

April 10, 2007



## **Fiction, or blueprint for the future? Panelists to explore von Braun novel: *Project Mars, A Technical Tale***

The U.S. Space & Rocket Center's "Thursday Nights at the Museum" VIP receptions, part of the overall celebration of Space Camp's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007, kicks off May 17<sup>th</sup> with what could be one of the most unique events of the entire year.

Featured guests include Chase Masterson, known for her break-out role on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, award winning motion picture director James Kerwin, science fiction author Austin Boyd, and the man who heads up the NASA project that will put humans back on the moon, Steve Cook.

It all starts at 6:00 p.m. with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres as we mingle in the museum and get to know our guests. 7:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. is reserved for autographs and photographs. We'll have copies of Mr. Boyd's three books for sale in the Gift Shop for those who want a personally autographed copy, and Ms. Masterson will be autographing copies of her poster and CD's, also available in the Gift Shop. Then, beginning at 7:30 p.m., we'll adjourn to the Spacedome IMAX® Theater for a one-hour panel discussion about the amazing and recently published story of mankind's first voyage to our nearest planet in space, *Project Mars, A Technical Tale*, by Dr. Wernher von Braun.

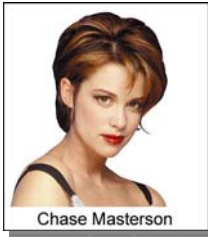


As important as the book itself is the story behind the story. Von Braun dreamed of exploring other planets since childhood in pre-war Germany. That dream led him to experiment with rocketry and propulsion, to develop knowledge and talents that would later be exploited during World War II. It wasn't until after the war that von Braun, and 117 others, immigrated to the United States and became the driving force behind America's manned space flight program.

Along the way, in 1949 to be exact, von Braun penned his dream of a mission to Mars to search for extra-terrestrial life. It is science fiction, but this long forgotten manuscript, unpublished until 30 years after his death, appears to be von Braun's blueprint for an actual interplanetary mission. The technical detail is such that readers are left with the feeling they're not simply following the characters from one dramatic twist to the next, but are witness to an actual event as described by a knowledgeable commentator. In fact, the book includes a 62 page scientific appendix, complete with mathematical equations, charts and graphs appreciable only to a seasoned mathematician, engineer or another rocket scientist.

Could this be how von Braun planned to sell Congress and the American public on the idea of space travel?





Even if you don't yet know her name, you will likely recognize Chase Masterson from her role on an Emmy award winning episode of *E.R.*, her recurring role on *General Hospital*, as well as her role on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, one of the highest rated internationally syndicated television programs ever. She was voted the #1 favorite science fiction actress on television in a TV Guide on-line reader's poll, selected as one of the "Top 20 People to Watch in Hollywood" by Sci-Fi Universe magazine, and most recently was named one of the 50 sexiest women of the year by *Femme Fatales* magazine.



For two consecutive years, James Kerwin has been listed as one of the top directors in Los Angeles by *Back Stage Magazine* critic Paul Birchall. His films have earned distinctions including the Telly, the Axiem, the Grand Jury Prize at the New York Independent Film Festival, the Crested Butte Gold Award, the Fort Worth Independent Film Award, the Grand Jury Prize at the Deep Ellum Film Festival, the Sea to Sky Experimental Film Award, and the R.C. Norris Screenwriting Award. Kerwin has instructed cinematography labs at T.C.U. and spoken on filmmaking in numerous venues, from the Hudson Valley Film Festival to San Francisco WonderCon. Kerwin's directorial work is studied in the curriculum of universities across the country (including SUNY Binghamton) and has been analyzed by scholarly organizations and journals such as the Shakespeare Association of America and *Shakespeare Newsletter*.



A Navy pilot, nuclear weapons officer, and spacecraft engineer, Austin Boyd flew three thousand hours in war and peacetime operations, designed satellites, and built classified systems to track terrorists. A world traveler, NASA Astronaut Finalist, and inventor with multiple patents, he served in key Navy space assignments before retiring to Huntsville, Alabama, where he lives with Cindy, his wife of twenty-eight years, and their four children. He continues to support NASA, military space, and aviation through his work with a major defense contractor. An active Christian, Boyd has served in a variety of lay ministries devoted to evangelism, stewardship, and crisis pregnancy. In addition to writing the Mars Hill Classified series, Boyd has also penned dozens of technical articles about space issues and has written award-winning poetry.



As the director of the Exploration Launch Projects Office at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Steve Cook is living his childhood dream of building rockets to send man and machine into space. He's responsible for overall project management and direction of NASA's new Crew Launch Vehicle, which will transport the Crew Exploration Vehicle into space and deliver unmanned cargo payloads to space -- key to the Vision for Space Exploration. His office is responsible for the overall integration of the launch vehicle system, and development of a first stage and a new upper stage. The projects office also is responsible for development of NASA's future Cargo Launch

Vehicle and Earth Departure Stage, which will carry heavy-lift payloads to space for use by exploration missions on the moon and destinations beyond.

Boyd, Kerwin, Cook and Masterson will comprise the panel as we explore von Braun's manuscript and attempt to determine whether the book was simply a work of fiction or a blueprint for exploration. Tickets for the first Thursday Night at the Museum VIP reception and panel discussion are \$25 and are available on-line at [www.spacecamp.com](http://www.spacecamp.com). Simply click on the link at the top of the red menu bar on the left side of the page. Advance tickets are also available at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center.

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(NOTE: The contact for this release is Al Whitaker, Media Relations Manager, U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Huntsville, Alabama. 256-721-7160. Email: [media@spacecamp.com](mailto:media@spacecamp.com))