

## IN THIS ISSUE

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PAGE 2

---

### DONORS & MEMBERS CORNER

PAGE 3

---

### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SPIKE O'DELL

PAGE 4-5

---

### 2020 ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

PAGE 6

---

### FEEDING THE MINDS OF TOMORROW

PAGE 7

---

## TO INFINITY & BEYOND

BY EVELYN LARSON



The dawn of a new age of commercial space flight began on Saturday, May 30 at 3:22 p.m. EDT, with the liftoff of a Falcon 9 rocket from historic Launch Pad 39A at Kennedy Space Center. At the top of the rocket sat NASA astronauts Doug Hurley and Bob Benkin in SpaceX's Crew Dragon Capsule, ready to be transported to the International Space Station.

This mission (dubbed Demo-2) marks the first time in nearly nine years that astronauts have lifted off from American soil in an American rocket, the last being the STS-135 mission of the space shuttle *Atlantis* in 2011, for which Doug Hurley served as the pilot. Since then, astronauts have been traveling to and from the ISS via the Russian Soyuz capsule and the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

The return of launch capabilities to U.S. soil is not the only thing propelling NASA into a new age of space flight. With its sleek digital control panel, brilliant white walls, and custom fitted carbon-fiber seats, the Crew Dragon capsule is like something out of a science fiction movie. If you know anything about Elon Musk, you know this was intentional. Musk hopes that SpaceX's futuristic technology will inspire the next generation of astronauts and engineers just like the Apollo astronauts did in the 1960s. This will be the generation of scientists that takes humanity beyond the moon and off to Mars.

By partnering with SpaceX, NASA (and, in extension, the American taxpayer) will save an astronomical amount of money in the endeavor to keep the ISS fully crewed and operational, return Americans to the moon, and eventually send humans to Mars. Rather than spending money on the development of an entire spacecraft system, NASA basically "buys" seats on the Crew Dragon. Find more information about the partnership between SpaceX and NASA at [nasa.gov](https://www.nasa.gov).

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the 2020 Winter Edition of the *PSF News* my emphasis was on PSF's past history and on the passing of two individuals, Drs. Ray Moehrlin and Edward Olsen, who were responsible for many of our organization's early successes. After all we were all looking forward to celebrating on February 8<sup>th</sup> PSF's 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary. 2019 was definitely a transitional year as we closed our Earth & Space Science Museum in Elizabeth, Illinois. Even before the doors closed on that facility plans were being made to enter into new museum partnerships to display many of our unique meteorites and astronaut memorabilia. As the deadline for the Winter *PSF News* was rapidly approaching I decided to hold-off with the announcement of our new museum partnerships until many of the specimens were actually in place. Whether or not that was a good decision remains to be seen given all the changes that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to our way of life. As I have said many times before in my President's Messages, PSF is a very resilient organization. During the past 31 years it has faced and adapted to many different challenges for its survival. Like many other successful organizations, I am sure that PSF will come out of this crisis even stronger than before. My confidence comes from the dedicated efforts of our staff, membership, research associates, and financial donors. In that light I would like to sincerely thank William and Valerie Anders for their extremely generous donation that will enable PSF to complete its 2020 mission. PSF is fortunate that in the darkest of financial times individuals like Bill and Val have come forth and provided the funds necessary to keep our research and educational programs going without interruption. My sincere thanks to all our donors past, present and future.



