Return To Flight
An Interview with Tim Ventura

By Tim Ventura, August 6, 2005

This started as a pre-interview writing assignment for Coast to Coast AM, and turned into a self-interview on the subject of space, gravity-control, and ultimately an inquisitive look at the social-pressures behind “Return to Flight”…

AAG: What are these continuing troubles with NASA missions really telling us?

Ventura: You’re talking about this “Return to Flight” mission that’s wrapping up as the Shuttle Discovery begins re-entry in a few minutes. Some of these troubles are unavoidable, but it’s outlining the need to move from an aging fleet & antiquated technologies to something better.

AAG: What does "failure is not an option" really mean?

Ventura: Despite NASA’s best intentions, weight-restrictions prevent them from carrying the type of comprehensive backup systems that could save a mission, such as heavy-duty onboard repair materials. NASA also relies on precision trajectories in their launches to make the best use of a critical amount of fuel. For any major issue, there simply will be no recovery from disaster in space. This is an issue with the basic philosophy. Mankind is new to space-travel, and needs more time to experiment with breakthrough technologies before becoming locked into an infrastructure based on unpredictable rocket technologies.

AAG: Where’s American Antigravity fit into this?

Ventura: The next-generation of space technologies are out there already: they’re clean, reliable, and far safer than riding to the stars on a controlled explosion. American Antigravity is a bridge between the independent inventor and mainstream space/defense industries that tries to match existing needs with breakthrough solutions. We’re a 501c [3] non-profit with years of experience in finding the best emerging technologies and helping inventors connect with a support community online.

AAG: What comes after Rockets?

Ventura: We have every indication that large-scale gravity-control will be achieved in the next decade. Quite frankly, it’s
already been achieved by inventors like Hutchison, and understanding it enough to control the effect is something that we're putting a lot of time into.

**AAG:** What's the strangest thing that's happened with Gravity Research?

**Ventura:** AG-research has heavy roots in the conspiracy-theory community, so the strangest event for us was military interest & support. Unfortunately, this isn't financial for the time being, but we nonetheless have friends in government and we're very appreciative for the information & support that they've begun to give the open-source community. This isn't just an American Antigravity phenomenon – its part of an evolving philosophy of collaboration, because we all share a desire a better, safer, cheaper ticket into space, and the trend is becoming about to sharing knowledge to make this dream a reality.

**AAG:** Isn't Government & Military Involvement a Bad Thing?

**Ventura:** Traditionally, government & military agencies tend not to interact with community-based activism groups, but this trend started changing with Darpa's unprecedented success with the Internet during the 1990's. Here we have something that starts as a top-secret "nuclear proof" computer network that ends up becoming as common as most household appliances, and makes Darpa a household word in the process. Is the internet a bad thing? Despite having military origins, are they in control of it? The answer is no to both questions. Obviously the military is beginning to see the value of open-standards & collaborative research, and our hope is that this trend will continue unimpeded with gravity-research.

At the most basic level, we all share the same dreams and goals regarding space, so why should people in government be different? There may be some bad guys there, but there are also some really wonderful individuals that are open & willing to participate. I think this is the "judging them by their actions, not their words" mantra...

**AAG:** What's the #1 challenge for BPP & Antigravity Research?

**Ventura:** Communication is the biggest problem. Most government & corporate scientists are trained to speak a specific vernacular, and pick up some prejudice along the way about people who can't communicate in the conventional terminology. Inventors need the scientific rigor that comes from "mainstream science", and mainstream science in turn needs the creative life-force that comes from inventors....however, if they can't speak the same language, they end up walking away in disgust and trash-talking what otherwise could be some really wonderful new technologies.

**AAG:** Where does this new Antigravity technology really fit?
**Ventura:** I interviewed X-Prize founder Peter Diamandis a few months ago, and he laid out a time-table for space-development that basically contains an R&D gap in the next few years. I believe that Antigravity & BPP research will fill this gap, and continue the legacy of space research that was begun by NASA nearly 50 years ago.

