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PINELANDS COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

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## Celebrating Yuri Gagarin First manned space flight



**YURI GAGARIN**  
FIRST MAN IN SPACE  
12 APRIL 1961  
"ORBITING EARTH IN THE SPACESHIP,  
I SAW HOW BEAUTIFUL OUR PLANET IS.  
PEOPLE, LET US PRESERVE AND INCREASE  
THIS BEAUTY, NOT DESTROY IT!" - Y. GAGARIN  
Bust donated by the International Charity Public Fund  
"Dialogue of Cultures - United World"  
with the support of the Consulate General of the  
Russian Federation in Cape Town and SANSA

**CREMORA TART** Nina Timm

**MANNED SPACE FLIGHT 60 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**LOOKING FOR BROADBILL** Bird Spotting



## WELCOME



### About the cover:

Pinelander Regine Lord attended the unveiling of the bronze bust of Yuri Gagarin that was donated to SANSA, Hermanus celebrating the 60 year anniversary of the first manned space flight - see the article on page 8 by Regine Lord. The bronze bust was sculpted by his fellow cosmonaut Alexei Leonov, an incredibly talented artist. Leonov was also born in 1934, like Gagarin, and the two of them went through cosmonaut training together. He was one of the 20 Soviet Air Force pilots who had been selected to be part of the first cosmonaut training group in 1960. On 18 March 1965, Leonov became the first man in the world to conduct a spacewalk; he was outside the Voskhod 2 spacecraft for just over 12 minutes.



## TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO ONE HAS GONE BEFORE

Being a '58 baby, I just missed the dawn of the space age with the launch of Sputnik the year before. I was also a little too young to appreciate Yuri Gagarin's first flight into space in 1961. However, as a junior schoolboy in a boarding school in Bulawayo in July of 1969, I do still vividly remember the whole school being packed into the library to watch the live TV broadcast of the first Apollo Moon landing. The grainy, jerky black and white video somehow added to the effect, emphasising that this was a really distant and daring event.

I think it was the excitement of that day that inspired a life-long interest in space and astronomy. As an older schoolboy in the 1970s, one of the first books I remember treasuring was a large tome simply titled "Space" by Patrick Moore. It was a little dry and probably too advanced for me at that age, but it was a book which grew on me over a number of years as I studied the pictures and diagrams for understanding. I think that book eventually led to my dabbling in astronomy at university and an ongoing interest in amateur astronomy.

While I am not that active in the hobby anymore, I can still appreciate a properly dark sky when we stay over for a break in the countryside. It is still fascinating and awe-inspiring to me to recognise old favourites in the night sky... nebulas, star clusters, constellations, galaxies and even the odd satellite trail.

It was inevitable that I would also become a full *Trekkie* - A Star Trek fan. On that subject... Happy 90th birthday this month to William Shatner whom you may know better as Captain James T Kirk - the "original" Captain of the Starship Enterprise.

I wonder if I will live long enough to one day witness the first interplanetary astronaut land on Mars... now that would be momentous and something to see.

I hope you enjoy this edition.

Max Schutte

**Editor and Advertising**  
Max Schutte

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The Muse reserves the right to select articles for inclusion and to make alterations to submitted contributions.

### GREATER CRESTED GREBE

This large long-necked Grebe has a distinctive dark double crest and a rufous-edged ruff. They are found in larger pans, and vleis with aquatic vegetation.

They are solitary, usually in pairs, either amongst water plants or on open water. In the non-breeding season groups of 50 to 100 birds are common. Their courtship is very elaborate involving a pair swimming towards each other with lowered heads, then heads raised with crests erect and flagged from side to side. They feed on fish, insects, crustaceans, molluscs and water plants. They build a floating nest anchored to the vegetation, usually amongst reeds or rushes. The fledglings have a black and white striped head with no crest or ruff, often seen riding on a parent's back.

### Featured bird text by:

John McFarlane, local Pinewood Village resident. John has been a keen birder for more than 30 years, and is a long time member of the Cape Bird Club.

See [www.capebirdclub.org.za](http://www.capebirdclub.org.za).