Now looking to the immediate present and future. I am pleased to announce that the first museum partnership that we will be entering into is with the Putnam Museum & Science Center in Davenport, Iowa. It is a wonderful museum that combines both "hands-on" learning displays with the more traditional informational displays. PSF's initial contributions will include numerous important specimens from our meteorite and fossil collections. In addition, PSF is also going to play an important part in the Putnam's Summer Children's Space Camp beginning on July 10<sup>th</sup>. The pandemic may have delayed many of our educational programs, but they will return sooner rather than later. Jim Dole and his staff at our Firebaugh Astronomical Observatory in Freeport, IL are ready to resume their summer observing sessions. Across the Mississippi River in Wilton, Iowa Grant Harkness is anxious to see his Wilton Observatory and meteorite educational programs get back into action. It is fortunate that the Wilton Observatory is only 30 miles west of the Putnam Museum and our future plans envision developing complementary educational programs. Even in these most difficult times I am confident that PSF will accomplish its educational and meteorite research goals. PSF's partnership with the Yale Peabody Museum is alive and well although both institutions are currently in a somewhat of a "holding pattern" with our anticipated programs. Museum renovations at the Peabody Museum and pandemic restrictions have currently delayed the transfer of additional PSF meteorites to Peabody. Once the pandemic crisis becomes better understood and restrictions are modified or lifted, we will have a better idea of how to proceed with our plans. Finally, although due to the pandemic restrictions our 1876 Banwarth House and Museum is temporarily closed to the public. Thanks to the continued efforts of our facility manager Connie Kohl and her husband Jim it is ready to open at any time.

On a more personal note I must sadly close with the announcement of the passing of William A. Cassidy, a PSF Honorary Life Member and friend who gave me the opportunity to see Antarctica for the first time. It was Bill Cassidy who created ANSMET, the United States' Antarctic Search for Meteorites Program. It was the late PSF Associate Board Member Edward J. Olsen who encouraged me to contact Bill Cassidy and apply for a position on one of his future meteorite expeditions. I did and was honored to be accepted as a member of the 1983-84 team going to the Allan Hills and the Elephant Moraine. My participation in that expedition was literally a "life-changing experience" and opened a whole new world of opportunities for me. I could never thank Bill Cassidy enough for taking me to a place where I could actually find meteorites, a personal dream, and to see and appreciate the beauty of Antarctica.

***Paul P. Szipiera***

# DONORS SPOTLIGHT

## SECOND QUARTER DONATIONS

### Special thanks to the William & Valerie Anders Foundation

To Bill & Valerie for their Founder's Circle Level donation in support of PSF's general operational expenses for the remainder of 2020. PSF is extremely grateful for their continued support, especially in these very difficult financial times.

### Firebaugh Astronomical Observatory

Steve Hoyer

### Student Internship Program

Diane & Paul Szipiera

## MEMBERS CORNER

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Pat Tierney

### *Remembering Al Worden*

The Planetary Studies Foundation had the privilege to have Apollo 15 Astronaut Al Worden at the 2006 Annual Fundraising Dinner. At that dinner, he wanted to share his experience of orbiting around the moon while his co-astronauts were exploring the surface. Getting to know Al was such a treat for us. He had so many personal stories and told them charismatically to both individuals and groups. Al had a very youthful disposition and his laughter was contagious.

Worden was born in Jackson, Michigan, on February 7, 1932. He was appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1955. He earned Master of Science degrees in astronautical/aeronautical engineering and instrumentation engineering from the University of Michigan in 1963. In 1971,

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Spike O'Dell

*Spike O'Dell is an Honorary Life Member and former radio host for WGN Radio in Chicago, Illinois. He joined WGN in 1987 and hosted the afternoon show until 2000, when he took over for the late Bob Collins in the morning slot. During the time Spike held that slot, his show was consistently the top rated morning show in the Chicago market.*

## ***Can you tell us about your background?***

I grew up in the Quad Cities area. I loved it there! I took off for college in Nebraska and figured out I couldn't hit a college fastball, so I lost what little I received in Scholarship. Came back home, got married and found a job at International Harvester Formal Plant where I worked for 7 years before the radio bug bit me.

## ***What interested you in the sciences?***

I was always attracted to gadgets, and radios, and all things dealing with outer space. As a kid, my father took me outside one time to watch something called "Sputnik" pass over us. He said it was in outer space. That's all it took. I was forever a fan of what was "out there".

