FUNspeakable Lectures Updated February 2023

“Some speakers are articulate and smart, but Mark goes way beyond. He’s hilariously irreverent and, when appropriate, serious. He has an arsenal of intriguing topics from space to the civil war. In the unlikely event Mark is given a topic about which he is not an expert, he’ll become one, in short order. Yes, I think he’s a genius, but only because it’s true!” - Sharon McCabe

Have you heard about *FUN*speakable?

If you like to hear compelling, informative and evocative presentations that you will not soon forget, then Mark Carlson and *FUN*speakable is for you!

*FUN*speakable offers a highly popular series of entertaining, educational, innovative and fun presentations for retirement communities, schools, adult education programs, museums, clubs and other organizations in San Diego, Orange, Imperial and Riverside Counties.

Mark Carlson has a wide-ranging array of topics of interest to many audiences. History, science, Aviation, Astronautics, disasters, classical history, Ships, civil engineering, folklore, excerpts from popular books, compelling essays, humor and much more. His list covers more than sixty topics from the *Titanic* to the *Hindenburg*, from the Civil War to the Lincoln Assassination, from Lindbergh’s flight to the Landing on the Moon, and from “Confessions of a Guide Dog” to the “Whole Kit and Kaboodle.”

“If you have an opportunity to attend one of Mark's lectures you will not be disappointed. He is one of the best presenters I have encountered.”

- Jack Doxey, Founder, Poway-Black Mountain Toastmasters

☺ New Topics!

• The Lindbergh Kidnapping - The Simple Truth

In 1932 Charles Lindbergh was one of the most famous and revered Americans in the world. His epic 1927 flight to Paris had earned him fame, fortune and the love of a charming woman. Wanting only to have a normal life as a husband and father, Lindbergh had settled into quiet seclusion in Hopewell, New Jersey. Then a nightmare tore apart their lives when someone kidnapped and murdered their infant son. From that day on Charles and Anne Lindbergh faced intense public scrutiny that eventually drove them to foreign shores. A German immigrant, Bruno Richard Hauptmann was arrested for the kidnapping and murder. His trial and execution was as much the result of careful investigation as a kangaroo court of public fury. The many complicated aspects of the investigation and trial are still hotly debated. So many questions remain unanswered. Was Hauptmann a scapegoat? Why did most of the ransom money never turn up? Now you can learn some of the answers.

WITH POWERPOINT

• A Successful Failure- The true account of Apollo 13

The 1995 box-office hit film told the dramatic story of how NASA’s Mission Control helped keep three astronauts alive for three days in a dead spacecraft coming back from the Moon. But the film left out some compelling and even more dramatic details. Why did it really happen? How close did Lovell, Haise and Swigert come to dying in the icy blackness of space? This is your chance to learn the full story of Apollo 13, what NASA called a “successful failure.”

WITH POWERPOINT

☺ TOPICS UNDER Consideration

Please note that the following topics have not been completed and may need some time for final release. Please allow at least two months in the event you wish to have one of these presented.

• Where is Everybody? Intelligent Life in the Universe

There are more stars in the observable universe than there are grains of sand on all the beaches on Earth. There are over 100 billion stars in the Milky Way. Most will have planets and some of those planets will have life. The universe is approximately 14 billion years old, old enough for a planet to have evolved from a bacterium to a spacefaring civilization dozens of times over. So where is everybody? Are we alone? If so, it would be an awful waste of space. Come and hear some of the most advanced theories and ideas about life in space and how we might find it.

WITH POWERPOINT

• “Fire in the spacecraft!” Apollo One

There are watershed moments in history. Pearl Harbor, the Kennedy Assassination, and Apollo One. During the evening of 27 January 1967 astronauts Grissom, White and Chaffee were enduring a long, tedious series of tests while sealed in their Apollo One Command Module as it sat on the unfueled Saturn 1B booster at Cape Canaveral. It was routine, with the Flight Control Team in Houston monitoring the tests. Then something horrible happened and in less than a minute all three men were dead and the CM torn open by the immense pressures of a fire.

What caused the Apollo One fire? What did it mean to the future of American manned spaceflight and the Moon landings? The truth is, if Apollo One had not burned, there would not be any human footprints on the Moon.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Victory Through Airpower – the United States Army Air Forces in World War II

As far back as the end of the Great War, airpower was a theory. The wood and fabric planes of the Great war were a far cry from what would one day change the course of world events. By 1945 fleets of sleek and fast powerful warplanes destroyed an enemy’s war industry. This is the story of how the United States Army Air Corps grew into a global force that helped to win a world war. The men and planes of the Eighth, Fifth, Ninth, and Twentieth Air Forces changed warfare forever. But it almost did not happened.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Flattops – The History of the Aircraft Carrier

The first naval aviators flew dirigibles and floatplanes, and their role was little mor than as scouts for the mighty battleships of the traditional U. S. Navy. In 1922 an old collier named the *Jupiter* went into drydock and emerged to change the face of naval power. As the new carrier, *USS Langley* was the training ground for the first generation of naval aviators, the men who would one day bring the might of a new United States Navy to Japan’s very shores.

This is the story of the most influential and decisive arm of the Navy and how it evolved from total obscurity to change war at sea forever.

