

New Mexico Celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the Apollo 16 Moon Mission



FLARE

December 12, 2011, Las Cruces, NM.

Just 52 miles south of Spaceport America, the Fellowship of Las Cruces Area Rocketry Enthusiasts (FLARE) and Southern New Mexico Science, Engineering, Mathematics, and Aerospace Academy (SEMAA) are set to Celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Apollo 16 mission to the Moon.

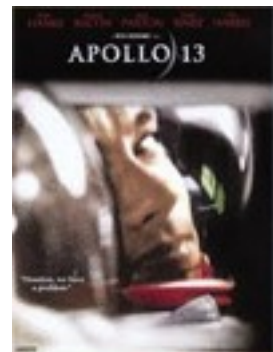
On March 8-10, 2012 Las Cruces and Alamogordo will enjoy the company of two icons of NASA history. "We are privileged and honored to have both NASA Flight Director Gene Kranz and Astronaut Charlie Duke as guest speakers for this event," said event Director David Kovar of FLARE. "We are expecting around 1200 middle school students for the Apollo 16 40th Anniversary Commemoration Event that is scheduled for Friday March 9th on the NMSU Campus . The public is welcome."

Gene Kranz's first challenge as a NASA employee was to establish the Project Mercury Global Communication Network. After Project Mercury he went on to become the White Team Flight Director for both Project Gemini and Apollo. He is best known for being the Flight Director for the Apollo 11 Moon landing and the Tiger Team Flight Director for the Apollo 13 rescue effort.



Charlie Duke was Gene Kranz's Capsule Communications (CAPCOM) for the Apollo 11 Moon landing. He was the only person to have direct communication with Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin as they descended to the lunar surface. After Armstrong reported that the Eagle had landed on Tranquility Base, Charlie Duke responded with his now famous quote: "Roger Tranquility we copy you down. You've got a bunch of guys about to turn blue. We're breathing again. Thanks a lot!" Duke went on to be the Lunar Module Pilot for Apollo 16 and was 10th man to walk on the Moon.

The celebration begins on Thursday March 8 with two special showings of the movie Apollo 13 (1995, Tom Hanks, Ron Howard) sponsored by Allen Theaters. The movie was nominated for nine Academy Awards including Best Picture; it won for Best Film Editing and Best Sound Mixing. The shows are at 4:00 and 7:30 pm at the Cineport 10 Theater in Las Cruces, NM. Kranz and Duke will be making guest appearances at both showings to discuss their roles in the Apollo Program. The discussions will be moderated by Mike Shinabery, Education Specialist from the New Mexico Museum of Space History. There are 230 seats for each showing. The cost for this once in a lifetime event is \$20/person. All proceeds from ticket sales go to Habitat for Humanity on behalf of Gene Kranz, and to the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation on behalf of Charlie Duke. Tickets for the showings are available only at www.apollo40.org.



On Friday March 9th, the Apollo 16 40th Anniversary Commemoration Launch Event will be held at the NMSU Campus. The event will start at 9:30 am at the Aggie Memorial Stadium East Parking Lot with actual launch demonstrations of scale replicas of some historic White Sands Rockets (V-2, Wac Corporal, and Little Joe II) as well as vehicles from the NASA manned space program (Mercury Redstone, Mercury Atlas, Thor-Agena, Atlas-Agena, Gemini-Titan, Saturn IB, and Space Shuttle), Highlights will include a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of John Glenn's Friendship 7 flight, Honoring the Space Shuttle Program, and a reenactment of the Apollo 16 Saturn V Moon rocket that will be launched from a working replica of Launch Complex 39. The reenactment comes complete with audio from the actual Apollo 16 launch.

The rest of the day's activities will be held at the Pan Am Center and will include hands-on and static displays from Spaceport America, the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History, NASA Johnson Space Center White Sands Test Facility, The New Mexico Museum of Space History, the National Solar Observatory, and the Fellowship of Las Cruces Area Rocketry Enthusiasts to name just a few. The highlight of the day will be presentations by both Charlie Duke and Gene Kranz. The topic of the presentation will be "Inventing the Future," and focus on the challenges of getting the Apollo program off the ground and how students of today can take the next giant leap into space. The program will be moderated by Michael Shinabery. The Friday activities are free to the public.

On Saturday March 10th, Gene Kranz will be making a guest appearance at the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo.

This event is being organized by both FLARE member Dave Kovar and by the Southern New Mexico Science Engineering Mathematics and Aerospace Academy (SEMMA) Assistant Director Laura Lomas-Tomlinson. "I thoroughly enjoy working with Laura in making these events education and outreach opportunities for Southern New Mexico SEMMA students," said Kovar. "I would like to think that it gets them excited about a potential career in science and space exploration. "How could you not get excited after hearing from two history makers who played such a significant role in our nations exploration of space."

This event is likely be the largest Apollo Mission 40th Anniversary Commemoration in the nation with more than 1200 SEMMA students in attendance, plus the general public. Besides just FLARE and SEMMA, this is a huge community effort that includes the Allen Theaters, the New Mexico Museum of Space History, White Sands Test Facility, NMSU, White Sands Missile Range, the Las Cruces Natural History Museum, Holloman AFB, SpacePort America, NM Space Grant Consortium, and the National Solar Observatory. When we held our first Apollo 40th Anniversary Commemoration back in December 2008 to celebrate Apollo 8, we had maybe 25-30 in attendance. Now for Apollo 16, we are expecting over 2000 to participate in the three day celebration.

The NASA manned Space Programs reached into the 21st century and pulled back a decade to do what was, in fact, impossible to do in the 20th. This is your chance to meet two of the celebrated pioneers of that era.

For more information and current announcements please visit <http://Apollo40.org>.