



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

San Diego Public Library

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CONTACT: Rita Glick
Serra Mesa-Kearny
Mesa Branch Library
858-573-1397

**An Evening Talk with Bill Ketchum,
Rocket Propulsion Engineer for the Atlas**
The Atlas Missile and the U.S. Space Program Exhibit

SAN DIEGO – Driving through Kearny Mesa, one may never guess the special history that the region holds and its role during the Cold War and Space Race. Stationed in the once barren land during the 1950's, before commercial and residential communities were built, was a project called the Atlas. The Atlas was a weapon system comprising of missiles which was later converted to an important aerospace program. The Atlas propelled America into the Space Age, launching the first Americans into orbit, and sent spacecraft to all the planets in the Solar System, besides providing America's necessary deterrent against the Russians during the Cold War. The aerospace program, funded heavily by the United States government, stimulated growth in the region and has helped transformed Kearny Mesa into the thriving community that it is today.

Bill Ketchum, formerly a Rocket Propulsion Engineer for the Atlas, has generously loaned his materials to the library for this exhibit. The exhibit will feature a scale model of the Atlas and historic photographs of Kearny Mesa.

Mr. Ketchum will be holding an evening talk at the library on Monday, September 22nd, from 6-8 PM. He will discuss the Atlas project and his interesting career before retirement. Come learn more about rocket building from a rocket scientist. He especially invites anyone who had previously worked on the Atlas and is still residing in the area.

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Mr. Ketchum speaks passionately when recalling his memories of the Atlas. “I want people to remember what happened in San Diego 50 years ago when the Space Race began... and what San Diego contributed to winning that space race and protecting Americans.”

The Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library is located at 9005 Aero Drive, San Diego 92123. The Library's hours of operation are Monday and Wednesday 12:30 to 8:00 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Friday 12:30 to 5:30 p.m., Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and Sunday 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

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