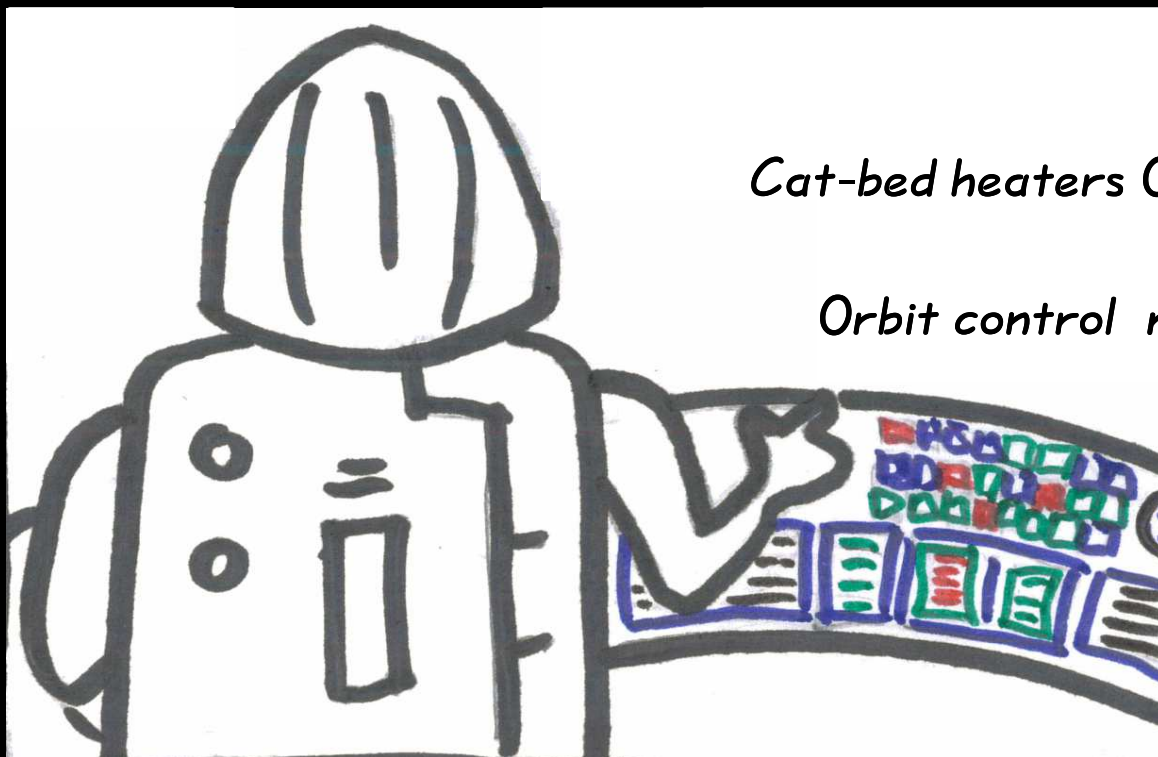


Isn't that  
dangerous?



Yeah! That's  
why we have  
to maneuver  
our space ship  
far away from  
TSX before we  
swap the  
formation.