**AAG:** Does this mean that you're selling out?

**Ventura:** Hey, fight the power, right? Any emerging cause or social organization starts out bucking the system, and fighting against entrenched mainstream interests. Over time, as the mainstream realizes that there's a real need for this new approach, they begin to shift towards acceptance of the new approach. Antigravity research isn't any different -- 10 years ago, anything we did was instantly blacklisted.....now, we've got AG proposals being published in the AIAA & AIP journals. You have to keep your eyes on the prize -- is it more important to start a fist-fight with NASA, or to ensure that our children have better, safer, and less expensive access to space & urban transportation than we do? The goal hasn't changed one bit, but we've built the collaborative tools over time to ensure that we can meet this goal, which inevitably means bringing the mainstream interests onboard.

**AAG:** Does the acceptance of AG-research mean funding?

**Ventura:** Unfortunately no -- at least not yet.....American Antigravity has run Ebay auctions [we have one up right now], done grant-proposals, and built a substantial products-section on our site to help supplement our income. None of this has worked, but we're still hopeful. It's been said that an idea can change the world, and in our case I hope that it's true: ideas are all that we can contribute for the time being, but my hope is that as acceptance for this technology grows we can begin to build a solid funding base to both expand the website and fund key experiments in AG & BPP research.

**AAG:** What are some of the breaking stories in this area?

**Ventura:** Chukanov Energy -- they're an innovative research company in the Salt Lake area attempting to extract Zero-Point Energy through high-energy gas plasma technologies. That's the technical version -- the simpler explanation is that it's a ZPE generator based on constrained ball-lightning, which doesn't seem to dissimilar in many respects to Farnsworth's experiments with Fusion in the 50's. Chukanov is yet another ex-soviet researcher doing work in the states on breakthrough technology, and I like that cultural overlap as both the USA and USSR did highly-complementary work in these areas during the cold war -- unfortunately, there was so much work that was accomplished that it will take a while before we're able to fully analyze how the different research paths compliment each other.

**AAG:** So the Shuttle's in the Ionosphere at the moment, any thoughts?

**Ventura:** Yes, Dr. James Corum mentioned spacecraft-reentry as part of his theory about the Philadelphia Experiment. As it turns out, the Shuttle re-entering our atmosphere creates a plasma around the craft while it's in the upper atmosphere, making it effectively invisible to
many types of radar. NASA's obviously developed some techniques to detect the Shuttle despite this radar-invisibility phenomenon, but it highlights the idea that gas-plasmas can be used for radar-invisibility, which he suggested was a confirmation for the impedance-matching technology of the 1943 Philadelphia Experiment. Obviously there's a backstory here, but I wanted to stress the point that next time you hear about a spacecraft returning to Earth, remember that it confirms many of the concepts behind the original Philadelphia Experiment goals.

**AAG:** What's the basis for this new spirit of collaboration?

**Ventura:** I'll defer for a moment to someone who can speak to this far better than I can -- President John F. Kennedy, "For in the final analysis, our most basic common link, is that we all inhabit this small planet, we all breathe the same air, we all cherish our children's futures, and we are all mortal."

**AAG:** So you believe that Antigravity technology is inevitable?

**Ventura:** You'd better hope so. If not, then despite the ability to get into near-Earth space occasionally, we're basically stuck when it comes to launching manned missions to other planets. President Bush is an advocate of exploring Mars, and I thoroughly support that vision, but at the same time believe that without control over gravity it becomes difficult or impossible to explore anything much further than that. Science-Fiction writer Jerry Pournelle wrote about ion-drives exploring the Asteroid Belt, but even he acknowledged that we'd need better technology to get much farther than that.

**AAG:** What can you tell me about "Selling Antigravity"?

**Ventura:** American Antigravity has done more media work on AG & BPP than anybody else out there. We've done television in the USA, Great Britain, Japan, and most of Europe...we've been published around the world, from Wired Magazine and Slashdot Online here in the states to New Energy Technologies, which is published in St. Petersburg, Russia. Call me crazy, but as a child of the cold-war I never thought that I'd ever interact with Russia, and here we are selling magazines on their newsstands. What I know for a fact is that part of making our dream of gravity-control become a reality is our ability as a community to "sell" these technologies.

