

A-- We published "Space Journal" (mag.) even before (Erik Bergaust's) "Missiles & Rockets" mag (in NY). We published it in Hsv, directly w/ v.B, Stuhlinger & Oberth. In fact, we ded. 1st issue to Oberth.

On your anecdotes: I gave you the name & no. of Lonnie Kennedy w/ Lockheed Martin out in Houston, who can tell you th one abt the computer problem & v.B. Down at the Cape, on an early Saturn I vehicle launch. This was a real situation, when they were getting ready to launch. They were trying to convert the launch blockhouse down there, to computerize everything. It was all early digital computers, when they had just come out. As he (Kennedy) told the story, they did all this work, got this stuff all in place, & started ck'ing th rocket out & everything went haywire. Lights started coming on, and v. Braun just blew his stack, and said, "Stop everything you're doing & let's go back & hard-wire this whole system. We cant depend on this newfangled stuff!" The way he (Kennedy) described v.B hitting his stack was really human, bec he really was made abt th whole thing. Kennedy or 1 of his co-workers witnessed it. But he knows th story. It was kind of interesting, bec they did go back & spend a heck of a lot of money, but at least they had a backup system so they werent fully dependent on something that was not tried & true. Were converting from analog to digital computers, as I understand it. Was probably in th early '60s when the first digital systs were coming out. In this case they had lot of probs w/ it & it just rubbed v.B th wrong way. They were trying to use that before it had ben de-bugged.

Q.-- Tell me again that story involving the wrench & v. Braun?

A -- Cant remem who told me tht story. But it wd hav ben in '50s. Von Braun spent an awful lot of time wandering around in th labs & mfg fac's. As I understood th story: It was late at night. This guy was working under there, strugg-  
ling to fix something, and a pair of legs appeared, & he abruptly asked the person, "Hey, hand me that wrench!" The person did. Pretty soon the guy was able to see who it was, and it was von Braun, who kinda got a kick out of the whole thing. He told him to just keep right on going w/ his work, dont mind him. That was very typical of what could hav hap in those days.

Also, I have a photo tht might interest you. It is of 1 of the last events where v.B was able to get up & actually make a presentation. Occasion was -- we were trying in mid-'70s probably less than a year before he died -- trying to get the nat'l Solar Research Institute at UAH. There were 2

V. B in shops  
("MBWA" mgr.)

195 or 196  
v. B sick  
(Always funny, skill)

W.C. →

*Mars in Houston  
His wife is not real*

episodes around that time that I recall first-hand. One of them, I had interviewed him (in D.C. area?) for "educational uses of th space program." I was working at UAH at th time. He was w/ Fairchild, having left NASA HQs. I had worked w/ him on some filmstrips, w/ Doubleday. Two of th 5 I wrote, "History of Space Stations (?)" and "Dividends from Space." I worked w/ him on them, even ~~went~~ up to Nashville with him, bec he narrated these things. ~~drove~~ I have a picture I took of him in RCA Studios there that I took while he was narrating.

Anyway, ~~xxxx~~ after that, in abt 1974, I was working on uses of th space shuttle for education, the teacher-in-space program, & I interviewed Dr v.B bec of his interest in educa. He gave a beaut. interview on the uses of educa. satellites, bec that's what he was working on at Fairchild. He elab'd in great detail abt th uses of educa'l satellites, such as in India.

Then, not too long after tht, we were trying to get th Solar Res Inst --

Wait, there was another episode -- that was th Willy Ley collection dedication at th library at UAH. The widow was there, & Art Rudolph. Willy Ley had worked w/ v.B in the '20s & '30s, and w/ Oberth. But when Hitler came to power, Willy Ley, being ~~xxxx~~ Jewish, decided to get th Heck out of Germany & came to this country & became a pretty famous author & writer, & wrote a bunch of books. UAH was offered th opp to acquire the W. Ley collection from th widow. UAH arranged th purchase of that & we were able to bring it to Hsv & set it up as a ~~xxxx~~ special collection. I was asked to put togeth a program to ded. th W Ley col'n, which I did. We had th bd of trustees, v Braun, A Rudolph, & many of the Team mem's & had tht ded'n. I hav all those photos. Von Braun on (UAH) campus.

*75-76  
sick... but still  
maybe active for her*

Q.-- Any anecdotes or quotes or punchlines connected to that for book?

