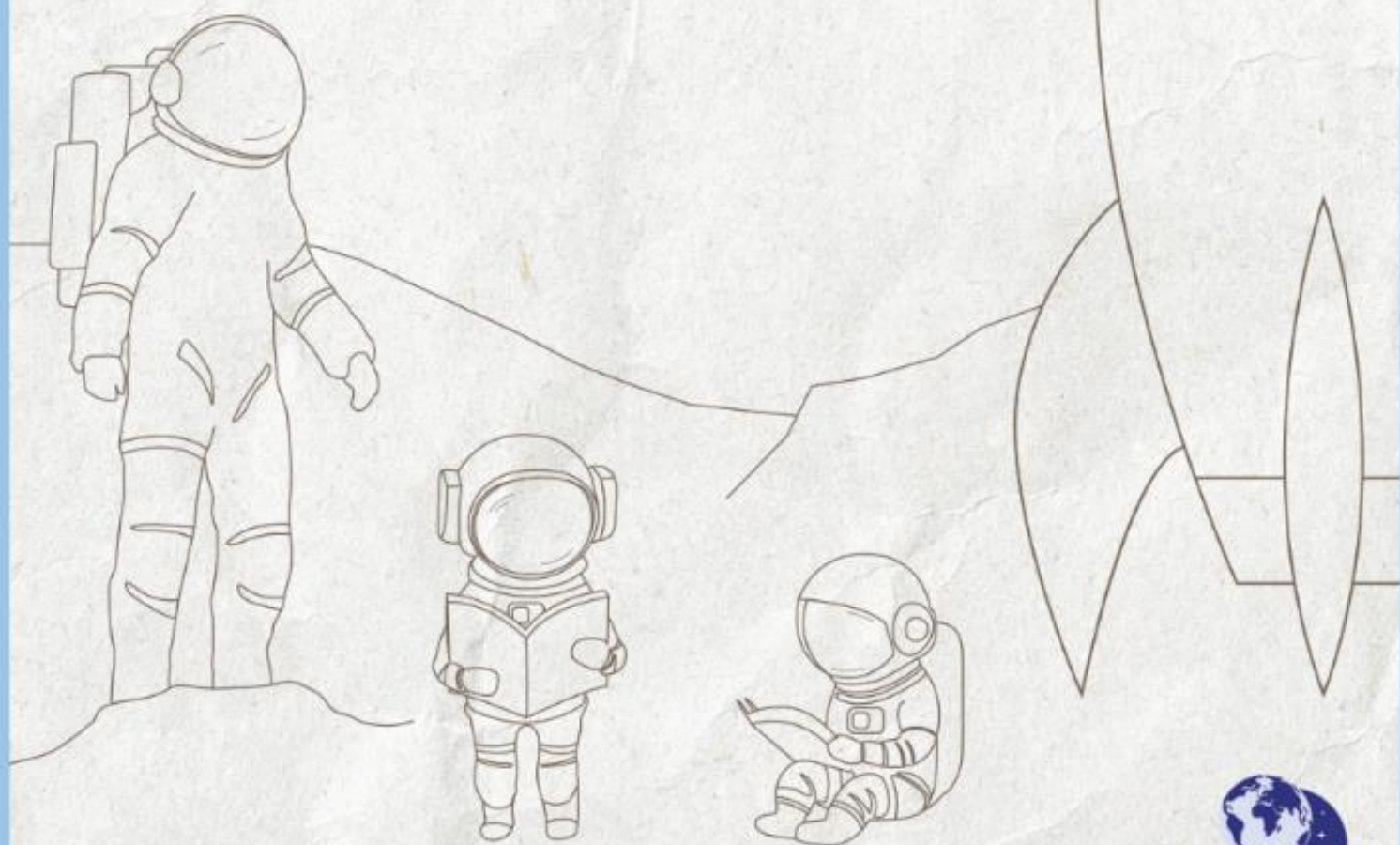


SPACE RESEARCH TODAY



December 2023

N° 218



COSPAR
COMMITTEE ON
SPACE RESEARCH



Book Review

"To the Stars – Women Spacefarers' Legacy"

By **Umberto Cavallaro**, 2023, Springer Praxis, ISBN-13 978-3031198595

[Mary L. Snitch, COSPAR IDEA Coordination Officer (ICO),
and Lockheed Martin Space Company]

When I was invited by COSPAR to offer a review for "To the Stars – Women Spacefarers' Legacy" I couldn't imagine what an opportunity this would be. In the course of reading "Stars" for the sole purpose of this review, I quickly realized I would be reading the book again. The stories of the many women spacefarers serve as a true inspiration to any young person who has ever dreamed of being a part of the global space community, on Earth or reaching for the stars.

Serving in my position as COSPAR IDEA Coordination Officer (ICO), I was very attuned to how Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility had a significance in the lives and careers of the 75 featured Spacefarers. It is astonishing to recall that not until 1976 did the US Space Agency open the door for women to apply to the astronaut corp. Until that year, astronaut candidates were selected only from the field of test pilots—accessible only to men. By 1976 NASA had created the "job" of



TO THE STARS
Women Spacefarers' Legacy
Umberto Cavallaro



Mission Specialist, decreeing a strong sciences background would set the new bar for candidates. In that initial call, over 8,300 people applied, with almost 12% of the applicants being women.

"To the Stars" fairly notes that in the 1970s, and before, many highly-skilled technical and also executive positions were not open to women and minorities. The jobs were not available because the necessary university engineering and sciences degrees were not accepting women in equitable numbers. Perhaps the space program and the chance for brilliant women to be included on a spacecraft with their male counterparts was the

turning point for women and minorities across all industries. These women were at the forefront of a new Space Age and recognized for their extraordinary skills and dedication to excellence. They are accomplished astronauts who just happen to be women.

The book is beautifully written, complete with humour and sadness, immense challenges and opportunities, making up each one of the 75 stories of previously unimagined accomplishments. I have the privilege of personally knowing a couple of these astronauts and salute them as a role model to this day.

*Signing off now to order my paper copy of
"To the Stars – Women Spacefarers' Legacy".*