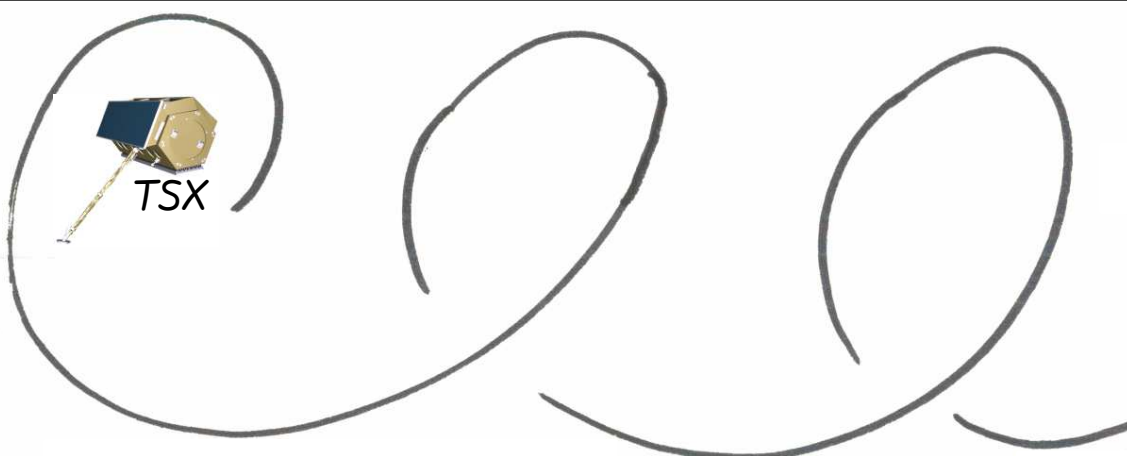
... MOMENTS LATER ...



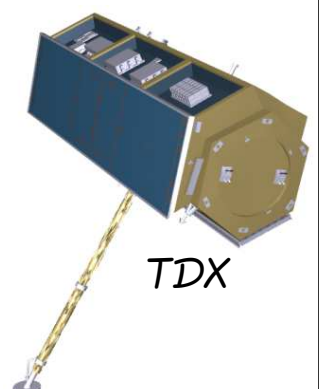
Cat-bed heaters ON ...

Orbit control mode entered

... 3 - 2 - 1  
BURN!!!

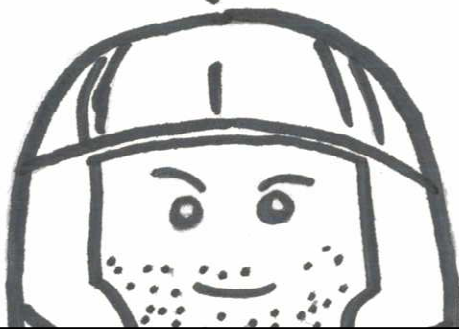


... THE BURN INITIATES THE SPIRAL  
DEPARTURE FROM TSX ...

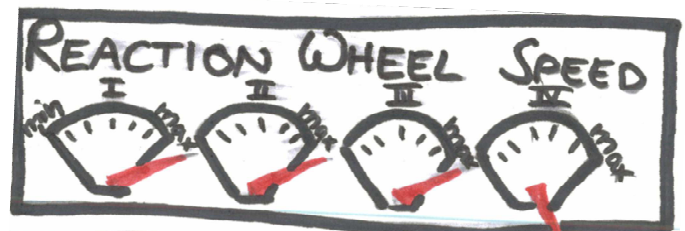
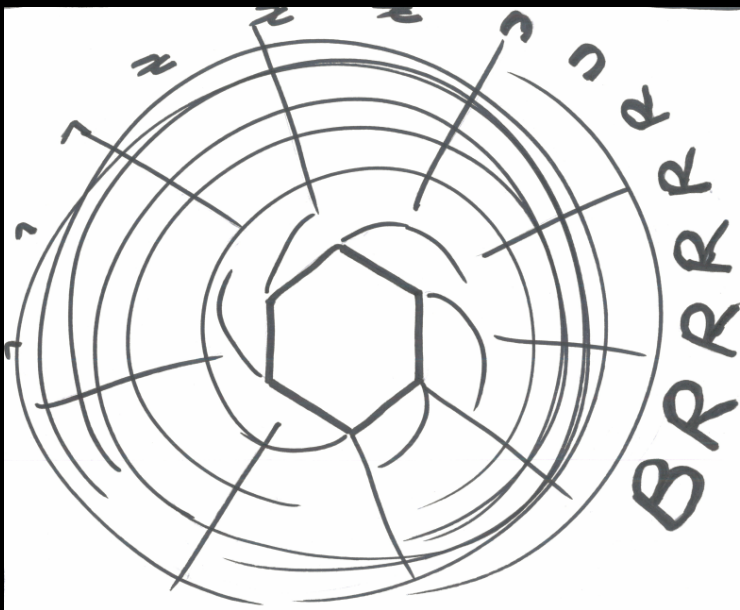
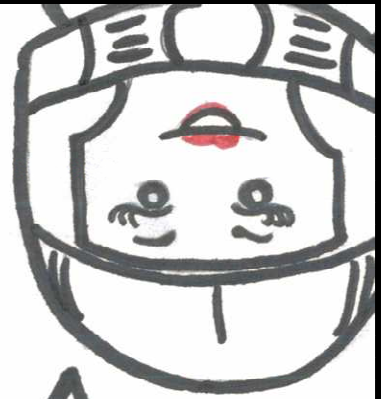




