

## Proposal for a National Space Monument

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### ABSTRACT

The author has serendipitously designed a monument to honor America's heroic astronauts using holograms.

### INSPIRATION

Much of my childhood was spent in a basement hunkered down over toy trains and slotcars on a sheet of 4 by 8 foot plywood and much of my adult life seems to be spent in a basement hunkered down over a 4 by 8 foot Newport table, building holographic layouts with laser power supplies taking the place of the train transformers, energizing the laser heads whose tightly collimated 633 nm headlight beams travel the path described by mirrors for curved track and beamsplitters for switches, reference and object branches uniting like the linking of the golden spike at the plateholder passenger terminal. So naturally my mind turns to models when I work on art in my spare time, because if you can't afford to make real monumental art then you can certainly scale down.

I picked up a piece of debris from a fender-bender because its shape reminded me of Sally Weber's waterfall piece. I united it with a piece of HOE (Holographic Optical Embellishment, my term for classical laser transmission holograms of wrinkly glass replayed pseudoscopically with white light for the ultimate in tinselly bursts of color!) left over from an abstract composition, and mounted it on a base made in a manner of early Dan Schweitzer, with a trio of "spacemen" encountering it, reminiscent of a scene from the movie "2001". Voila, I had sort of acquired a Schweitzer and a Weber for my collection because I have always admired their work, and at that time (and even this time) I couldn't afford the real things.

It was not until after I had built this little sculpture from a piece of grillwork from a burnt-out Ford Pinto (Remember the car with the built-in self-immolating feature when it got rear-ended option?) that I realized the sub-conscious imagery. Seven stories for the recently lost Shuttle astronauts; three columns for the Apollo astronauts burnt on the launchpad in '69; and in one big monolith for the great granddaddy of the space program, Werner von Braun.

The model is about 20 centimeters tall; but for approximately 25 kilobucks I could make a bigger one with each of the 21 cells containing a 30 by 40 cm holographic plate. It would stand about 3 meters tall, suitable for the lobby of a building.

Twenty-five megabucks would get you a structure built to the scale of the model, so it would stand seven stories tall, to be placed on the Mall in D.C. It could be lit by sunlight or big searchlights at night.

The imagery for either of the above would be abstract cosmic shapes, collaged with holograms of the rockets and capsules that Dr. von Braun had designed. For the former, models could be used, or in the case of the latter, holograms of the actual hardware!

How about a collapsible one that could be taken up in the shuttle and expand to be big enough to be seen orbiting above us, with thruster rockets tilting the structure to the Bragg angle to diffract sunlight down to us so that we can see a little rainbow in the sky? I estimate about 25 gigabucks for this one.

But the best would be to erect one on the moon to diffract the sunlight over to us! It might cost as much as 25 terabucks, but think of how it will overwhelm the extraterrestrials when they come around!

