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**“When we left earth” - NASA Space Program explored at Iola Historical Society presentation this Saturday**

America’s venture into space in the 1960s comes to life in a special presentation Saturday, July 18, at the Iola Historical Society. The presentation begins at 1:00 p.m. at the Society’s “Machine Shed” at 222 Depot Street.

A viewing of a Discovery Channel documentary entitled *Ordinary Superman* will open the program. The documentary looks at NASA’s selection of the seven men who became the country’s first astronauts, ushering in a new space age. They were all test pilots and understood the enormous risks, as no one at the time had attempted a vertical space launch on top of a rocket.

NASA and the Mercury Seven, as the astronauts were dubbed, embarked on a bold journey into the unknown. Rigorous training hours prepared them for travel exceeding 17,000 miles per hour on a converted intercontinental ballistic missile.

Iola native Robert Stamstad will be available after the documentary viewing to talk about the mission and answer questions. Stamstad worked at the Redstone Arsenal (later renamed George Marshall Space Flight Center) in Huntsville, Ala., as an engineer responsible for aligning the guidance and control equipment for the Redstone missiles and Mercury capsules. His work with gyroscopes, telemetry equipment, accelerometers, and spacial attitude-control nozzles were very critical to the success of the launch, ride, and re-entry of the missiles.

The Iola Historical Society’s historic village will be open from Noon to 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays through the end of August. Seven buildings including the Machine Shed, Iola’s original vintage railroad depot, township hall, 1930s hunting log cabin, museum, replica one-room schoolhouse, and replica fire station are all open for viewing.

Admission to both the presentation and the historic buildings is free, although donations are welcome. For more information, go to [www.iolahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.iolahistoricalsociety.org) or [www.ischamber.com](http://www.ischamber.com).

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