## ***Over the years, you had Paul Sipiera on your program many times, he spoke about meteorites, astronomy and Antarctic exploration. Which area did you find most interesting?***

Paul and I immediately hit it off and became friends because I had found another person who was like me. Someone who I could say things to and he would understand what I was talking about. I was fascinated with his search for meteorites. It also was pretty cool to learn how respected he is in his field, and he actually knew a lot of astronauts! Paul was my "go-to guy" on my radio show every time something was in the news that had fallen from space! It was pretty cool to know that my radio listeners were hearing the explanation from one of the best.

## ***As a radio announcer for WGN, who was one of your most interesting people you spoke with and why?***

I am always asked that question. I have been lucky enough to speak with Presidents, Royalty, big movie stars, and the best in the world of sports. But the best interviews to me were with the astronauts. My favorite was with Alan Shepard. He had a booming voice, and a commanding confidence about him. I just kept thinking while he was sitting in front of me, "This guy was the first American to ever experience space flight, and he also WALKED ON THE MOON!" He was scheduled for a 30 minute interview, but I think he was enjoying his time at WGN and said he would stay with me for another 30 minutes. Pretty cool!

## ***Does your wife and family share in your astronomy hobby?***

My wife really doesn't, but she doesn't mind how "geeky" I get about it sometimes. My son and his 3 boys have picked it up from me I think. They are always building rockets to launch and tracking satellites with me when they come over. My son is now in the process of building a rocket that will achieve over a 1000 feet in altitude, and requires a special tracking system to retrieve it with GPS. It's a lot different now than when I was launching the little "Estes" rockets!

## ***When at WGN Radio, do you recall the excitement you felt when you heard the Park Forest Meteorite exploded over the Chicago area, how did you feel?***

I was on the air that morning when it was being reported! There was definitely a buzz about it, and the whole



town was talking about it. Again, Paul was my go-to guy to talk about what had happened and make it easy to understand to the listeners. I woke him up from a deep sleep that morning if I remember correctly. Ha!

***One of your loves is being an artist, when did you start drawing and painting? What is your favorite medium?***

I have dabbled in painting for several years, but just really started to take it seriously in the last few years. I work exclusively in watercolors. It gives me peace and quiet to enjoy my time with this hobby. I'm becoming known for painting "weird stuff". Just anything that strikes my eye is fair game to be painted!

***At one of PSF's fundraising dinners and award ceremonies you received the James Lovell award "Failure is not an Option" what did that award mean to you?***

That award was truly a special thing in my life. It meant more to me than

a lot of people may have thought. I had just lost my house in a fire. It burned to the ground and we had nothing left. Even my little buddy Otis, our dog, had perished in the fire. I was also just stepping into the morning position at WGN after a terrible tragedy that took the life of my friend who held that position before me. So, I had a lot of things on my plate to deal with. Rebuilding a home and virtually starting over with all that brings with it, and also trying to keep a real big radio station that billed over \$40 million dollars a year thriving and not let it fail. So literally, Failure was NOT an option for me. To be awarded this by Jim Lovell himself was just the icing on the cake. I kept pinching myself.

***Where is the most memorable place(s) your wife Karen and you have traveled to?***

That's a tough one. We have been fortunate to do a lot of traveling around the world. If I had to pick a spot I could go back to over and over again, it would be Alaska. Every half

mile is another picture postcard. Breathtaking.

***You were born and raised in Illinois, then became known in Chicago, why did you move to Tennessee?***

My kids went to college here, and after living down here they said this was where they would be staying. Every time Karen and I would visit we could see why. So, we figured if we wanted to see them, and eventually grandkids, we might as well move down there too! We really like it here with the moderate winters with not much snow, and tolerable summers much like northern Illinois, only a couple of months longer.