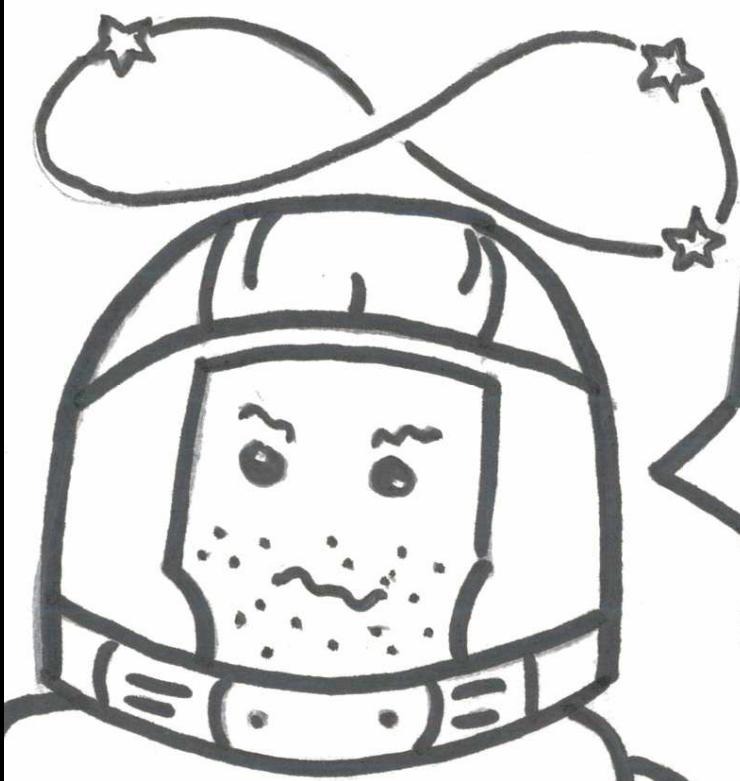
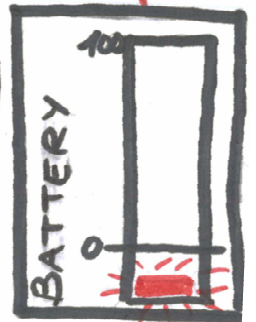
5000 m separation achieved.  
Inter-satellite link communication  
with TSX lost.  
Nobody can see us now!



Okay. Let's do it.  
Quickly!



Break!  
BREAK!!!



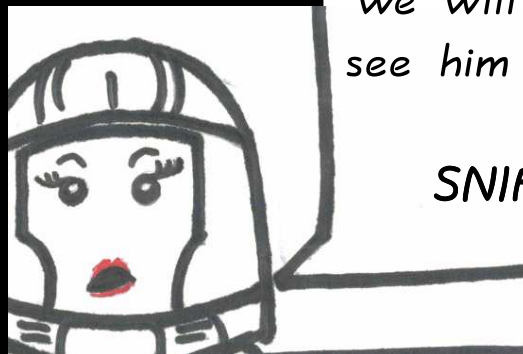
360 deg - Full - Sky -  
High - Power -  
Radar survey completed!

5432 space debris objects  
and 16 Earth-like planets  
detected!