WITH POWERPOINT

• When Iron Ruled the Waves – *Monitor* and *Virginia*

March 9, 1862 marked a moment when the world changed and history was made. Two new warships, both constructed in a whirlwind of desperation and patriotism arrived at the same point in time and space to begin the first battle between ironclad warships. The Confederate *CSS Virginia*, built upon the burned hull of a Union steam frigate, and the radical Union *USS Monitor*, traded shot and fury in a three-hour duel that changed history. *Monitor* was designed and built in record time to challenge the dangerous Confederate ironclad that could destroy the Union ships blockading Norfolk. While they failed to inflict serious damage on each other, neither survived the year. The concept, design and construction of the two ironclads made every other warship in the world obsolete. This is the story of the first time iron ruled the waves.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Sink ‘em All! The U. S. Navy’s Submarine War in the Pacific

The U. S. Pacific Fleet submarines were one of the most effective forces in the Second World War. But they did not start out that way. Originally tasked to patrol ahead of a surface battle fleet, subs were little mor than underwater scouts. But Pearl Harbor, having \put the big battleships out of action, forced the navy to use the subs in the same way Germany did, as underwater commerce raiders. Japan, an island nation, dependent on sea trade, could be strangled by sinking every ship flying the Rising Sun.

More than three hundred subs saw service in the war, and in the end, sank 2.5 million tons of enemy shipping. The cost was high. Fifty-three American subs went to the bottom with their crews. Submarines commanded by Morton, O’Kane, Fluckey and others became legend. This is the amazing story of the Silent Service and how it helped win the war.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Real Butch ^ Sundance

The wildly popular1969 film starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford pushed two relatively unremembered outlaws into legend. Robert Leroy Parker and Harry Longabaugh, along with the Wild Bunch of the Hole in the Wall Gang, were known for bank and train robberies in the late 1890s. But much of what you have been told is pure fiction. Sundance was not the handsome quick draw gunslinger of the film, but a hard-drinking horse thief. Butch was less a charismatic leader than a follower. Sundance’s girlfriend, Etta Place is virtually unknown to history. While there is evidence they both died in San Vicente Bolivia in 1908, some accounts say that Butch survived until the 1930s. Come and learn the REAL, not REEL, Butch ^ Sundance.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Great Challenge: Building Apollo

When anyone talks about Project Apollo, it usually centers on the astronauts. They have always been the most visible point of the Apollo pyramid.

But let us not forget the incredible feat of building Apollo, from the massive Saturn V to the Vehicle Assembly Buildings, from the immensely complex Command and Service Modules to the amazing Lunar Module, and from the huge crawler transporter to the Launch Utility Tower. The hardware of Apollo transcended every technical discipline ever developed. Even the F1 rocket engines that pushed 3,000 tons of booster and spacecraft into the sky were orders of magnitude greater than anything ever built.

This is the real story of Apollo’s Stallions and the 400,000 people who made them into reality.

WITH POWERPOINT

• X-15: America’s First Spacecraft

While the nation’s eyes and adoration were focused on the seven Mercury astronauts, and waiting to send a man into space, another, almost forgotten endeavor was doing just that in the skies over Edwards Air Force Base in California. Another seven young pilots were flying the remarkable X-15 rocket plane into space, flying faster than any other American. Neil Armstrong, Joe Engle, Bob White and others reached space first and set unheard-of altitude records. The X-15 flew 199 times, more than Mercury, Gemini, Apollo and the Shuttle combined. Come and listen to the story of how these men, all of whom were astronauts, put the vaunted Project Mercury into its long, black shadow.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Death of a Titan – The *USS Shenandoah* Tragedy

In September 1925, the United States’ first dirigible, *Shenandoah* was torn apart in a storm over Ohio. Half her crew were lost, and the rest endured a harrowing ride through the heart of a fierce thunderhead until coming to rest in a valley. Why did the ship crash? And why was it ordered to fly well after the start of the storm season? Here is the story of the ill-fated ZR-1, the U. S. first rigid airship in the United States Navy.

WITH POWERPOINT

ဵ• Thermopylae and Salamis – When Greece changed the World

In the Fifth Century BC Greece and Persia fought to the death on land and sea. Emperor Xerxes, leading a mighty armada of ships and troops invaded the first democratic nation on Earth. Greece, a conglomeration of separate city-states, banded together to fight the mighty host. At a narrow defile of Thermopylae, and a constricted bay at Salamis, two Greek leaders, the Spartan Leonidas and the Athenian Admiral Themistocles, conducted desperate and brilliant campaigns to defeat Xerxes and save the future of democracy. Our own American liberty is the direct descendant of those ancient Greek heroes.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Atoms for Peace – Ike’s Deadly Nuclear Dream

When Eisenhower became President in 1953 he began planning a bizarre and dangerous national effort known as “Atoms for Peace.” It was nothing less than a campaign to show the peaceful benefits of atom bombs, the program would use the nation’s nuclear arsenal to blast new mines, lakes, harbors, a new canal across Panama, and control the weather. Even more, the United States Air Force hatched an audacious scheme to develop a nuclear-powered super bomber that could stay in the air for weeks at a time would become the ultimate guarantor of world peace. All through the harnessing of the new idol created from the invisible atom. This is something few Americans ever heard of but should never forget.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Casting Light on the Dark Ages

Today we freely accept a need for technology to keep the world working. For centuries humanity has been improving the tools that are as much a part of daily life as food and clothing. Yet it may surprise you to learn that the long road to modern times began ten thousand years ago. The peoples of the Middle and Far East, the Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Christians invented metallurgy, writing, agriculture, trade, medicine, travel and communications. The fifteen centuries during what has long since erroneously been termed “The Dark Ages,” was one of the most dynamic times in human history. This presentation will take you back ten millennia to the beginning of Humanity’s most technological advances.

