



## Apollo Astronauts - Connected by Tribulation

By Jeff Anderson

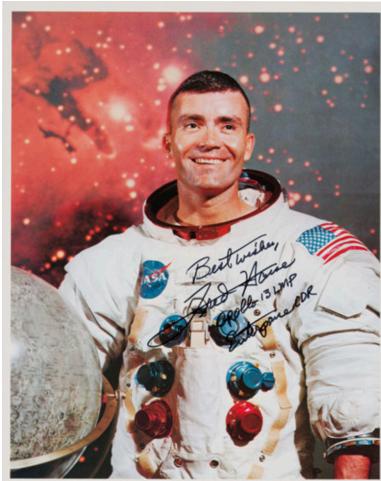
*"Houston, we've had a problem!"* were the words from Apollo 13 on an April evening in 1970. On board Apollo 13 was Lunar Module Pilot Fred Haise and receiving this message of tribulation in Mission Control was Capsule Communicator Astronaut Jack Lousma.

Fred and Jack both reported for duty in 1966 at the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston with seventeen other new astronauts. At the time, they joined a cadre of thirty five astronauts, including the Mercury Original Seven; as Jack says, "Pretty fast company for a 30 year old new guy!"

Soon, they would forever be linked by their connection to a five word radio communication *"Houston, we've had a problem!"*, which has reverberated across the world for half a century. This drama followed a routine message from Mission Control; "Thirteen," said Capcom Jack Lousma, before the crew settled down for the night. "We're got one more item for you when you get a chance, we'd like you to stir up your cryo tanks."



Courtesy photo



FRED W. HAISE, JR.

13 mission to the moon, an explosion aboard the spacecraft plunged the crew into a fight for their survival. Within less than a minute there was a cascade of systems failures throughout the spacecraft. "It was all at one time – a monstrous failure," said NASA flight control.

The Astronauts converted their lunar module "Aquarius" into an effective lifeboat. Their emergency activation and operation of lunar module systems conserved both electrical power, oxygen and cooling water in sufficient supply to assure their safety and survival while in space and for the return to earth.

Their spacecraft journey detoured home from this emergency by looping around the moon, using its gravity to return to earth; uniquely providing Astronaut Haise with the co-record for the farthest distance from the Earth ever traveled by human beings.

While the mission of Apollo 13 was not a conventional success, it became known as a triumph of ingenuity and determination. Showing the world, in the words of

Fifty-five hours into the Apollo

Commander Jim Lovell, "That even if there was a great catastrophe, it could be turned into a success."

July 11th, Hall of Fame Astronauts, Fred Haise and Jack Lousma will be speakers at "A Tribute to Apollo 11" presented by Dynamic Learning Institute at the Cailloux Theatre. Tickets are offered free thanks to the generous support of H-E-B, Ray C Fish Foundation, Texas Hill Country Bank, Cecil Atkisson Motors and Martin Marietta. Tickets are available only by pre-registration. To register, call (830) 792-4044 Monday - Friday or register online at [www.clubed.net](http://www.clubed.net).

Fred Haise "grew up on Buck Rodgers and Flash Gordon" and was the first astronaut among his class to be assigned to a Apollo mission. An Officer in the Marines and Captain in the Air Force, he served as backup Lunar Module Pilot for both Apollo 8 and Apollo 11. After serving as Lunar Module Pilot on Apollo 13, he was backup mission Commander for Apollo 16. Fred says, "Knowing that you were preparing to fly to the Moon, walk on the Moon, defies description."

Colonel Jack Lousma, a retired US Marine, served on the astronaut support crews for the Apollo 9, 10 and 13 missions. Lousma's two NASA Space missions were highlighted by Piloting Skylab II for 60 days in 1973, a first of a kind space flight of two months of living in zero gravity traveling 25 million miles orbiting the earth. Jack also Commanded the 3rd Orbital flight test of the Space Shuttle Columbia.



Three of the speakers at the July 11 "Tribute to Apollo 11" will be, from left, Gerry Griffin, retired director of the Johnson Space Center; Col. Jack Lousma, retired astronaut; and Tom Moser, former chief engineer at the Johnson Space Center. Courtesy photo

Tom Moser, a speaker at The Apollo 11 Tribute, who served in key positions in every NASA human spaceflight program commented, "Apollo flights were politically easy but technologically enormous challenges." The Apollo 11 landing of the Lunar Module on the Moon created breathless tension within the Module as well as 240,000 miles back home

at Mission Control. The cause of the pressure was what Neil Armstrong saw as he peered out his tiny window from inside the spidery lunar lander, a fragile cocoon with walls about as thick as construction paper.

The Apollo 11 commander said, "I finally had a clear view of where the on-board computer had directed us to land. I did not like what I saw, a giant crater with boulders strewn all around. A *death trap*. To make matters worse, *Eagle* had limited fuel reserves." If Armstrong couldn't find a safe landing site soon, he would have to ditch the bottom half of the lander and burn for lunar orbit in a dangerous and risky abort procedure. Otherwise, he and Buzz Aldrin would not only become the first humans to land on the Moon, they'd become the first humans to die there, too.

Beyond the Apollo missions, NASA was preparing its Astronauts for learning to live and work in space for extended durations. Jack Lousma set a new endurance record by piloting Skylab II for 60 days in 1973 where he experienced the ultimate adventure in Earth-orbit, performing two spacewalks!

#### Join the Tribute

The Dynamic Learning Institute will host a "Tribute to the 50th Anniversary of Apollo 11" at 6 p.m. July 11 at The Cailloux Theatre. The Tribute features six NASA pioneers who played major roles in accomplishing the Apollo Mission set forth by President John F. Kennedy.

Tickets are free, but seating is by pre-registration only. Call 830-792-4044, Monday-Friday or register online at [www.ClubEd.net](http://www.ClubEd.net).

Colonel Lousma says, "Views of the Earth and celestial sphere are limited when viewed through the small window inside the space station. Yet, when exiting the spacecraft, the perception is three-dimensional, enabling one to sense great speed and see the entire, round ball of the Earth about 1,200 miles in all directions."

"There is no vibration, no sound, nothing flapping in the breeze; it's just like gliding along on a magic carpet whirling around the world, into the sunrise and into the sunset, every hour and a half. From our 275-mile altitude, it was possible to see freeways, cities, rivers and lakes with the naked eye, as well as the colors of the Earth."

"The blues of the oceans, green and brown patchwork of farmers' fields, white of the clouds and snow on the mountains and the beautifully colored deserts painted just the way the Master Painter painted them so long ago arrayed in vibrant colors. The memories of my spacewalking days set them apart from all other days aboard the Skylab Space Station."

Colonel Lousma and Captain Haise shared insights about the tribulations of human spaceflight. Haise said, "We just kept putting off the worry as we focused on the next problem and how to solve it." Then referencing Mission Control, "They are what got us home from the space mission. They are why I was able to live to tell about Apollo 13." During the return flight Haise

developed a urinary tract infection that caused him to live in pain for most of the trip to Earth. His message to audiences, "There is no achievement without risk."

Lousma recalls the tribulations of human spaceflight this way, "The vocational life of an Astronaut can be encapsulated by what President Teddy Roosevelt described as, daring to be a part of mighty things. My preparations begun as a young man when I took to heart Proverbs 3:5-6...*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.*"

Until the next time, "*Remember learning is a treasure that follows its owner everywhere.*"

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Three additional articles about the Apollo 11 Tribute and Speakers are available at [www.DynamicLearning.com](http://www.DynamicLearning.com).