Why's NASA afraid of Antigravity? Why can't any branch of our government talk in public about the idea? The core problem comes down to a stigma, and that stigma comes from the fact that the only people out there talking about Antigravity have traditionally been doing it as a part of science-fiction. We have to stop looking at AG as a "plot-device" and start looking at it as a new, valid, real technology that can get us off the Earth without the human & financial costs associated with contemporary rocket technologies.

**AAG:** How do you ultimately see your role in this?

**Ventura:** When I started American Antigravity in 2002, I spent several months being paranoid about the idea of government and corporate suppression, and eventually hit burnout on that. I quite literally quit caring about who may want this technology suppressed, and started
talking to anybody and everybody who would listen. This goes both ways, of course, as I also started listening to people in the established positions, and over time became capable of looking at the issue from several perspectives, while still remaining true to the core ideas involved with building the breakthrough technologies of tomorrow. I'm not an advocate of living in fear: you only have a limited number of years on planet Earth, and spending them worried about what somebody else is going to do to you is a poor way to live.

**AAG:** So you believe in "Manifest Destiny" in Space?

**Ventura:** I heard a quote a while back, "mankind is how planets reproduce".....I thought that it was an interesting concept, especially since when you think about the reality of colonizing other planets, we really do have to take our entire ecosystem with us to make planetary colonization work. These planets that we're looking at -- Mars and the rest -- they're really dead planets. They're planets were life could have taken root, but for some reason never did. This is probably the closest that I'll ever get to a Gaia hypothesis, but at the very least it outlines a path forward, and also opens up a few interesting debate topics. Does colonizing Mars create pollution? How will the environmental lobby react?

**AAG:** Environmentalism in Space, what do you mean?

**Ventura:** I love the 1950's view of space as a giant no-man's-land where anything goes, but we're already starting to see the legacy of pollution in near-Earth orbit. Scientific American and others have already begun to run warning articles talking about exactly what happens when you leave fast-moving space-junk in orbit, and it's not a pretty sight. In fact, there are already tentative plans in place to use Kevlar nets to "de-orbit" Space Junk to ensure that it doesn't damage future space-missions. Keep in mind that even a small piece of metal moving at high-speed in space can be like hitting your spacecraft with a shotgun at close range.

I believe that space-junk will be even more detrimental to Antigravity craft than to rockets: the reason is that rockets use similar orbits, which means comparable orbital velocities to the space-junk than we're likely to see with AG-devices. Antigravity let's us lift straight up into orbit, rather than blasting off at thousands of miles per hour, but it also means that the relative speed of space-junk becomes thousands of miles per hour in comparison to our AG-craft.

In terms of traditional environment pollution, who knows? The moon isn't large enough to support a real atmosphere, but it doesn't mean that extensive lunar-mining won't create a slowly-expanding lunar dust-cloud that turns our now familiar moon into something that resembles a gigantic comet's tail. However, part of true solar-system colonization will be in realizing where the best places to mine & exploit truly are. Supposedly, the entire surface of Venus melts every 10,000 years, so I doubt that anybody will complain about mining that planet....another example might be Mercury, where the surface is so hot that you literally have pools of liquid metal standing on the surface.
**AAG:** What's this stuff about Hans Moravec?

**Ventura:** Hmm... Basically, Moravec is proposing that highly-advanced robots would do the work for us around the solar-system & beyond. Arthur C. Clarke cited the same concept for his vision of “The Monolith”, from 2001: A Space Odyssey – Clarke's version was a self-replicating 'Von Neumann Probe'. It's certainly a great dream, but at the same time doesn't quite seem fulfilling, does it? Maybe this goes back to the Gaia planetary-reproduction argument, and maybe not. At the very least, though, having robots explore the cosmos seems to shortchange mankind on the ability to do the work ourselves, so I wonder how much support this idea will fully receive. In fairness, the recent robot-explorations to Mars are inline with Moravec's vision, and seem to provide at least the type of quantitative data that we're looking for, but believe that we're never going to fully consider our space programs to be "the exploration of space" until we have humans living among the stars. Moravec's work also relates to many of Kurzweil's ideas about machines becoming more human and vice-versa, so I think that before we fully explore this issue we'll need more time to determine exactly which direction computers are evolving towards.