WITH POWERPOINT

•Steel and Flesh – the Age of Swords and Armor

For the better part of three thousand years, men have fought one another in countless clashes and battles, on foot, horseback, and on the sea. They used swords, lances, axes, and arrows to inflict mortal wounds on their enemies. The development of edged and pointed weapons dominated the minds of great thinkers like Julius Caesar, Tacitus, Leonardo da Vinci and many others from before the birth of Christ and into the late Middle Ages. It was a time when life was cheap.

Here you will meet the warriors who shaped civilization with swords and lances. Alexander the Great, Xerxes, Leonidas, Themistocles, Attila the Hun, William the Conqueror, Henry V , and a dozen others fought battles that are still legendary. This is the story of how early warfare developed, how the weapons evolved, and the legacy they left behind.

WITH POWERPOINT

Ancient Mysteries

• Part 4: The Great Flood and The Star of Bethlehem

We all know the story of Noah and the Ark, but the real root of the story is the Great Flood. For 40 days and 40 nights God CAUSED RAIN TO INUNDATE THE WORLD, EXTERMINATING AL HUMAN AND ANIMAL LIFE, SAVE THAT WHICH WAS ON THE Ark. Did the flood really happen? Did it totally cover the Earth? When did it happen? Archeologists have at last sifted the sands and revealed the truth.

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25 in the year 1. Scholars as far back as the 5th Century Ad have placed his birth year as 6BC. There is some astrological and astronomical evidence to support this date, but new information puts Christ’s birth six years earlier, and in August, not December. Was Halley’s Comet the Star of Bethlehem that led the Magi to the manger? Perhaps this will explain why the stores begin the Christmas shopping season in August. Follow the Star to the real Nativity.

WITH POWERPOINT

Ancient Mysteries

• Part 5: Forty Years of Miracles - The Exodus

When Moses led the Children of Israel from the bondage of Pharoah, he took them to the mountain where he was given the word of God from a burning bush. Then, to cleanse the sins of the people, he took them for a forty-year odyssey across Sinai. Along the way he worked a multitude of miracles that seem too good to be true. Yet it really happened. The burning bush, water from rock, a bevy of quail, Manna from Heaven, these miracles performed by Moses on the way to the Promised Land are demonstrable fact. Follow Moses and Joshua from Egypt to Canaan!

WITH POWERPOINT

• Captain Kidd - The Pirate Scapegoat

Captain William Kidd was an honest and law-abiding businessman. In 1697 he entered into a privateering contract with the British Crown and New York Governor Bellomont.

In 1699, Kidd was arrested for plundering £20,000 of gold, jewels and riches from the ships of the Great Mogul of India. He had made a deal with the King and Governor to share the riches, but they chose to hang him instead. Except for what he shared out to his crew and some loot buried on Gardner’s Island, most of Kidd’s treasure, worth in excess of $20,000,000 today remains missing. What happened to the booty? Did Kidd hide it where it has never been found? Did the Crown cover up the truth and hang Kidd to keep its secret?

More than three hundred years later, Captain Kidd’s last voyage still creates wonder and the hunt for buried treasure.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The True Saga of the Mutiny on the *Bounty*

Since Nordhoff & Hall’s famous trilogy was published in 1932, three major Hollywood films have told the legendary epic of the ill-fated *Bounty* during her 1787 voyage to Tahiti. In every case Captain William Bligh is portrayed as a sadistic tyrant and Fletcher Christian as a handsome hero. In reality Bligh was a young, idealistic officer and Christian was nothing like Clark Gable. What really sparked the mutiny? How did Bligh make it back to England? Was Christian murdered on Pitcairn’s Island? Did Bligh have to account for his actions? Now you can learn what really happened to the *Bounty* and her crew 230 years ago. You may be amazed.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Silver Lining - Plagues in History

Throughout history Mankind has been decimated by plagues and disease. More people have died from invisible bacteria and viruses than in all the wars since the dawn of time. Scores of millions have fallen from influenza, bubonic plague, malaria, cholera, typhoid and other diseases. For most of history the causes were unknown. But there is a silver lining. Nearly every pandemic led to a greater understanding of disease and physiology. Yet they also had positive outcomes in trade, communication, international relations, science and even statistical analysis. Strange as it may seem, the most devastating pandemics have benefited humanity.