***Do you have advice for young scientists and students?***

Follow your heart and dreams. Don't let anyone tell you that something is unachievable. Study! This is an old cliché, but it's so true...Knowledge IS power! ♦

'REMEMBERING AL WORDEN' CONT'D FROM PG. 3

the University of Michigan awarded him an honorary doctorate of science in astronautical engineering. Before becoming an astronaut, Worden was an instructor at the Aerospace Research Pilots School. He also served as a pilot and armament officer from March 1957 to May 1961 with the 95th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland.

Worden was one of 19 astronauts selected by NASA in April 1966. He served as a member of the astronaut support crew for Apollo 9 and as backup command module pilot for Apollo 12. During the Apollo 15 mission, he orbited the Moon while Commander David Scott and lunar module pilot James Irwin descended to the Moon's surface. On the return trip, Worden took a spacewalk—at what was then the record distance from Earth for such activity, about 315,000 km (196,000 miles)—retrieving cassettes containing films of the Moon from the rear of a sub-satellite that they had sent into orbit two days previously.

After leaving the astronaut corps, Worden moved to NASA's Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California. He was the Senior Aerospace Scientist there from 1972-73, and then chief of the Systems Study Division until 1975. He wrote a book of poetry, *Hello Earth—Greetings from Endeavour* (1974), and a children's book, *I Want to Know about a Flight to the Moon* (1974). He also co-authored, *Falling to Earth: An Apollo 15 Astronaut's Journey* (2011; written with Francis French) is a memoir.

On March 18, 2020 in Sugar Land, TX he passed away. With great sadness the PSF organization will miss him.



# ANNUAL MEMBER'S MEETING: SEP. 12TH @ 1P



Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Annual Member's Meeting will look a little different. This year, we will be hosting the meeting online via video on September 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. If you are interested in participating in the meeting, please send Diane Sipiera an email at [dsipiera@planets.org](mailto:dsipiera@planets.org). We will then add you to a guest list and an email with instructions will be sent to you before the date of the meeting. Please note: there will not be an opportunity to vote on the day of the meeting, so members who wish to cast their vote will have to do so through email or mail by Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>.

## *Meet the 2020 Candidates for the Board of Directors*



Dr. Jim Hagen has been a Board member for many years and a Life member for over 20 years. Jim is a Professor Emeritus at Saint Xavier University in Chicago. His Master of Science and Doctorate Degrees were earned at the University of Montana and Loyola University of Chicago, respectively. As a research microbiologist at Loyola University, one of his interests was the study of extremophiles and the search for evidence of microbes in space. Most recently, he has been involved with the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs concerning the peaceful uses of outer space and the tasking of satellites to assist in disaster management, including the COVID-19 Pandemic. Jim's collection of terrestrial and non-terrestrial samples is used to excite young students about science.

*"It would be my privilege to continue working with PSF, an organization that brings space science to both young people and to the scientific community as a whole."*



Ryan P. Nolan has been a Life member for 10 years. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Economics and a Concentration in Latin American Studies from Cornell University. Ryan has lived in Mexico City, New York City and now in Chicago with his wife and son. He serves as Vice President at Barclays. Ryan joined the PSF team in 2017 for the Great American Total Solar Eclipse in Ravenna, Nebraska and considers it one of the top memorable experiences of his life. Ryan's priority for the PSF is the longevity and sustainability of the organization while maintaining the core values and principles set by the Founders.

*"I hope my involvement can ignite the next generation of interest in the organization's mission."*



Dr. Paul P. Sipiera was one of the Founding members of PSF and is now President and CEO. He is Professor Emeritus of Geology and Astronomy at William Rainey Harper College in Palatine, IL. Paul has a Ph.D. in Natural Sciences from the University of Innsbruck, Austria and a M.S. degree awarded in Earth Science from Northeastern Illinois University.