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# 60 YEARS SINCE FIRST HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT

In April 2021, it will be 60 years since the first human being saw our beautiful Earth from space. On 12 April 1961, Colonel Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin, a Soviet Air Force pilot, strapped himself into the small Vostok 1 spacecraft, mounted on top of a powerful R-7 Semyorka rocket. Gagarin's exclamation "Поехали!" ("Poyekhali!" – "Let's go!") – as the booster rockets ignited and his spacecraft roared upwards – is legendary. From take-off at Tyuratam (now Baikonur Cosmodrome) to landing near the city of Engels, his daring single orbit of Earth took 108 minutes. Gagarin, who was 27 years old at the time of his historic space flight, died 7 years later, when his plane crashed during a routine training flight.

## Memorial to Gagarin at SANSA, Hermanus

A memorial honouring Gagarin was unveiled at the South African National Space Agency's (SANSA) Space Science Centre in Hermanus on 5 November 2020, by Mr Iakov Baskakov, Acting Consul General of the Russian Federation in Cape Town, and Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell, Managing Director of SANSA Space Science.



Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell and Acting Consul General Mr Iakov Baskakov unveil the Memorial to Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin at SANSA Hermanus

SANSA Hermanus was chosen to host this memorial because its interactive science centre, coupled with its community outreach program and mobile lab, attracts many visitors, young and old. The Yuri Gagarin memorial provides a wonderful focal point for sparking interest in science, space and technology.

## SANSA Hermanus - Unique in Africa

SANSA Hermanus hosts the only Space Weather Regional Warning Centre in Africa. In the southern hemisphere, only Brazil and Australia have similar centres. Thirteen are in the northern hemisphere (one in Moscow, Russia). Space weather refers to the interactions between the Sun and the Earth's magnetic field and atmosphere. The Sun's activity, in the form of sunspots, solar flares, solar winds and coronal mass ejections (powerful blasts



By Regine Lord

Pinelander and wordsmith

of plasma and magnetic field), affects both space-borne and ground-based technological systems. Solar superstorms can damage national power grids, disable satellites, and disrupt high frequency radio communication, mobile phones and GPS systems. They can affect the defence sector such as radar and tracking systems, navigation, communication, aeronautics, weapons control and targeting systems. Solar energetic particles also present a health hazard to astronauts on space missions, and can damage electronic systems on satellites. The worldwide Space Weather Regional Warning Centres thus monitor sunspot activity and variations in the Earth's geomagnetic field, and issue alerts.



Space Weather Regional Warning Centre at SANSA Space Science, Hermanus.

Acting Consul General Baskakov said: "Gagarin's feat united people around the globe in their aspiration to reach new heights. The breakthrough combined the determination of mankind to stretch the boundaries of science and technology together with personal bravery of the individual. This monument reminds us we should be together in the exploration and use of space, (it) will undoubtedly serve to strengthen friendship and collaboration between Russia and South Africa." Dr Lee-Anne McKinnell concurred: "Space research and exploration is global. While representing the African continent we also look to our international stakeholders to partner with us on an equal footing as we take on the challenge of optimising space utilisation and inspiring the next generation."

## Long-term collaboration with Russia

South Africa has collaborated with the Russian Federation in the field of space exploration for many years. Three of South Africa's four satellites have been launched from sites in the Russian Federation. And the first African in space, South African-born Mark Shuttleworth, flew to the International Space Station (ISS) on board a Russian Soyuz spacecraft in 2002!

## The benefits of space exploration

The so-called Space Race between the USA and the USSR from the 1950s to the 1980s led to a surge of pioneering work and

The memorial inscription reads:

*"Orbiting Earth in the spaceship, I saw how beautiful our planet is. People, let us preserve and increase this beauty, not destroy it." Y. Gagarin.*

technological development focused on space exploration and space applications. NASA astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the moon in July 1969, the Hubble Space Telescope was launched into low earth orbit in 1990, and numerous unmanned space probes have been sent to several planets and moons, asteroids and comets, and even to the furthest reaches of our solar system.

Most recently, in February 2021, three unmanned interplanetary missions arrived at Mars – the *Hope* orbiter from the United Arab Emirates, China's *Tianwen-1* mission, which includes an orbiter, lander and rover, and the USA's Mars 2020 mission, operated by NASA and JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory). This consists of the *Perseverance* rover and a small helicopter-drone called *Ingenuity* – which will be the first time that scientists are attempting to fly a helicopter-drone on Mars! The nail-biting EDL (Entry, Descent and Landing) of *Perseverance* was live-streamed worldwide. Due to the 11-minute delay in communications between Earth and Mars, the robotic lander had to land autonomously, with its AI obstacle avoidance navigation system fine-tuning the approach and landing safely in Jezero Crater on Mars.