WITH POWERPOINT

• From Sea to Sea - Building the Panama Canal

Today a ship can pass between the Atlantic and Pacific in less than twelve hours. Back in the 1880s, it was the dream of the man who had built the Suez Canal to do the impossible, to dig a canal across the narrow Isthmus of Panama. The French tried and failed after losing more than 2 billion Francs and at least 23,000 lives. Panama was hell on Earth, a deathtrap of Yellow Fever, Malaria, mudslides, and torrential rains. Yet in 1902 the new American president, Teddy Roosevelt declared that he could “make the dirt fly.” For the next twelve years, the entire world watched as Americans armed with a massive array of huge machines, supreme overconfidence and absolutely no concept of what they were getting themselves into drove their way through fifty miles of Panamanian jungles, swamps and mountains. It was impossible, it was epic in scale. But it was done. Here is the real story of how Americans built the Panama Canal.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Rails across America – The Transcontinental Railroad

From 1863 to 1869, two railroad companies charged pell-mell from Omaha, Nebraska and Sacramento, California. The Union Pacific raced west over the Great Plains while the smaller Central Pacific slogged its way through the rugged Sierra Nevada Mountains headed east. The goal was for each company to lay down the most track before they met at a tiny hill called Promontory, Utah. The story of the effort to build the first transcontinental railroad in history is a saga of patriotism and greed, industry and scandal. This is how it happened.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Tidal Wave: the Mission to Burn Hitler’s Oil

On 1 August 1943, 180 B-24 Liberator heavy bombers left Benghazi Libya to fly the longest and most audacious bombing mission of the Second World War. They were to fly to Ploesti, Romania, to destroy the huge refineries that provided Hitler with a third of his oil. Each plane was loaded with a ton of bombs and had specific targets for those bombs. Operation Tidal Wave was flown at nearly tree-top level to assure perfect accuracy. But things went wrong from the start, resulting in chaos, confusion and the loss of 53 Liberators. Yet the bomber crews did managed to destroy a part of the target.

Today Tidal Wave remains one of the most remarkable bombing missions ever. Here you will meet the men who flew it.

WITH POWERPOINT

CATEGORIES

☺ War and the Military

• Into the Valley of Death - The True Story of the Charge of the Light Brigade

In October 1854 five light cavalry regiments were ordered to charge down a mile-long valley at Balaclava in the Crimea. Armed only with sabers and lances, six hundred and seventy men rode into the blazing muzzles of twenty-four Russian cannon and thousands of rifles. The Charge of the Light Brigade was the most famous cavalry action in history. It was also the biggest blunder, resulting in over five hundred dead. To this day the charge of the lancer, dragoon and hussar cavalry at Balaclava has spawned more legend than truth, more glory than reality. Despite being directly responsible for the disaster, the three British generals never lost their place in the pantheon of heroes. The men and horses that charged into that valley of death paid the ultimate price. Alfred, Lord Tennyson enshrined the charge into the most famous poem in British history. But the truth is more compelling. Here is what really happened to the “Gallant Six hundred.”

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Great Escape

One of the most popular WWII movies was “The Great Escape” starring Steve McQueen. Based on an actual escape from German Stalag Luft III in March of 1944, the movie took a great deal of dramatic license to tell a gripping story. In fact, the truth is far more compelling and remarkable. Several hundred British officers spent more than a year under the scrutiny of armed German guards to plan, prepare and tunnel to freedom. It was the most audacious escape from a POW camp in history. Seventy-five prisoners made it out and Germany was in chaos. All but three men were recaptured. Fifty were brutally murdered by the Gestapo. The Great Escape is a true account of the flat refusal of a group of men to remain locked up in time of war. This is their story.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Marines’ Lost Squadron

In January 1944 a new Marine fighter squadron was preparing for their role in the largest amphibious and air assault on Japanese forces in the Pacific. But instead of facing a human enemy these eager Marine pilots found themselves confronted with an even more implacable and deadly foe: a Pacific typhoon. Twenty-three young men took off on a routine ferry flight, but only two-thirds of them survived. It was the worst non-combat loss of a Marine squadron in history. The disaster was covered up by the Navy and has remained largely forgotten. Now, after three years of careful research into official documents, dozens of interviews and painstaking investigation Mark Carlson, the author of the new book “The Marines’ Lost Squadron” tells the whole compelling story and reveals one of the last dark secrets of World War Two.

The author will sell and autograph books at this event.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Ghosts on the Little Bighorn

on June 25, 1876 two warring armies came to death blows in a quiet river valley in Montana. Elements of George A. Custer’s 7th Cavalry Regiment and six tribes of the Sioux and Cheyenne nations fought for supremacy and survival. The battle of the Little Bighorn has long become the iconic clash between the red man and the white man. What led to the war? Why did Custer lead his men to doom? What really happened that fateful day? Now you can learn the truth about Custer’s Last Stand.

WITH POWERPOINT

• World War II – Through Their Eyes

The Second World War and the people who remember it are told in a series of vignettes and accounts from the beaches and oceans, skies and jungles. This is not the history of the war, but about those who fought it. Here you will meet real men and women who saw the war up close and personal.

WITH POWER POINT

• Admiral Nelson’s Three Great Battles

Over two hundred years ago, the mighty Royal Navy was the unchallenged master of the seas. But England’s ‘wooden walls’ were the only bastion of security against the ambitions of Napoleon Bonaparte. Only the audacious and clever tactics of a small, frail man who was often seasick stood between Napoleon and his invasion of England.

Admiral Horatio Nelson’s three greatest naval battles at the Nile, Copenhagen and Trafalgar landed the triple blows which sank Napoleon’s dreams.