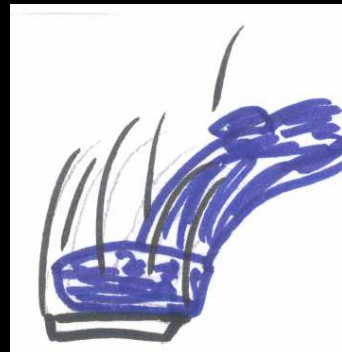
... FEW HOURS LATER ...



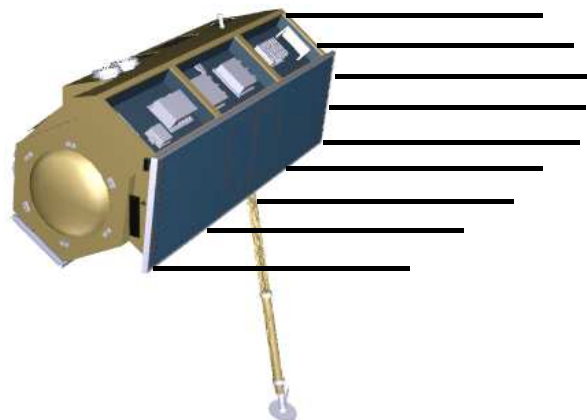
If the drift  
stop maneuver  
fails  
we will never  
see him again!



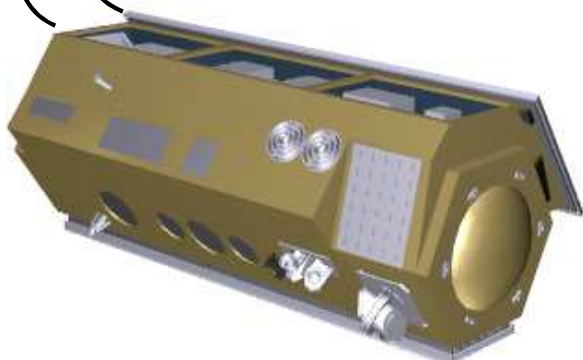
SNIFF.



... AN INCREDIBLE  
ALTERNATION OF  
FULL BRAKING ...



... AND FULL THROTTLE  
CATAPULTS TDX IN  
THE SWAPPED ORBIT.



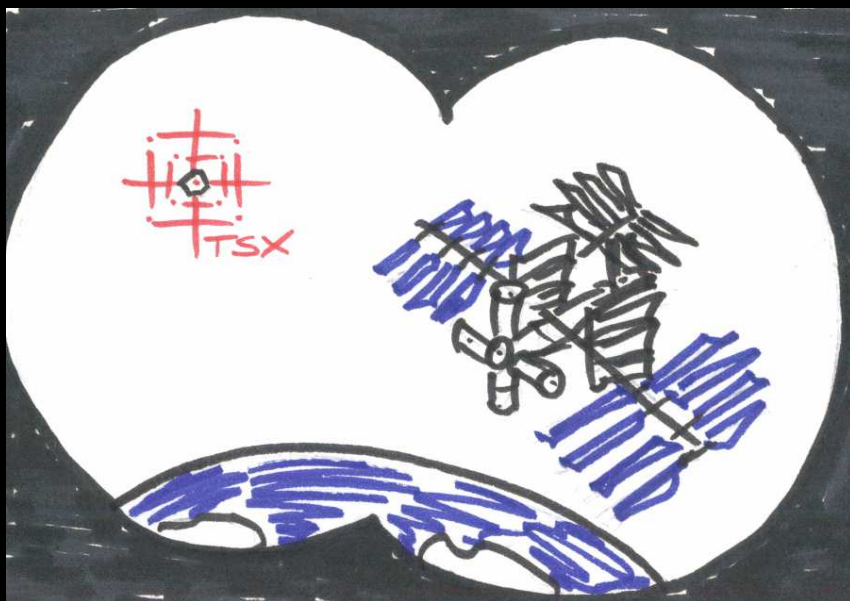


... IN A DISTANCE OF 10000 M FROM TSX THE ORBIT SWAP MANEUVERS ARE SAFELY EXECUTED ...

