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**FIFTH TENNESSEE VALLEY INTERSTELLAR WORKSHOP UNVEILS AGENDA, KEY SPEAKERS FOR SYMPOSIUM SET FOR OCT. 3-6 IN HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA**

The Tennessee Valley Interstellar Workshop, in partnership with Starship Century and Tau Zero Foundation, has expanded its fifth symposium to four very full days of panels, workshops, and seminars. A comprehensive schedule of events for TVIW 2017, set for Oct. 3-6 at the Embassy Suites in Huntsville, Alabama, is now available:

<https://tviw.us/2017-schedule>

The 2017 symposium's theme is "Step By Step: Building a Ladder to the Stars." TVIW will unite aerospace technologists, communicators, psychologists, and other visionaries whose work could vitally impact the future of humanity's interstellar adventure.

**Agenda highlights**

Launching the symposium Tuesday Oct. 3 will be a series of seminars on human exploration of space, conflict in space, and an introduction to laser propulsion, plus a tour of United Launch Alliance assembly and integration facilities. Symposium attendees are invited to a reception at 6 p.m. CST that evening in the Embassy Suites ballroom, hosted by science fiction publisher and TVIW sponsor Baen Books.

Wednesday Oct. 4, will showcase the Breakthrough Starshot Initiative, an ambitious project leading to a first launch, within the next generation, of an interstellar spacecraft to Alpha Centauri. The afternoon session will kick off the first of the symposium's more than 30 peer-reviewed plenary talks, working tracks, Sagan meetings and discussion groups. An art show and reception will be held at 6 p.m. in the hotel ballroom.

Plenary talks, working tracks and discussion groups will continue Thursday, Oct. 5. That evening, symposium attendees will visit the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, where internationally renowned astrophysicist **Dr. Andrew Siemion**, a lecturer and researcher at the University of California-Berkeley, will speak on the subject "The Search for Ourselves Among the Stars."

Among panel speakers Friday, Oct. 6 will be **Congressman John Culberson** (R-Texas), chair of the House Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, NASA's funding source; **Lt. General Steven Kwast**, commander and president of Air University, the U.S. Air Force's primary center for professional military education, at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama; **Paul McConaughey**, associate director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville; and **Pete Worden**, executive director of Breakthrough Starshot and former director of NASA's Ames Research Center. Panelists will discuss the steps needed for humanity to become an interstellar species. Additional presentations will include discussion about steps attendees may take to further the goals of TVIW and its partner organizations – taking us to the stars.

## Key symposium speakers

Speakers for the Oct. 4 Starship Century sessions include Worden; **James Benford**, sail system director for Breakthrough Star Shot and president of Microwave Sciences Inc.; **Robert Fugate**, retired senior scientist for the Air Force Research Laboratory and creator of the U.S. Department of Defense's Starfire Optical Range; **David Messerschmitt**, author and professor emeritus of electrical engineering and computer sciences at the University of California-Berkeley; and **Kevin L.G. Parkin**, systems director for Breakthrough Star Shot and founder of Parkin Research LLC.

On Oct. 5, Tau Zero Foundation will present **Marc Millis**, Tau Zero founder, veteran NASA physicist and author of *Frontiers of Propulsion Science*, a scholarly compendium on propellantless drives and faster-than-light flight; and **Jeff Greason**, Tau Zero board chairman and chief executive officer of Agile Aero, to discuss the nonprofit foundation's goals to develop practical interstellar transportation technologies, vehicles and missions.

TVIW speakers on Oct. 6 will include **Congressman Culberson**; **Lt. Gen. Kwast**; NASA physicist **Slava Turyshev**, who will discuss a mission to study exoplanets using the sun's gravity field to focus light from distant targets; and additional speakers from NASA's Glenn Research Center, NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Rochester Institute of Technology, Wichita State University, the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and Clemson University.

## More about TVIW

Conceived in 2011 by NASA physicist and author Les Johnson, physicist and author Greg Matloff, and engineer and entrepreneur Robert Kennedy, TVIW ([www.tviw.us](http://www.tviw.us)) was incorporated in 2014 by a board of five interstellar futurists. To bring the symposium to Huntsville, TVIW partners with interstellar starship development symposium Starship Century (<http://www.starshipcentury.com>) and Tau Zero Foundation (<https://tauzero.aero>).

TVIW sponsors include science fiction publisher Baen Books (<http://www.baen.com>) -- "The Heart of Science Fiction," proudly supporting TVIW since 2013; Digital Oilfield Solutions (<http://www.digitaloilfieldsolutions.co.uk>); MontTech, Inc.; and a number of private supporters.

Learn more about TVIW 2017 online, and connect via social media:

Web: <https://tviw.us>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TNValleyInterstellarWorkshop>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/tviwus>

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