Through detailed diagrams and colorful descriptions, learn how Nelson and his ‘Band of Brothers’ planned and executed the battles which cost him his life and made his name legend.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Birth of the United States Navy and the Naval War of 1812

In 1794 the new American nation was under armed terrorist attack from the corsairs of the Barbary states of North Africa. This finally forced congress to pass the Naval Act, authorizing the staggering sum of $688,000 for the construction of a permanent navy. The six frigates built in every major Atlantic seaport were small, fast and hardly a match for the mighty Royal Navy. But they and their crews changed the world. Learn the story of how the U.S. Navy came to be and how it made the rest of the world take the new nation seriously.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Battles of the Civil War

Lee’s Last Hopes

Chancellorsville, Gettysburg and the Wilderness.

Places long since enshrined in the pages of history. At Chancellorsville Lee lost his most effective general to sheer fate and yet was his most stunning victory. The three days at Gettysburg was where pride and an unquenchable faith in God’s blessing turned the tide against the Confederacy. Lee’s road to defeat began at the Wilderness when he first faced Ulysses S. Grant. See the battles in detailed diagrams and personal accounts.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Pearl Harbor: Day of Infamy, Day of Sacrifice – the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor is one of America’s darkest defeats. But were the Japanese able to achieve the attack with such success only because of their cunning and planning? Or was there an American element to the attack? Were FDR, the Chief of Naval Operations and Churchill also responsible? Were the 3,000 men and women killed that day betrayed by a government who wanted the U.S. to enter the war? The spark of controversy has been fueled over the last 60 years and only now is another truth being revealed.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Doolittle Raid and Midway – Turning the Tide in the Pacific

In 1942 a small, daring and secretive bombing raid on Tokyo set in motion a path which would soon lead to the end of Japan’s conquest of the Pacific. Just six weeks later the nearly defeated remnants of the U.S. Pacific Fleet staked everything on a roll of the dice and smashed a victorious numerically superior Japanese Navy at Midway. But it could have been very different.

Learn how it was done, and how narrow the margin for victory really was.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Which way did they go? Air Wing 8 at Midway

One of the mysteries of the Battle of Midway concerns the failure of *USS Hornet’s* air wing to find the Japanese fleet during the most critical phase of the battle. Sixty dive bombers and fighters were on the same course and time as the other two air wings, but never saw the enemy fleet. Only the torpedo planes, separated from the others, manage to find and attack the Japanese carriers and were wiped out. Why did fifty dive bombers fail to find them? Their participation could have changed the course of the battle and kept the *USS Yorktown* from being lost. What happened? The real reason was mired in bad judgment, poor leadership and pure arrogance. The truth was only revealed forty years after the battle when a historian discovered a vital clue written on the back of a ten-dollar bill. Now you can learn the real story of the mystery of Air Wing 8.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Remember the *Maine*! Hearst, Roosevelt, and the Spanish-American War

On February 15, 1898, the American battleship *Maine* exploded in Havana Harbor, killing most of her crew. Spain was blamed for the disaster and the U. S. declared war. The battlefields were the Philippines and Cuba, long under Spanish rule. The war launched William Randolph Hearst and Theodore Roosevelt into legend.

But the war, touted in the Hearst press as a great crusade to end Spanish tyranny, was actually nothing more than an excuse for America to seize control of the former Spanish colonies. And the *Maine*, the powder keg that ignited this “Splendid little war?” Just why *did* it explode? The answer may surprise you.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Great War and the Dawn of the American Century

A century ago, Europe was torn apart as old empires and mighty nations came to death blows across the face of the globe. At sea, in the air and in trenches that still scar the landscape, more than twenty million people died in what was carelessly called “the war to end all wars.” But it was only the beginning of the century that shaped and threatened the entire world. The roots of Nazism, racial genocide, the Cold War and terrorism were born in the years 1914 to 1918. This is how the Great War began, how and where it was fought and how the United States came to consider it a great adventure. We still feel the shocks in our own time.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Booth and Lincoln: The Simple Truth

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln brought to a close the bloodiest war in American history. But even now, more than 150 years later, it is still the subject of endless speculation and controversy. Recent publications have “exposed” a “major government conspiracy to allow the assassination and cover it up,” but this is one time where the truth is just as compelling. John Wilkes Booth worked almost totally alone in his zeal to kill Lincoln. The men who planned and executed his insane plot were not a well-organized, highly trained group of patriots backed by a deposed government, but a tiny band of malcontents, drunks and feeble sycophants. With archival photos and maps, Mark Carlson will tell you how and why Booth really killed Abraham Lincoln.

WITH POWERPOINT

☺ Ancient World

• Mysteries of the Ancient World

Part 1: Atlantis and The Day The Sun Stood Still

Atlantis. El Dorado. Easter Island. Sodom and Gomorrah. The Parting of the Red Sea and the Day Joshua made the Sun stand still. Even today, centuries later, these places and events have the power to evoke awe, wonder and endless speculation among historians, biblical scholars and crackpots. What is the real story behind the legends? Was there really an Atlantis? Did Joshua really stop the Earth from rotating? Was there really a city of Gold in the Andes? Who built the strange sculptures on Easter Island? Did Moses really part the Red Sea? While some mysteries may never be solved, the truth is often not as hard to find as you might think.

• Part 2: Parting the Red Sea and Easter Island

While Cecil B. DeMille and Charlton Heston made a great show of the parting of the Red Sea, the truth is far less dramatic. But it is still a remarkable event in Biblical history.