*"PSF is in a very critical transition phase and my vision for the PSF's future is to bolster its international reputation in meteorite research and to promote its educational efforts utilizing 21<sup>st</sup> century technology."*

**Your vote matters! Included with your copy of the newsletter is a ballot to cast your vote for this year's election of Directors. Please send in your vote electronically (preferred) to [dsipiera@planets.org](mailto:dsipiera@planets.org) or via standard mail to Planetary Studies Foundation, 10 Winterwood Lane, Unit B, Galena, IL 61036.**

# FEEDING THE MINDS OF TOMORROW

BY GRANT HARKNESS | [info@expandspacestudies.org](mailto:info@expandspacestudies.org)

In these times of isolation and turmoil, minds still exist in this world that hold the reigns of our future. These young students still deeply desire to learn, to be fed knowledge, to be challenged. As a species whose existence and success is forever entangled in a cosmic ballet of discovery among the stars, it is incumbent upon those who have the means to fuel these students along their journey!

Reaching out around the globe through a network of professionals that grows each week, The Organization for the Proliferation of Space Studies has worked to identify exemplary young pupils who are evaluated on two criteria alone. First, they must be in 12th grade or less, or the equivalent in their home country. Second, they must exhibit an exceptional talent that has the potential to impact space-related fields. This wide net encompasses all of the beauty within the community of space studies. From engineering to art, from programming to propulsion technology. Once identified, the students must answer a series of questions that are meant to tease out their true passions. The organization then designs a package at no cost to the student. The package is designed to meet them where they are in their respective area of study and exploration, while enticing them to go further in their learning, challenging them to expand intellectually, while providing total support. It fills in gaps in their on-hand technology, provides a network of experts chosen to mentor them and lasts from when they are chosen to when they graduate 12th grade. As our first students begin down this road, let us share with you a little about who they are and what they are up to!

Tapaswini came to us by way of a special recommendation. She resides in Indore, India and at 17 is truly an

exceptional student. Having won nods from NASA for her astronaut habitation designs, learning five programming languages and tirelessly working on her inventions, such as smart glasses and human hibernation chambers, she is ahead of the curve. Through all of this, however, she deeply desires to be an astronomer. With a clear talent for learning new skills, our investment began immediately. As her area lacks the ability to robustly support this particular passion, we stepped in to aid her on her journey. Having recently suffered everyone's worst modern nightmare, a total computer failure, we had to address this first. We purchased a new laptop and case for her. Her genuine gratitude warmed our hearts even from such a great distance! From there we are funding a collection of research and instructional texts, all standards in their own right, to give her a solid footing in the basic principles of studying the skies above. Now comes the truly awesome part. Since she cannot travel long distances and is isolated due to the ongoing pandemic, we are bringing telescopes and astronomers to her from across the globe! We are designing a mentoring package of professional and amateur astronomers that can meet with her remotely, as well as handing her the keys to her own online telescope account. This account will allow her to work side-by-side with her mentors while remotely commanding actual telescopes, conducting meaningful science and building her very own collection of data! The skies will open up to her in ways she has never dreamed!

Alexander is a stateside mind with a bright future! Having a focus in aerospace engineering, this student of only fifteen years has a deep passion



for propulsion! Currently designing and building gyroscope stabilizers for rockets and his own propellant generator, he has a need for professional support to help him gain the skills needed to make his ideas truly flourish. With an eye to the future beyond our current travel limits and visitor restrictions, our organization is in the process of designing a private study program specifically tailored to grow his mind and expand his already robust skill set. This program will include travel and accommodations to visit NASA facilities, speaking engagements with industry professionals, as well as material support for his builds. Not only will he gain the knowledge and support to build bigger and better projects, he will also learn the state of current NASA missions first-hand! We can't wait to see his designs take flight!

While the world can seem so distant at times and members of our species may stand against one another, we must recognize our shared path. We must acknowledge the breadth of the journey ahead of us and realize that to succeed at becoming interplanetary we must feed the minds of everyone we can. When a profoundly gifted young mind glares brighter than the rest, then we must feed it. Those are the future intellectual titans that will guide our species into the stars! ♦

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Doug Firebaugh Observatory

& 1876 Banwarth House & Museum