

# Simpson Street Free Press

## Women Have Been Traveling to Space for 50 Years

by Masha Vodyanik, age 16

When you think of astronauts, you don't typically think of women. However, the history of women in space has recently hit the 50-year mark.

In 1963, cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, became the first woman in space. She circled the Earth 48 times as a pilot aboard the Soviet Union's Vostok 6 spacecraft. Tereshkova made this journey just two years after the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin.

Currently, only 57 of the 534 people that have traversed space are women, the majority of whom are from the United States. The first American woman in space was Sally Ride, who went up twenty years after Tereshkova. Since then, forty other female astronauts have participated in NASA missions. NASA currently has twelve active female astronauts working a range of jobs, from commanders to pilots.

In the last 50 years, only three of nineteen women trained as Russian or Soviet spacefliers have flown out to space. The most recent female-manned flight was by Elena Kondakova in 1997.

Over generations, the United States has worked on



integrating women into their space program, while the Soviet Union did not see this as a priority. Over the last year, however, Russia changed their recruiting requirements for cosmonauts.

Currently, Russia has two female cosmonauts. Anna Yuryevna Kikina is one of eight cosmonauts recently accepted into the Russian space program. Elena Serova is the other Russian female cosmonaut. She is due to fly to the International Space Station in September 2014.

Over the decades, female involvement in spaceflight has

greatly increased. China recently sent their second female spaceflier, Wang Yaping, to the nation's orbiting module. In addition, Karen Nyberg, a NASA astronaut, is currently living onboard the International Space Station.

Overall, 2013 has been a big year for women in space and with developing female involvement, the years ahead will be even more important.

[Source: [NBCNews.com](http://NBCNews.com)]

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