Easter Island is the most remote spot on the face of the Earth, yet it has a fascinating past and holds a great mystery. Who carved and erected the strange Moai statues and why did they do it? Now you can find out. Join us for part 2 of the Mysteries of the Ancient World.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Part 3: Sodom and Gomorrah and El Dorado

The very names of Sodom and Gomorrah still evoke images of great sins and the Wrath of a Vengeful God. But there is a real truth behind the morality story. The Five Cities of the Plains near the Dead Sea did once exist and they were consumed in a fiery devastation. but the sins of Sodom did not cause the cities to be destroyed. Find out what really happened.

The fabled city of gold, or El Dorado has been sought by explorers and treasure hunters since the Fifteenth Century. But no one has ever found it. did it really exist? Here is the real story behind the golden legend.

WITH POWERPOINT

Parts 4 and 5 are listed in TOPICS UNDER Consideration Below

• The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

The Great Pyramid at Giza is the only one of the Seven Wonders still intact, and even it is a pale shadow of its former glory. The Lighthouse at Alexandria and the Temples of Zeus are long gone. The almost-mythical Hanging Gardens of Babylon has passed into folklore with no evidence of what it once was.

The Seven Wonders awed Mankind from the Second Century BC to the Modern Era. Today, archaeologists and architects have been able to recreate some of these magnificent structures that defined the world of the Eastern Mediterranean. Now you can see what they looked like and what it took to build them.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Standing the Test of Time - Building the Great Monuments

The Pyramids. Stonehenge. Karnak. Abu Simbel, Hatshepsut’s Obelisk, Machu Picchu, Some of the greatest and most enduring monuments to mankind’s industry, ingenuity and faith.

How were they built? What did it take to raise the huge towers of stone from the barren plains of Giza? How could the ancient Inca have carried massive stone blocks weighing many tons dozens of miles to place them with mathematical precision upon one another? The same questions remain for Stonehenge and Karnak. Here is your chance to learn some of the answers and plumb the mind of our inventive and amazing ancestors.

WITH POWERPOINT

☺ Disasters, Ships and the Sea

• Pyrates and Plunder

What is it about pirates that still sparks the imagination 300 years after they prowled the Spanish Main? The Golden Age of Pirates lasted less than a generation, yet from movies to novelty songs, from Disneyland to folklore, legendary buccaneers like Blackbeard, Captain Kidd, Bartholomew Roberts and many others still haunt the minds of children and adults alike. Did they really make their captives walk the plank? Did they bury chests of gold doubloons and jewels, leaving a dead man to tell no tales? Here is your chance to find the buried treasure in the legends.

WITH POWERPOINTS

• Stephen Decatur: Duel or Murder?

On May 22, 1820 at Bladensburg Maryland, two naval officers faced one another on the field of honor. Commodore Stephen Decatur, the most famous hero of the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812 had been challenged to a duel by a former friend named James barron. Barron had accused Decatur for the ruin of his naval career and only wanting the return of his honor. They faced each other over the barrels of two pistols. This was not an uncommon event in the early 19th century, but the two seconds had one thing in common: they both hated Stephen Decatur. Was it a duel or a coldly planned murder?

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Fiery Ordeal - The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake

At 5:15on a calm morning in April 1906, the colorful and lively city of San Francisco was suddenly shaken by a violent earthquake that measured 7.8 on the Richter Scale. The Earth shook and the sky burned as the city by the bay was consumed in an inferno that lasted for three days. Famous and beautiful landmarks and Gold Rush-era mansions were reduced to splinters and ashes. More than three thousand people lost their lives. Even today more than eleven decades later, traces of the disaster still linger. This is the story of the day that defined San Francisco as a Phoenix that rose from the ashes.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Palaces of the Sea - the Great Liners

*Queen Mary, Olympic, Vaterland, Aquitania, Normandie*, names of some of the grandest vessels ever to sail the North Atlantic. Carrying the rich and poor of Europe to the New World, the great liners occupied a long-vanished era in maritime and world history. In triumph and tragedy, in peace and war, in prosperity and poverty they were the largest and most majestic ships ever to sail the seas. The fast and famous ocean greyhounds were the national status symbols of four generations.

Part 1: Sail, Steam, and Size - 1840 - 1918

Part 2: Golden Age of speed, Luxury and War - 1920 - 1950

WITH POWERPOINT

• *Andrea Doria* – An Impossible Tragedy

July 1956, the Italian Liner *Andrea Doria*, one of the most modern and beautiful liners on the Atlantic was nearing New York. Aboard her were nearly 1700 passengers and crew. Approaching was the Swedish liner *Stockholm* out of New York. Both vessels were equipped with modern radar and radio, and were following the others’ progress.