A.-- No. But I do hav a story for you. Well, 2 episodes in mid-70s. v.B sick. One was in Germantown, Md, where Fairchild was. I used to go up there fairly often bec we were working on some things. I was up there 1 day & he said "let's just keep talking but I've got to go give a lecture. Why dont you just ride w/ me & we'll go where I'm going, & you could leave from there." We went to Johns Hopkins University ~~xx~~ where he was giving this lecture. I hap to hav a video of that. What was interesting, tho, right at the end of what was a basic lecture abt educa & satellites, the kind of stuff he was working on. And someone asked him a question abt going to Mars. If you recall, we were going

*'75 or '76?  
v. B Sick  
(Mars turn-on, still!)*

"Mars" form-on,  
tho sick in mid-'70s!

to be on Mars in 1982, if we had kept our Saturns. Anyway, I vividly remem him lighting up like a Christmas tree & going thru the ~~xxx~~ spiel abt how we could hav & should hav gone to Mars. It was very interesting to me to see that. Fortunately, I was able to take a video of him saying all that, so I do hav that. The thing that struck me is how, even tho ill, he just turned on immed when he started talking abt going to Mars, getting very dynamic in explaining all that, as nobody else could. Because that had really been his dream moreso than going to th Moon. He even wrote a book on it, "The Mars Project."

175-176  
Sick - but still active for Hsv.  
(maybe last pub. appearance?)

This next l took place when we were trying to get the Solar Res Inst in Hsv. I was th proposal mgr. I was at UAH heading up th solar research programs there. As a team we got togeth some very hi level peop includ Ed Teller. He was going to be th dir of th new institute. He was int in overcoming his H-bomb image, & he thought solar energy wd be a good way to do that. So he was the designated res leader for tht project. Then we decided to get some pol support. Set up a mtng in Wash. I think Ed Hudspeth (sp.?) & Sen Allen, & Sen Sparkman were th ones tht helped set this up. We went to Wash. & had a b'fast at th Sen office bldg. At tht mtng we had Sen Howard Baker, Sen Robt Byrd, & Sen from Ky.

This was abt '75. Not long before v.B died. He was pretty sick. But he was there. He was moving very slow. This was l of his last hurrahs. Have his talk on tape. And photo of head table. What they were doing is collectively endorsing politically Hsv as th site for SRI. I have Teller's & other talks transcribed, but th l I remem is v.Braun. He opens up by saying, "Hsv gave us th Moon, now Hsv can give ~~us~~ th Sun." I have that exact direct quote in transcript.

The other thing tht struck me is tht he came on strong for the solar power satellites. The Saturns would hav put them up.

March 12, 1976

Dave w/ v.B in Germantown in '70s - stayed w/ v.B after 1 meeting. They accompanied him in car on drive to another meeting. v.B just let up, talked abt it

5-21-99

Dave Christensen Faded

(from analog to digital)

- Saturn I - an early one - Cape - converting blockhouse computers - doing it out - went haywire - VB blew his stack! - sd. stop, go back, start again, test. (hadn't been debugged)

(Lonnie Kennedy can tell) →  
W.C.?

- '50s - VB in labs & shops - late @ nite - guy working inside or underneath a missile structure or assembly - all he could see was pair of legs  
yelled "Hey, hand me that wrench!"  
turned out to be V.B. - who handed it to him - & said keep working

Dave

- has photos - 1 of last events V.B. able to appear & speak publicly - in mid-'70s Dave interviewed VB in Wash area
- Dave has photos of VB in RCA studios - in Nashville -!

- Willy Ley had worked w/ VB in Oberth in '20s & was Jewish, left Germ. when Hitler came to power  
> VAA Lib. acquired Ley collection from widow - purchased from her + Art Rudolph's  
(Dave C. coord. the dedication)

- Dave w/ VB in Germantown in '70s - stayed w/ VB after 1 meeting, then accompanied him in car on drive to another conf. or meeting or reception, etc. nearby -  
Someone asked V.B. Q. abt going to Mars  
VB just lit up, talked abt it

\*

in abt. '75 or '76

Dave C.

- event when trying to get Solar Res. Inst in HSV. - UAH - (Dave C. project team leader to do that)

invited Dr. Edw. Teller here  
 - he came -  
 was proposed as its Director

good story -  
 late in  
 v.B. life

• went to Wash., DC for lobbying, meetings, etc.

v.B. had pretty much stopped working @ Fairchild.

→ v.B. there - moving slow - sick -

got political group together in D.C. - to endorse HSV as site for Solar Res. Inst.

Dave  
 to get direct quote to me by fax

→ v.B. sez: "HSV gave us the Moon, and now HSV can give us the Sun!"

has photos to go w/ it

• photo of v.B. digging ditch for Astronomical observatory

maybe Thurs. abt noon @ Times

Dave C. to deliver