**AAG:** Tell me a bit more about Energy...

**Ventura:** I'm not sure if you've heard the rumor, but several people have been talking about a coming "global energy crisis". If nothing else, we should prepare ourselves for the worst as a buffer against possible negative outcomes, so looking at breakthrough energy-generation is a good way to try and move our increasing global energy-needs towards a state of stable production. Oil is inherently limited -- we need new solutions to bridge the gap between the technologies of yesterday and the renewable solutions of tomorrow.

I'm busy working on the Chukanov Energy story this week, which claims to promise a nearly infinite amount of energy from a stabilized ball-lightning reaction. I’ve received word that the DOE that analyzed this technology a few years ago, but didn't make progress with it quite simply because they didn't understand the reaction that was occurring. If anything, this is a better example than most of exactly how technologies can "fall between the cracks" and yet remain potentially viable solutions for our energy needs.

**AAG:** What about ET?

**Ventura:** My military and NASA contacts seem to be as mystified about this as the rest of us... They’re literally asking the same questions, and hoping to find the same answers. In the Star Trek series, the Vulcan's wait until we develop a primitive hyper-drive to pass their "test", and once we do, they show up to share more advanced technologies with us. Obviously this would be a great outcome technologically, but it begs the question of self-respect, which I felt that Star Trek never fully explored. If ET gives us the technology, then how is it going to change the way that we view human endeavor? If we're flying their ships, then is it really human endeavor at all, and what do we owe them for using the technology? What if they gave us the
Roswell crash on purpose so that they can show up in force in 2100 and claim to have some ownership to our technologies as a result?

ET's craft appear to most people to be a shortcut to doing it ourselves, but it's the difference between being the rich-kid who inherits the fortune, versus the poor-kid who creates it himself. At the end of the day, when we build these technologies ourselves, we're beholden to nobody but ourselves, which is incentive enough to make sure that our own technology moves forward without "outside assistance". From a pragmatic standpoint, the question is a bit more simplistic: ET's technology comes from a completely different school of engineering than ours does, so we're going to have a much easier time with our own technology than with theirs....especially in terms of integration with the many other technologies (such as life support & navigation software) that go into designing a spacecraft.

**AAG:** Aren't you Afraid of the Military Weaponizing Antigravity?

**Ventura:** I don't make policy.....that's been a statement that many have claimed is a cop-out for not taking responsibility for your work, but I view this in a different light. It is the responsibility of the engineer or scientist to ensure that the technology is workable and available, and then to let the existing political structure delve into the "how's and why's" of it's implementation. The best example of this is the development of the nuclear bomb in the 1940's, with Oppenheimer's famous "I am become death, destroyer of world's" quote. Did he say that out of fear of what he'd unleashed, or in a moment of sick ecstasy, a drunken power-lust of madness? Who's to say?

The "History Channel" ran a special on what might have happened if the nuclear bomb hadn't been developed, and they effectively made the case that the Japanese would not have surrendered under any circumstances. Imagine US troops fighting against men, women, and children in close combat in a massive battle that wouldn't have ended until the last of the defenders had been destroyed -- not a pretty sight, and it would have meant the very end of Japanese culture, history, and their very race. Oppenheimer's creation, despite killing hundreds of thousands of Japanese, saved their culture....this is never an easy argument to make, but the History Channel made it quite effectively. Also, in the recent documentary, "The Fog of War", Robert McNamara spoke on the subject of fire bombings in Japan -- probably another subject that Oppenheimer wouldn't have known the details of during the war. More people were lost to the fire bombings than to nuclear weapons, which further highlights the idea that the bomb saved lives in addition to taking them...

The bottom line is this: my role is to help humanity reach the stars, but what we do there becomes an issue beyond my control. Did you elect me? Did a single one of you cast a vote on my behalf?....Obviously not, so if I held back on my research or the coverage of breakthrough technology as a result of what I’ve learned then I would be circumventing the electoral process, and ultimately undermining our democracy. My work is with technology: the political side of things belongs in the hands of the elected officials most qualified to make these decisions.....otherwise it's not a democracy.