Yet in a few terrifying minutes, both vessels steered a course that led them to collide. The *Stockholm* lost her bow as she sliced into the *Doria’s* starboard hull, killing dozens of passengers and dooming the lovely ship. The true tragedy took place before the eyes of the world as many crewmembers abandoned the passengers and left them to fend for themselves. This is the story of the first televised sinking of a modern ocean liner.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Death on the Mississippi – The *Sultana* Disaster of 1865

The paddle wheeler Sultana, built to plod the mighty Mississippi, had a passenger capacity of 375 persons. But on April 27, 1865, *Sultana* was chartered by unscrupulous Union officials to carry recently released POWs back north. The boat, already fighting a fast-running spring flood, was loaded with almost two thousand Union soldiers, each desperate to see home after a brutal war and imprisonment in inhuman squalor. Just after midnight, as the cruelly laden riverboat struggled up past Memphis, Tennessee, the boilers exploded. *Sultana* was torn apart and ablaze from bow to stern. More than 1,200 men died that night. To this day it remains the worst maritime disaster in American history. Yet it has been almost totally forgotten. *Sultana’s* remains still lay buried, waiting for the day when America finally remembers her.

WITH POWERPOINT

• *Titanic* - The Liner, the Legend, the Legacy – The last *Titanic* survivor died in 2009, but the story of the ill-fated liner still fascinates to this day. Learn the hidden facts of the Ship of Dreams, the stories of the passengers, crew and officers. What really happened that cold night in April 1912? How did the ship sink? Who was to blame and what was the legacy of *Titanic*?

WITH POWERPOINT

• The *Lusitania* Sinking

In May 1915, during the height of the Great War, *RMS Lusitania*, queen of the Cunard Line, was carrying 2200 passengers and crew into the War Zone of the British Isles. They had been warned that any ships flying the Union Jack were liable to be torpedoed by German U-boats. In broad daylight in sight of the Irish coast, she was struck by a torpedo from the *U-20* and sank in twenty minutes.

The loss of life was second only to *Titanic*, but the repercussions and blame went much farther and ultimately led to the United States’ entry into the Great War.

WITH POWER POINT

☺ Aviation and Astronautics

• Flights to Oblivion, Flights to Fame – The New York to Paris Race

The vast Atlantic Ocean, long a barrier to the emerging technology of flight was challenged by a few brave men-and women-in the years following the First World War. Learn the hidden and fascinating stories of the pilots and pioneers who risked and in many cases, lost their lives to reach across thee trackless sea for a $25,000 prize and worldwide fame. Only one lone man, Charles Lindbergh actually did it. Here is the story of how it was done.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Drowned Eagle - The Amelia Earhart Mystery

On July 1, 1937, famed aviatrix Amelia Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan took off from Lae, New Guinea on the longest leg of their flight around the world. Their destination was tiny Howland Island, 2,600 miles away in the vast, empty Pacific Ocean.

Twenty hours later a few garbled and faint radio calls from their Lockheed Electra were the last ever heard from them. A huge air and sea search turned up no trace. To this day the disappearance of Earhart and Noonan remains aviation’s most enduring and puzzling mystery.

Here is the story of that last flight, the legends, myths and possibly, the answer to what happened to Amelia Earhart.

WITH POWER POINT

• The *Hindenburg* and the Age of the Giant Airship

In May 1937, one of the most fascinating and awe-inspiring eras of human history died in a cataclysm of fire and death at Lakehurst New Jersey. Learn the story of the huge behemoths that once dominated the skies, raining both bombs and goodwill across the world. From ‘Crazy old Count’ Zeppelin to Adolf Hitler, from the flawed *R101* to the *Shenandoah*, here is the story.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Bound for Glory – The Disastrous 1927 Dole Derby

Charles Lindbergh’s successful flight to Paris in May, 1927 was the catalyst that launched a wave of aviation hysteria across the United States. Every man who could fly a plane was determined to achieve the same fame as Lindy, whatever the risk. Hawaiian pineapple mogul James Dole sponsored an air derby and offered a prize of $25,000 to the first person to fly from California to Oahu. Thirteen planes entered the competition, despite the staggering difficulty in flying 2,400 miles to find Hawaii, a tiny dot in the vastness of the Pacific Ocean. One by one the entrants took off, bound for glory and fame. But only five planes made it into the air from Alameda. Two reached Hawaii. The others were lost at sea and never seen again. The Dole Derby was the worst air disaster since the invention of the airplane. Now you can learn the full account of this ill-fated business venture and hear the stories of the people who attempted it.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The First Men in Space

In 1959 seven American test pilots became the single-combat warriors competing for the new frontier of space. With no experience and little technical knowledge, NASA began a crash program to reach space before the Soviet Union. This is the story of how a team of dedicated pioneers and visionaries took the first steps off Earth and reached for the stars.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Miracle of Gemini

The footprints Mankind left on the Moon from 1969 to 1972 were the result of a decade of hard work, patriotism and dedication by hundreds of thousands of Americans. But it was Project Gemini, virtually forgotten between the pioneering Mercury and titanic Apollo programs that made the lunar landings possible. Gemini was the incredible technological achievement that proved the innovative hardware and techniques. Without Gemini, there would be no human footprints on the Moon.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Apollo: Bridge to the Moon

It has been more than fifty years since Neil Armstrong proclaimed ‘One giant leap for mankind.’ We can look back at it with the pride of national accomplishment. But in 1957, no one believed we could fly into space, let alone the Moon. The panic of Sputnik, the pioneers of Mercury, the progress of Gemini and the tragedies and triumphs of Apollo were the greatest scientific and engineering challenge 400,000 Americans ever attempted for a national goal. John F. Kennedy took the first step. Learn the real story of our journey to the Moon, where the footprints remain to this day

WITH POWERPOINT

• NASA’s Golden Age

A summary of the glory years of NASA from 1961 to 1975. Tells the story of Projects Mercury, Gemini, Apollo and Skylab. This is the story of how Mankind reached the Moon and the men and women who made it happen in the greatest technological crusade in human history.

