



# THE HERMES

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE INSPIRED 24


*“The vision of NASA is to reveal the unknown for the benefit of all humankind.” -Victor J. Glover*

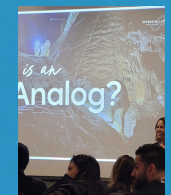
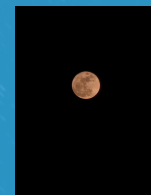
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## 2026 Analog Astronaut Conference

Members of the Inspired 24 attended this year’s Analog Astronaut Conference from April 30 - May 3, at Biosphere 2 in Arizona. Speakers presented on a variety of topics, from crop viability in space to SCUBA diving, and everything in between. Dr. Eiman “Phoenix” Jahangir also presented his talk during the main session. Participants enjoyed evening entertainment, extra-curricular activities, a screening of the new *Wright of Passage* movie, and a lot of networking. This is the conference to make friends for life! Early bird tickets for the 2027 conference are on sale [HERE!](#) 





## Member Spotlight!

### Wil "Space Pirate" Schweitzer



Space Pirate was in the fourth grade when he first fell in love, but it was with the Space Shuttle. To him, it wasn't just another rocket, it was *the* rocket. As a child, he was constantly sketching spacecraft and habitats, completely enthralled by the idea of living and working in extreme environments, whether that was in orbit or beneath the ocean. When he was 10, his father gave him a massive 60 page printout about NASA and what it took to become an astronaut, and he decided right then that he wanted to be a Mission Specialist.

A field trip to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center moved his view of space as something he watched on TV or read about in books, into something that felt tangible and within reach. Space Pirate studied business management at Georgia Northwestern Technical College, and although he doesn't have a formal degree in aerospace, his still has a love for science and literature. His work now centers around creating content and technical research. He also serves as a moderator for a very large, 815,000 member space exploration group, aptly called *SpaceX*, on Facebook.



Space Pirate approaches his work with a filmmaking mindset, focusing on storytelling, visuals, audio and music, and the emotion behind it all. He wants the work to be meaningful, not just viral. He feels inspired by the ability to connect with people through space exploration, as well as through honest storytelling that cuts through the noise of conspiracy theorists and naysayers.

Some of the most powerful experiences Space Pirate has had include watching rocket launches in person, especially Falcon Heavy STP-2 and Inspiration4. "Standing there, feeling the rumble in your chest comes close to the Overview Effect that Frank White wrote about," is how he describes it. In 2023, Space Pirate had the opportunity to work with Yuri's Night, and found inspiration from that event, as it celebrates crewed space exploration. But beyond the in-person events, the most meaningful part for him has been the direct feedback from people. When someone tells him that one of his videos or explanations helped them understand a mission, it creates a shared love for space exploration, and he feels that is the most validating experience a person could ask for.

Looking forward, Space Pirate's biggest goal is to participate in a Zero-G parabolic flight, something he has been dreaming about since childhood. He has spent many years creating content and talking about space exploration, but now he wants to live out some of the things he talks about. He's ready to move from simply observing and documenting space to actually participating in space and sharing that experience with others.



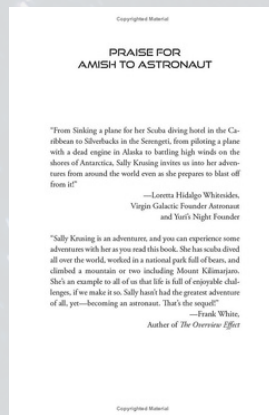
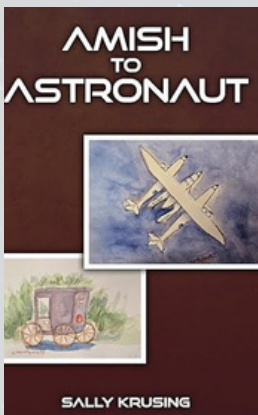


# I24 Members on the Move

*Elizabeth “Boo” Schneider attended the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of NASA Astronaut Alan Shepard’s Mercury-Redstone 3 mission. The event was held on May 5<sup>th</sup>, at Hangar C and Launch Complex Blockhouse 5/6 (which was the control center for his mission) at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. Shepard’s daughter, Laura Shepard Churchley, who flew to space on December 11, 2021, aboard Blue Origin’s New Shepard rocket, was a guest speaker.*



*Congratulations to Sally “Super Sal” Krusing on publishing her new book, “Amish to Astronaut.” This book will inspire you to get out of your comfort zone and take advantage of the opportunities that come your way. [Order it on Amazon HERE!](#)*



*Two I24 members have been selected as 2026 Karman Fellows! Dr. Eiman “Phoenix” Jahangir and Sheila “Cool” Xu join a group of 15 exceptional individuals from around the world who are shaping the future of space with a commitment to responsibility, collaboration, and peace. Learn more about the Karman Fellowship [HERE](#).*

