

It's Not Rocket Science! (Okay...it actually is!)

By Teresa Campbell, Dramaturge for The Blue-Sky Boys

How did the “most controversial figure in history” come to work with the future Flight Director of Apollo 13 to land a man on the moon? Read on to find out!

Howard Haggerty. Jed Berman. CJ Caldwell. Venice von Volp. Beginning March 11 audiences will meet this quirky and affable cast of characters responsible for getting the Apollo 11 crew off the ground and into space in the New York premiere of Deborah Brevoort's *The Blue-Sky Boys*. Since this is a work of historical fiction, these are not the actual names of the scientists and engineers behind the Apollo 11 mission. Let's take a minute to learn about the real-life men who dared to defy gravity...and expectations.

The year is 1961. The place is Langely, Virginia.

America is in the midst of the Cold War and the “Space Race” is heating up. President Kennedy announced his plan to land a man on the moon by the end of the decade. There is just one little problem: NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is only two and a half years old and the United States has just 15 minutes of human spaceflight experience. It will take some serious scientific sleuthing, if not a miracle, to make this goal a reality.

Jerome Weisner (seen in the play as Howard Haggerty) was appointed in February 1961 to chair the President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC). He dealt with everything from internal disagreements to severe underfunding and harsh deadlines that seemed impossible. But after achieving the impossible, Weisner was promptly fired and returned to MIT as the Dean of the School of Science. Listen for mentions of this famed research institution in *The Blue-Sky Boys*!

The Space Task Group was created in 1958 and its original members only numbered a few dozen.

At the head of the Space Task Group was Robert Gilruth (dramatized as Jed Berman), an aeronautical engineer who oversaw all areas of the project after an appointment by President Kennedy. Thanks to him, the first American astronaut orbited the earth just three years after the creation of NASA. He was enshrined into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in 1994.

At just 21, **Glynn Lunney was by far the youngest member of the Space Task Group, and you will see his onstage alter-ego, CJ Caldwell**, struggling with the age

gap, and pressures of the job. He succeeded with flying colors because he was later promoted to Flight Director of Apollo 13, the third lunar landing mission, in 1970. When disaster struck, Lunney was able to think on his feet, and, due to his quick thinking, the crew of Apollo 13 returned safely back to Earth. Lunney's character even appears in the film *Apollo 13*.

Finally, **Wernher von Braun**, one of the most “controversial figures in history”, according to Aljazeera, serves as inspiration for the misunderstood, yet highly intelligent, **Vencel von Volp**. As a child, von Braun was fascinated with the fiction writings of H.G. Wells and Jules Verne, which led him to a career in space exploration. During World War II, he actually fought AGAINST the Allies, until it was clear Germany would lose the war, at which point he switched sides! After working for the Army for 15 years, he became the director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center and would be influential in landing Americans on the Moon. No doubt Wells and Verne would have been proud of him.



Sign on the Space Task Group building in June 1961

Mark Your Calendars! Special Events for *The Blue-Sky Boys*:

TUE	MAR 14	Movie Night! <i>Apollo 13</i> in the GE Theatre at Proctors
MON	MAR 15	Opening Night
SUN	MAR 20	miSci pre-show (matinee) workshop
TUE	MAR 22	Chef's Table with 677 Prime
WED	MAR 23, 30	NEW! Pre-show talks with special guests
SAT	APR 2	Girl Scouts pre-show (matinee) workshop
SUN	APR 3	Behind-the-Scenes (NEW TIME!) with astrophysicist Dr. Heidi Jo Newberg
MON	APR 11	Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson at Proctors

Most events at Capital Rep are FREE! See back for event details and applicable pricing!

SPECIAL EVENTS

It's not just STEM and STEAM—It's the Creative Economy—It's Science in the Capital Region—It's our future!

Come celebrate the rich scientific and technological landscape of the Capital Region! theREP is putting science center stage. Capital Repertory Theatre, Proctors, miSci and area partners have put together an exciting schedule of events to shine the light on science and innovations here in our area and beyond.

Apollo 13 • GE Theatre at Proctors • March 14

Run time: 140 minutes • Showtimes: 1:30 pm, 4:15 pm, 7:00 pm
 "Houston, we have a problem." Though it had been less than a year since man first walked on the Moon, the Apollo 13 mission was thought routine until these five words pierced the immense void of space. Stranded 205,000 miles from Earth in a crippled spacecraft, astronauts Jim Lovell, Fred Haise and Jack Swigert (Tom Hanks, Bill Paxton and Kevin Bacon) fight a desperate battle to survive as the heroic Mission Control ground crew—led by Ken Mattingly and Gene Kranz (Gary Sinise and Ed Harris)—race against time and odds to bring them home. Ron Howard directs.

