

# NEWS RELEASE

## Yuri's Night: The World Space Party

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Sci-Fi Legend Ray Bradbury, Mars Rover Team, Young Professionals Celebrate Spaceflight in Style at Annual Gala

*Local Space Education Group Joined by Coalition of National Space Organizations and "Space Celebrities" at Celestial Soiree and Awards Benefit*

**LOS ANGELES, April 5, 2003 -- Yuri's Night: The World Space Party** announces a celebration honoring 43 years of human space exploration with its annual flagship gala in Los Angeles on Monday, April 12, which will be joined by space revelers at concurrent parties in more than 45 cities across the globe.

First observed in 2000, Yuri's Night occurs annually on April 12, marking the anniversaries of Russian Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's first spaceflight in 1961 and the first space shuttle mission 20 years later. Each year, a series of space-themed parties, dinners and educational events are held around the world to mark these historic achievements. Organized by the non-profit Space Generation Foundation, Yuri's Night plays off the tremendous popularity of the rave party phenomenon to introduce teens and young adults to the thrill of space.

With 360 degrees of retro-space chic inspired by the Apollo era, Encounters Restaurant at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) will once again host the 2004 Yuri's Night flagship celebration, which will feature a presentation by world-renowned science fiction author Ray Bradbury. Best known for *The Martian Chronicles*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, Bradbury is also famous for his extraordinary ability to "translate" passion for space to any audience or age group.

"We're thrilled Mr. Bradbury will be joining us this year," said 30-year-old Astrobiologist Loretta Hidalgo, co-founder of Yuri's Night and the Space Generation Foundation, both based in Los Angeles. "His incredible energy and passion for space exploration is precisely the level of enthusiasm our generation is committed to bringing back to the space program."

Bradbury will speak during the VIP Reception scheduled from 7:30 – 9 p.m. During the reception, NASA's JPL Mars Exploration Rover (MER) team will receive the Earth and Space Foundation's first *Exploration Award* for its innovative work exploring the Red Planet. On hand to accept the award will be 30-year-old Flight Director Chris Lewicki.

"The MER team has done a fantastic job exploring Mars with the indomitable *Spirit* and *Opportunity* rovers," said Earth and Space Foundation co-founder Douglas Messier. "Their creativity and perseverance reminds us that a great team, willing to give it their all for a greater good, really can do the impossible."

"Space applications and exploration represent one of the largest growth areas within Boeing," said Marshall Short, Director at Boeing Satellite Systems Engineering, a corporate sponsor of the event. "With today's competitive marketplace, it's increasingly important that we attract skilled employees with not just the requisite technical skills but also a passion for creating a bold future worthy of our proud past. Yuri's Night is a great opportunity to celebrate our shared history while promoting interest in space-related careers."

Following the VIP event, Yuri's Night will continue until 2 a.m. with a dance party that will feature the prominent local house and trance DJ's as well as a midnight toast to other Yuri's Night space parties taking place around the world.

This year, at least 50 events will be held in 23 nations on all seven continents during the weekend of April 10-12. XM Satellite Radio will broadcast party highlights from a number of the celebrations. Yuri's Night LA is also planning a webcast.

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### **About Yuri's Night**

Yuri's Night is a global celebration launched by the Space Generation Foundation with the support of individuals, major corporations, and like-minded non-profit organizations around the world. Supporters include the Space Frontier Foundation, the National Space Society, Boeing Satellite Systems, Northrop Grumman Integrated Systems, the United Nations Space Generation Advisory Council, and the International Space University.

All Yuri's Night events are organized and managed by an international grassroots network of volunteers. In the three years since it's inception, Yuri's Night has seen its individual celebrations range in size and scope, from 1500 people in Los Angeles to cosmonauts and astronauts on the orbiting International Space Station. Yuri's Night global parties represent the diversity of Earth itself and help us remember how small our planet is and how space can unite us all. For more information about Yuri's Night, go to <http://www.YurisNight.net>

### **About the Space Generation Foundation**

Founded in 1985, the Space Generation Foundation (SpaceGen) identifies tomorrow's space leaders who share the commitment to create access to space for all people. SpaceGen builds a team to provide the support, encouragement, motivation, and connection necessary to turn these dreams into reality. One of SpaceGen's earliest projects was the creation of the International Space University, now with a permanent campus in France. Established and operated by students and young professionals, SpaceGen works to ignite passion and excitement for space exploration in young people, thus creating the next generation of space leaders and pioneers.