

Ladwig Rockets Lake Barcroft Village into Space at Quarterly Meeting

The featured guest for the Lake Barcroft Village Quarterly Meeting was Lake Barcroft neighbor Alan Ladwig. His topic was *The Long and Winding Road to Space Tourism*. Alan described the history of the desire to travel into space: “The dream got underway in the early 1900s.” The Wright Brothers took off in 1903. In 1950 the Hayden Planetarium started a program called *Conquest of Space* and accepted “reservations” for the first flight. Little did they expect the huge response they received, with letters arriving from all over Earth. Space became part of pop culture: Colliers issued an eight-part series and Disney produced a space series.

In 1960 after NASA was founded, a call for astronauts was issued, but, Alan noted, “Eisenhower decided to go with military pilots.” In the 1960s the idea of women in space was not accepted. Alan stated: “Women were treated as sex objects.” All posters with women in them were demeaning. However, women still wanted to go on board. Geri Cobb, who set records for her flying skill, was allowed to take three parts of the exam and then was not selected.

Blacks “had a hard time getting into the program.” Edwin Dwight, a Black pilot, was selected but was treated very poorly.

In the early 1970s there was talk of a space shuttle. NASA realized it needed “mission specialists,” not just pilots. A “new group” was founded; it included women and Asians. The first flights of the shuttle were in the 1980s. In 1984 there was a competition for a teacher to go into space. Christa McAuliffe was selected; she died in 1986 in the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle.

A civilian moon voyage is planned for 2023. A Japanese entrepreneur [Yusaku Maezawa] has bought all the seats in the rocket. A contest for passengers is occurring at present. Now’s your chance!

Alan currently serves as the Chief of To Orbit Productions as well as serving on the Board of Directors and Executive Vice President of Communications for the STAR HARBOR Space Academy. He has also recently written a book, *See You in Orbit? Our Dream of Spaceflight*, which is available for purchase on Amazon. The tinyURL is: tinyurl.com/5z3p4jum A short business meeting followed the presentation. The meeting was held via Zoom.