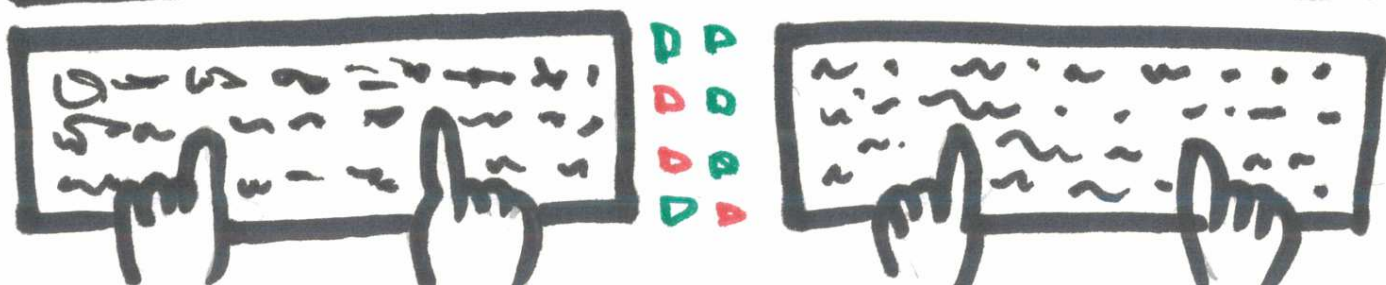
Star-Tracker  
Far-Range-CAM  
Mode activated.

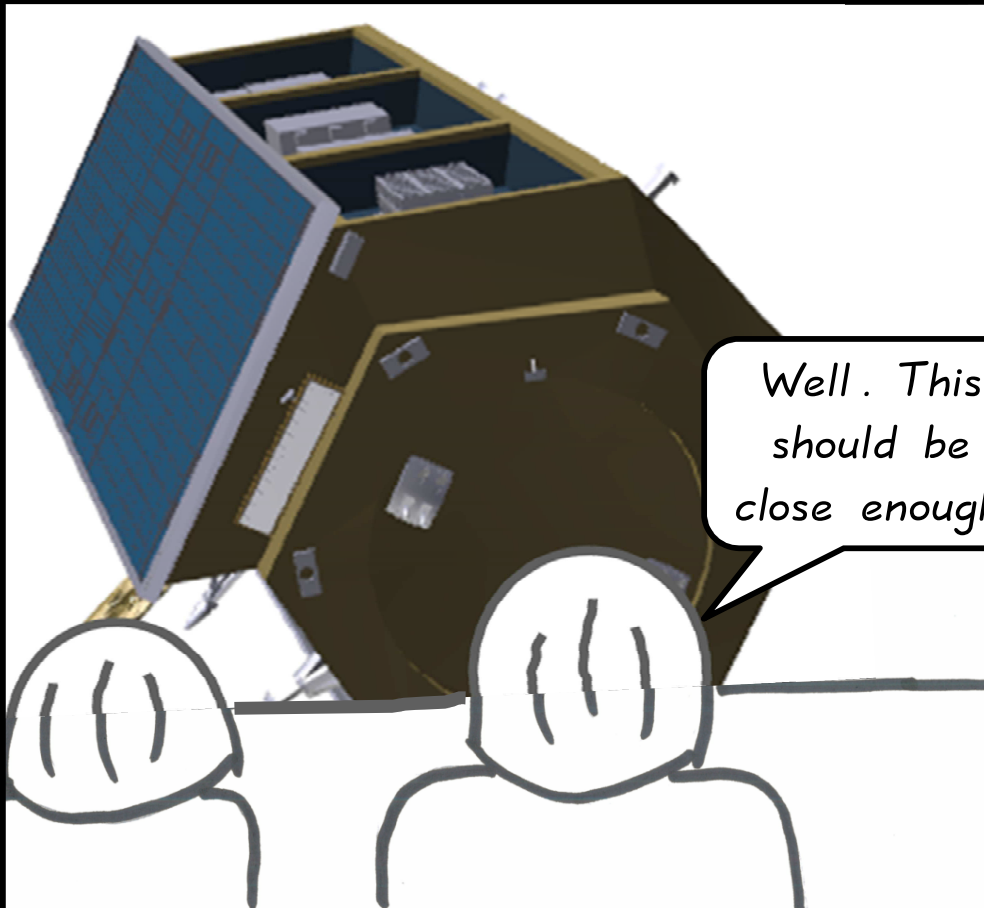
Target identified.

