

LINES OF FORCE

THE WEEKEND ADVENTURES OF ANDREW BARTON

BY DREW BANKSTON

FREE CHAPTER PREVIEW

CHAPTER 1

Time to Spare



Dedicated to the people who spend their lives researching and developing their ideas. Those who have made many significant discoveries in their time. Several of those people never get to see the end results of their labors. Sometimes, very often, discoveries are made purely by accident. Many of them change the world and the people that live in it. Some benefit only a few people. Others affect one person and, in small ways unbeknownst to the world, affect every living being in one way or another. This is the story of one man who accidentally stumbled upon things that most of us only dream about. ~ Andrew Barton

“My name is Andrew Barton, but you can call me Andrew. Everyone has for as long as I can remember, which isn’t long compared to other things in this world. I, like many other people, went to college. A fairly good college, as a matter of fact. I studied Agricultural Sciences and

worked in that field for about three years until the bottom dropped out of my specialty. It was then that I had to find other avenues of employment. Fortunately for me, a world-renowned retailer was hiring in my area, and I promptly became a forklift driver at one of their less-than-state-of-the-art warehouses. Not my dream job by any means, but it paid the bills.”

“Being the curious soul I am and always interested in science, I found time to tinker in my garage every chance I could. Okay, it was only on weekends, but it was an amazing time. I’m sure this was much to the dismay of my wife, Julie.”

“Julie and I have been married for ten years. She’s a wonderful woman. She’s kind, understanding, pretty, and smart, but best of all, she puts up with me and my little quirks. I’m not sure why she does it, but I’m grateful. She understands me and my need to explore the world around me.”

“I don’t know how often she’s patiently listened to my stories about magnets. I’ve been fascinated with magnets since I was a kid. They were so cool! Wait, no, they are so cool! Perhaps you can relate. Two pieces of metal that can attract and repel other magnets without using batteries. Strange pieces of metal that, when a wire passes over them, create electricity. I always wondered about these amazing anomalies of nature and knew they had some strange, magical, and mystical force we had yet to explore completely.”

“As I grew older, I forgot about the magic of magnets but still thought about them from time to time when I would change the alternator in my car or see one in a toy store. Julie would patiently wait for me to stop playing with them, and our eight-year-old daughter, Stephanie, would huff and puff and throw her head back, becoming limp all over, but still manage to stand upright, like a rag doll with equilibrium. ‘Come on, Dad!’ she’d exclaim in as whiny a voice as she could get away with. ‘Why don’t you just buy some magnets and play with them at home?’”

“She didn’t realize that by making that suggestion, she had inadvertently started us out on a very long and interesting adventure, which assured me that our entire family’s future would be forever filled with excitement.”

“I bought the magnets and continued to buy them. First, I bought the toy store varieties, and then I went online and started buying the stronger, natural magnets. I wasn’t sure where this all was leading to, but I found out soon enough.”

“One Christmas, a relative gave me a plasma ball as a gift. As with many science-type things, I looked at it with awe and wonder, and just for fun, I put a magnet up to the glass while it was on. I was amazed at how the magnetic field affected the electricity inside the plasma ball. I could hear it crackle. I watched it bend and dance to the will of the invisible field that called to it. I realized there must be some connection between these three elements; electricity, magnetism, and plasma. That’s where I started getting in trouble. I spent every weekend in my makeshift workshop in the garage, trying to figure out the connection between these three mysteries of nature.”

“Spending as much time as I did, I learned through experience and, of course, the occasional book or website, things that I had never known about these strange, natural pieces of rock. Let me tell you my story so you can understand how this all went terribly wrong in an incredibly wonderful way!”