

See You in Orbit? Our Dream of Spaceflight

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Raise your hand if you want to fly in space! If so, you share a quest with millions of dreamers around the world who have patiently, and impatiently, anticipated Sunday afternoon drives down celestial freeways. Yet, since human space travel began, fewer than 560 professional astronauts, cosmonauts, taikonauts and a-half dozen millionaires have gazed down at Earth from inside a spaceship.

Given so few orbiting travelers, what made so many “ordinary people” think they had the slightest chance to fulfill their dream? Because for the past 70 years, space visionaries, aerospace companies, government agencies, and the media have told us our ticket to ride was just a rocket away. All we had to do was “keep the dream alive.” With so much optimism, shouldn’t we all be there by now?

See You in Orbit” Our Dream of Spaceflight guides you on a historical, personal, irreverent, and often-humorous tour of the promises, expectations, principal personalities, and milestones regarding the goal of routine space tourism.

The tale begins with the visions of theoretical and practicing aerospace engineers in the 1920s and 30s; reviews space achievements and predictions for public space travel throughout the Space Race beginning in the 1950s and throughout the 60s; features public expectations in response to the advertised capabilities of the space shuttle throughout the 1970s and 80s; recounts the creation of the Payload Specialists Program and the Space Flight Participant Program and the tragic Challenger accident (including the Teacher in Space and Journalist in Space initiatives); examines the post-Challenger reboot regarding citizen flights; and concludes on a note of optimism that the recent advances by NewSpace companies are getting closer to the day when we can greet fellow dreamers with the joyful salutation: See You in Orbit!