Formation re-  
acquisition sequence  
initiated!



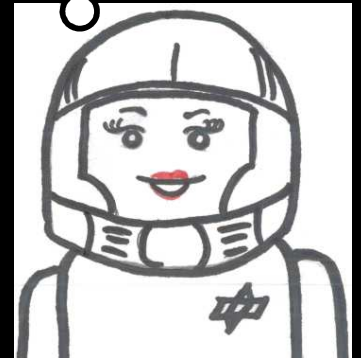
... DURING THE CRUISE BACK TO TSX THE CREW IS BUSY LOADING NEW ATTITUDE STEERING TABLES, TRANSMIT EXCLUSION ZONES, ETC. ...





Well. This  
should be  
close enough.

Now it's time  
to initiate the  
rendezvous  
sequence.

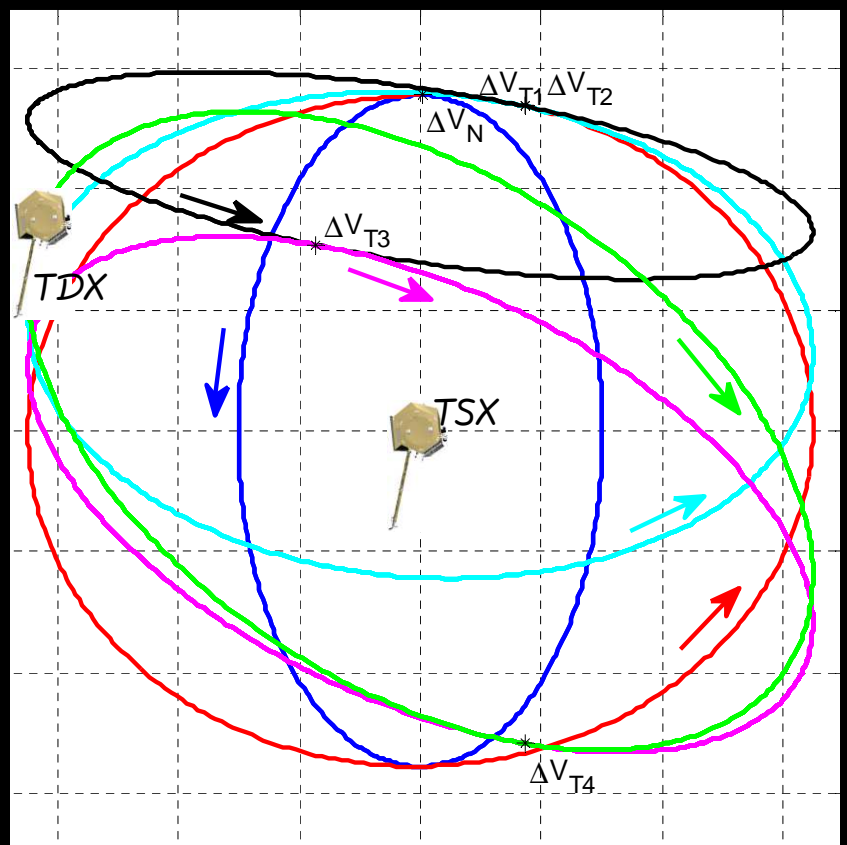


... FINALLY ANOTHER WELL-DOSED ORBIT MANEUVER  
BRINGS TDX BACK INTO THE CLOSE FORMATION  
( *GREEN CURVE* ) WITH TSX ...

WELL  
DONE  
!!!

YEAH.

...It feels much  
better to fly in  
clock-wise  
direction ...



... TO BE CONTINUED.