**AAG:** So in essence, you're an idealist?

**Ventura:** Yes, I guess that you could say that. My father's side of the family is Italian-American, which means that when they immigrated to the USA in the early 20th century, they got to see the Statue of Liberty on their way to Ellis Island. My mother's side of the family is Mayflower-material, and mom’s told me a few times that my grandfather didn't entirely approve
of her marriage to what was then considered to be an "ethnic culture"... how things have changed, eh? Our deeper values remain the same, though....

The Statue of Liberty comes not from a uniquely American ideal, but instead from the older virtues of the Roman Republic. I've read Plutarch & Pliny, we well as Plato's discourses. Once upon a time these were required reading in college -- back in the days before our current 'Laize Faire' system of public instruction. I've also read every single book written by Machiavelli, Garibaldi, Voltaire, Descartes, and most of the celebrated intellectuals of the 15th through the 18th century, in addition to early American works like the Federalist Papers. While I am not an expert, I do have a good idea of their values, virtues, and constraints... one of my favorite authors (believe it or not), is Julius Caesar, who outlined both a means to power and a management strategy for social change in "The Conquest of Gaul". This book was written by Casesar himself as a pseudo-documentary on his military conquests, but also as a promotional tool in his bid to empire, making it an interesting read on management during the Roman era.

The Statue of Liberty is based on the Romanesque ideals of Virginia and Lucretia. Obviously, they were a bit more stringent on values in their time than we are today, but you can get a good feel for these stories by Googling "The Rape of Lucretia" online. It's widely debated whether or not this was an actual event, or perhaps simply a myth, but it certainly influenced the ideals and social morays to come for nearly the next 2,000 years. If nothing else, Virginia and Lucretia set a standard of virtue and purity that became a keystone in modern intellectualism and feminism...

So what do I believe in? Purity, honor, chastity, virtue -- despite classical origins, these have become the traditional American ideals, and no matter how indifferent our society becomes to ideas like this, at our core we have symbols like the Statue of Liberty to remind of them. These in turn remind us of more global virtues -- the hallmarks "absolutism" of right and wrong, good and bad, past and future.

In reality, Space is nothing more than the absence of air, as attested to by some of the early pioneers in dirigibles. They found that at high-altitudes they suffered from vacuum-sickness even without understanding what exactly they were missing. The decreasing pressure's a continuum, right?...for instance, on my way back from the TeslaTech Conference, I remembered that the cabin-pressure is only 0.5 atmospheres in pressure, even though I was still able to breathe without difficulty during transit. It begins to beg the question: where does space begin? Where does it end? Anybody who's been on a aircraft flight will probably recall the shock of being above the clouds, and yet the part that makes it shocking isn't the flight itself, it's the mental constructs that are built & shattered in our own minds along the way ...space is more important as an idea than as a reality, and we need to realize that we cannot pursue space without addressing both the mythology and our own preconceptions in the process.

**AAG:** What's this got to do with Antigravity?

**Ventura:** Obviously, I've left the realm of technology for the land of modern-feminism. However, I think that this relates rather effectively to our exploration of the cosmos. Space is the "virgin whore" of the 21st century, and as a species we carry these presumptions about it's "innocence or guilt" with us as we travel around. From the male perspective, at the very least we retain the naming conventions -- ships are always effeminate, probably because they carry us in
womblike fashion into otherwise insecure territory. It's interesting, in face, how many of our modern naming conventions are effeminate, as what it really indicates is that no matter how far away our home might be, our wives, mothers, and children nonetheless remain close-by in our hearts & souls.

The concepts that Richard C. Hoagland deals with on a daily basis on EnterpriseMission.Com fall at the core of our beliefs about ourselves. In the last few centuries, we've begun to awaken to the idea that Space may not be as simplistic as we first thought it might be, and in the last 50 years we finally realized that we can indeed begin exploring this vast cosmos. However, we need to keep in mind that the exploration we undertake is not only dependant on the tools we use, but also on the ideas that we carry within ourselves. The exploration of space is not so much an exploration of space in and of itself, but instead an exploration of ourselves in space, and space in ourselves.

Tim Ventura is the Founder of the American Antigravity, a 501c [3] non-profit dedicated to community space activism and support for breakthrough technology development. You can learn more about him online at [http://www.americanantigravity.com](http://www.americanantigravity.com)