## KARMAN



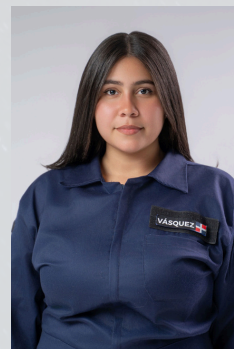
**Sheila Xu**  
Director of Development & Ambassador  
AstroAccess



**Eiman Jahangir**  
Physician & Professor  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
Citizen Astronaut (Blue Origin NS-26)



*The first Dominican analog space mission is taking place this July! I24 member, Alba Vásquez, was selected as Mission Commander. The mission is part of the Atabey Program, which aims to become the first analog space program in the Caribbean, and it will take place at Habitat Marte in Brazil, under the supervision of habitat director and I24 member, Dr. Julio “Cosmos” Rezende. During the mission, the crew will operate under Mars analog conditions, including isolation protocols, extravehicular activities, scientific operations, engineering tasks, and field exploration in desert terrain designed to simulate planetary environments.*





### Members on the Move (cont'd)

*On May 3rd, Andrew "Titan" Parris, Juan "Smokey" De La Garza and Lucero "Violet Nebula" Martinez met up at the Hopper Haus in Port Isabel, TX for a meetup to talk about space and enjoy the Haus' fantastic food. Titan never misses a chance to visit Starbase whenever he is in the Rio Grande Valley, mentioning that "it has changed so much since 2014. A lot less mosquitoes and a lot more rockets."*



*I24 member Martina Dimoska is happy to announce that she has received the Future Technology Pioneer Award by Women in Tech (WIT). She is the first female analog astronaut from the Balkans and currently works as a Program Human Systems Discipline Integrator at NASA JSC in Houston, TX. Martina feels especially emotional about the award, because her mother will be receiving it in Martina's name. Martina expresses, "she never had the chance to attend college herself, and knowing that she will stand there and experience this moment means more to me than I can put into words. In many ways, this award belongs to her too."*



### I24 News

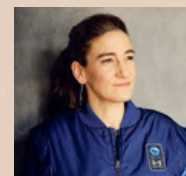
We are excited to announce that Ariane "Leto" Fikki has accepted the position as Director of Engagement for The Inspired 24. She brings to the I24 the same networks, conviction, and cross-sector reach that define her work at Andromeda Ventures, where she serves as Regional Vice President of the Space Force Association for the Southeast Region of the United States, and at UCF's Pegasus Research Institute.

*Welcome aboard, Leto!*



### Affiliate News

The next cohort of SpaceKind Training begins September, 23, 2026. It will be led by SpaceKind Founder, Loretta Hidalgo Whitesides. This non-traditional learning course will invite you to open your heart, define your dreams, and share your life vision. You will use Loretta's book [The New Right Stuff](#) as a text book for exercises that help you navigate your own hero's journey and come out the other end ready to make your unique contribution to the cosmos. Many of our I24 members and other well-known space industry professionals have participated in this life changing program. Virtual sessions will be held on Wednesdays 12:00 pm Pacific for 8 weeks. [Click HERE to register!](#)





**[CLICK HERE FOR I24 MERCH!](#)**

We now have I24 pins, patches, name tags, & engraved drinkware!

**Get the latest I24 committee updates and news!**

**[CLICK HERE to watch the replay of May's All-Hands Meeting!!](#)**

## About The Inspired 24

*"Inspired 2 Space 4 All"*

We, The Inspired 24, are an inclusive group of like-minded, space positive people dedicated to promoting the access to space for all.

Our mission objectives are:

**Network** with organizations that support inclusive participation in space exploration.

**Collaborate** to create opportunities to experience the overview effect.

**Train** for space flights and provide space-ready individuals for future missions.

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## NEW MEMBERS THIS MONTH

(May 2026)

- Geetanjali Rohilla Rajput
- Kayla Maher
- Morgan Kainu
- Tory Schendel-Vyvoda
- Maxfield Arnon
- Anas Tellat
- Phillip Fury Wainwright

## Just for fun!

### Space science trivia :

In Feb. 2023, NASA's Curiosity Mars rover captured a photo of "sun rays", also known as crepuscular rays, shining through clouds at sunset. "Crepuscular" is taken from the Latin word for:

- A. Twilight
  - B. Dawn
  - C. Evening
  - D. Glowing
- (see below for answer)

### June in space history:

- **June 16, 1963:** Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space aboard the Vostok 6 spacecraft. She orbited the Earth 48 times over three days.
- **June 3, 1965:** NASA astronaut Edward H. White II performed the first American spacewalk during the Gemini 4 mission.
- **June 18, 1983:** NASA astronaut Sally Ride became the first American woman in space aboard the Space Shuttle STS-7 mission.

Trivia answer: A. Twilight  
[Click HERE to learn more from JPL](#)