OPENING NIGHT OF THE BLUE-SKY BOYS

Tuesday, March 15 at 7:30 pm • Regional Premiere
By Deborah Brevoort • Directed by Gordon Greenberg
 Join us for pre-show music from Justin Friello, a gallery of student art inspired by the play, and a post-show reception with champagne and dessert provided by Bella Napoli Bakery.

MAKE SCIENCE A FAMILY EVENT – Bring a young person to theREP to experience science first-hand with the experts from miSci
Sunday, March 20 at 12:30 pm (The Blue-Sky Boys Matinee at 2 pm)
 miSci (Museum of Innovation and Science) partners with theREP for a pre-show science extravaganza, including hands-on science activities and a short discussion with Dr. Valerie Rapson, the Outreach Astronomer from miSci and the Dudley Observatory. Your special ticket price includes all pre-show activities, space-themed snacks, and a ticket to the show (\$22 children 17 and under, \$40 adults; some restrictions apply; regular tickets are available for just the show at 2 pm). Perfect for kids age 10 and up. Use code SCIENCE online or at the Box Office—518-445-SHOW.

CHEF'S TABLE HOSTED BY 677 PRIME • Tuesday, March 22
 With light fare and cash bar before the show, this event will be out of this world!

SHINE THE LIGHT ON SCIENCE DISCUSSION NIGHTS!
NEW, PRE-SHOW TIME – 6:30 pm • March 23 & 30

Wednesday, March 23: Join Maggie and her special guest, Mike Fogel, VP Technology Development at Hearst Newspaper, space enthusiast, and applicant to the NASA astronaut program.

Wednesday, March 30: Join Maggie and a special guest to talk about The Blue-Sky Boys, innovation, imagination, and exploration.

Both pre-show discussions at 6:30 are free for all ticket-holders to the evening performance.

MORE FAMILY FUN! A Midsummer Night's Dream • Saturday, April 2 11:00 am • Tickets are \$9 for ages 17 and under/\$11 for adults
 Join us for the one public performance of our On-The-Go! tour production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Visit capitalrep.org for more info, or email Katherine Stephens at kstephens@proctors.org.

IT'S GIRL SCOUT DAY AT theREP! Saturday, April 2 1:30 – 2:45 pm (matinee of The Blue-Sky Boys at 3:00 pm)
 Get your troop together and join us for pre-show science activities and badge work, then enjoy the show. Contact Heather Rutski at hurtski@proctors.org for more information and to register your troop. Special pricing is available.

MEET ASTRO-PHYSICIST DR. HEIDI JO NEWBERG • Sunday, April 3 Professor of Physics, Applied Physics & Astronomy at RPI
 Come Behind-the-Scenes with Maggie and our special guest, Dr. Heidi Jo Newberg for a family-friendly discussion about astronomy, innovation, and exploration. Perfect for families with children age 10 and up. Join us at 12:30 for light refreshments from Cider Belly Doughnuts, then the discussion at 12:45—note the new time! Matinee begins at 2:00 pm. Free to all ticket holders.

NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON AT PROCTORS • Monday, April 11, 8 pm
 Dr. Tyson, director of the Hayden Planetarium, hosts *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey* and is the former host of *NOVA ScienceNOW* on PBS. He makes his debut at Proctors in Schenectady for a night of science and live audience Q&A. Tickets are on sale now; call (518) 346-6204 or buy online at proctors.org.

BEING A MEMBER

Ticket sales alone only cover a portion of the costs to run Capital Repertory Theatre. You can help ensure live theatre for the Capital Region and help us bridge the gap by making a pledge of support to the Annual Fund.

As our way to thank you for your support, we offer a number of benefits.*

- Invitation to the annual Donor Sneak Peek Preview Party
- Recognition in all season playbills
- Complimentary tickets
- Recognition on the donor wall in the lobby
- A private, behind-the-scenes tour of Capital Repertory Theatre for four
- A special dinner for two with the theatre's Producing Artistic Director

*Donor benefits based on donation level

For more information on membership, please contact Carrie Kirkaldy • 518.382.3884 x 172 or email development@capitalrep.org

THE GROUP ADVANTAGE

518.382.3884 capitalrep.org/groups
 Heather Rutski x 152 • hurtski@proctors.org

10% deposit within 30 days, balance due 30 days prior to show date. Unused tickets may be released before final payment.

Note: Discounts don't apply to all shows; specific rules do apply.

Gather your friends, clients, colleagues or club members to form a group and save!

SAVE!

EASY

Our group policies make the buying process virtually risk free!



THE BLUE-SKY BOYS

MARCH 11 – APRIL 3