Artist's concept of the Mars 2020 mission's Perseverance rover and Ingenuity helicopter.

© NASA, Source: [www.nasaspacesflight.com](http://www.nasaspacesflight.com).

## The international Space Station

Although human beings have not yet walked on Mars, astronauts have lived in space for many years. After the Soviet Union constructed a series of manned orbital space stations (from Salyut 1 in 1971 to Mir in 1986), the construction and maintenance of the International Space Station (ISS) since 1998 led to close collaboration between the USA (NASA) and the Russian Federation (Roscosmos), and more recently also with Japan (JAXA), Europe (ESA) and Canada (CSA). Since NASA's space shuttle Atlantis completed its final mission in July 2011, all astronauts visiting the ISS have been launched on a Soyuz spacecraft from

Baikonur Cosmodrome. In May 2020 Elon Musk's company SpaceX performed their first crewed flight by transporting two NASA astronauts to the ISS on their new Crew Dragon spacecraft. This opens up a new route to the ISS for the Americans.



**The International Space Station,** photographed by an STS-132 crew member onboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis after undocking, on 23 May 2010. © NASA, Source: [www.nasaspaceflight.com](http://www.nasaspaceflight.com)

Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite, was launched by the Soviet Union in 1957; currently, there are almost 2,800 artificial satellites in orbit around Earth. They are used for communication, satellite television, earth observation, remote sensing, geographical information systems, weather forecasting, global positioning systems, navigation, etc. Our modern world relies completely on them. In 2019, SpaceX started sending hundreds of small satellites into low earth orbit to create a vast mega-constellation called Starlink that will encircle the entire planet. They want to launch about 42,000 satellites within the next decade.



**SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying the Crew Dragon spacecraft launches on the Demo-2 mission to the International Space Station at Kennedy Space Centre, Florida, on 30 May 2020.** © NASA Source: [www.nasaspaceflight.com](http://www.nasaspaceflight.com)

The Yuri Gagarin memorial is more than an acknowledgement of a single individual's heroic achievement. It is a recognition of the resourcefulness of human beings, of courage and fearlessness in the face of adversity, and of the longing to reach beyond the known world. It stands as a reminder of how humankind's presence in space began, and of the many thousands of small steps that led to where we are today. And may it indeed inspire the next generation of intrepid space travellers to follow in Yuri's footsteps! ■



Spartan winning team captains Lucy Walker & Thaba Moiloa Herman Bosman: Victor Ludorum

## PINEHURST INTER-HOUSE SPORTS WEEK

The Pinehurst Sports Day is usually on a Saturday morning, characterised by parents shouting encouragement from underneath umbrellas, children enjoying ice lollies, boerie rolls in the interval, and great athletics! This year, only the latter was possible. Our Sports "Day" was stretched over a week, sadly with no spectators allowed, but was still a very joyous time for the children who had lots of fun. All children participated in a sprint event, running for their house and earning points. The Spartan team were the overall winners, followed by the Trojans. This year, there were also children from younger grades participating in our field events, thereby setting the standard to beat for years to come.

The Spartan u11 boys relay team ran a great race, set a new record and followed their record-breaking trend of the previous two years, where they had set a new u9 and u10 record. The 800m junior cup was awarded to Unathi May (girl) and Ché Jansen (boy). The senior girl 800m cup winner was Nina McDiarmid, and the boy who won the 800m cup was Kamohelo Rakeepile. Our Victrix Ludorum was Lucy Walker, who was the Spartan team captain together with Thaba Moiloa. The Victor Ludorum was Herman Bosman. We congratulate all the children for giving their best during the competitions and for the team spirit shown throughout the week, with special mention to the Olympian team who won the spirit cup.



U11 boys relay



Olympians spirit cup



Ché Jansen



Field event



Nina McDiarmid (800m cup winner)



Kamohelo Rakeepile snr 800m



Unathi May jnr 800m