WITH POWERPOINT

☺ Inventions and Great Construction

• The First World Wide Web - The Amazing Telegraph

For the greatest part of human history, information could not travel any faster than the pace of a horse or the speed of a ship. By the middle of the 18th Century France and Britain had developed a series of towers that sent optical messages across the land. But it was primitive and slow. In 1844 Samuel F. B. Morse invented the first practical electric telegraph and linked Washington and Baltimore. His invention transformed the world and by the 1870s, more than 650,000 miles of telegraph cables linked the world from city to city, from nation to nation and across the oceans. Ironically the telegraph was seen as a means of eliminating war and promoting human understanding. Today’s Internet is the direct descendant of the electric telegraph. This is how what was called the most remarkable invention in human history came to shape the future.

WITH POWERPOINT

• From Silk to Silicon– The Genesis of the Computer

Would you be surprised to learn that the computer was conceived before the American Civil War? Or that the first major breakthrough in information storage was a byproduct of French silk weaving? Or that the first programmable computers helped to win the Second World War? This is the story of how the most influential technology in history became a reality. It’s not just gigabytes and microchips. The modern computer has a fascinating history.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Brooklyn Bridge: the Great Work of the Age

Built in an age of steam power and horse-drawn wagons, the bridge stands today as a monument to engineering and industry. Learn the story of the greatest engineering work of the age...of the men and women, of the triumphs and tragedies, towers of monolithic stone and spun webs of steel to bring to life Washington Roebling’s Magnum Opus. Learn what it took to make the dream of two cities into a reality.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Hoover Dam – The Greatest Work of the Depression

From 1930 to 1936, tens of thousands of out of work, desperate men traveled to the hot deserts outside of Las Vegas, Nevada to find work on the biggest project in the history of civil engineering. The U.S. Department of the Interior and Bureau of Reclamation were set on a goal to bring water to the arid lands along the vast Colorado River Valley. But could it be done?

Six major companies led by a hard-driving dam builder dug huge tunnels and blasted thousands of tons of rock from the walls of the canyon to erect the biggest dam in history. The massive project was beset by accidents, deaths, strikes and the worst working conditions since the digging of the Panama Canal.

Here is the story of why and how it was done, and who did it.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Lamp at the Golden Door - Building the Statue of Liberty

Did you know that when Auguste Bartholdi first envisioned the Statue of Liberty he wanted it to be a lighthouse? Did you realize that the U.S. Government wanted nothing to do with it? And that when it finally arrived as a gift from the people of France to America there was no place to put it? Here is the story of how Lady Liberty came to be on tiny Bedlow’s Island in New York Harbor, how it was designed, built and finally shone her light on the New World.

WITH POWER POINT

• Palomar: Bridge to the Stars

In 1921 no one knew about galaxies, quasars or nebulae. The universe was limited by the shortsighted vision of the small telescopes and narrow view of the astronomers. But one man, with tenacity and his unbounded dreams unleashed the world of giant science by shepherding into being the largest telescope in the world. The 200” Hale Telescope on Palomar Mountain took 20 years and 6 million dollars to build. And the universe hasn’t been the same since.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Eyes on the Universe: A History of Astronomy from Pythagoras to Hubble

Primitive man began looking to the skies long before the advent of recorded history. He found strange lights and moving dots, and peopled the heavens with their gods.

From Pythagoras to Copernicus, from Kepler to Lowell, and from Hale to Hubble, this lecture outlines humanity’s search for knowledge in the skies.

The first primitive telescope in 1610 allowed Galileo to prove that Earth was not the center of the universe. In the 1920s Edwin Hubble made the universe far grander than ever imagined.

And his namesake the Hubble Space Telescope has given us vistas almost beyond imagination. See into the past and the future.

WITH POWERPOINT

☺ Human Interest and Film

• Confessions of a Guide Dog

Excerpts and stories from the humorous and inspirational new book ‘Confessions of a Guide Dog - The Blonde Leading the Blind’ by Mark Carlson and Musket

The author tells the remarkable story of how he met his first Guide dog Musket, their travels, and adventures together.

This is your chance to learn not only how a Guide Dog is trained but how they do their job and, in Musket’s case make an awful lot of people fall in love with him.

He’s not your typical Guide Dog. This is their story - and they’re sticking to it.

For more information about the book, go to www.musketmania.com

WITH POWERPOINT

• Flying on Film – A History of Aviation in Film 1912-2012

A popular book by Mark Carlson

This is the behind-the-scenes story of twenty of Hollywood’s most famous aviation movies from 1927 to 2000. Aviation and film historian and author Mark Carlson describes the production, aircraft, history and trivia of several popular movies from the silent era to the modern action film. Excerpts from interviews with famous actors, stuntmen, pilots and veterans help tell the story behind movies like *Wings, Hell’s Angels, The Great Waldo Pepper, Tora! Tora! Tora!, Top Gun, Amelia, Memphis Belle, Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines* and many others. If you like airplanes, movies and history, this is the place to be.

WITH POWERPOINT

• The Reel Story behind the Classic Movies

Many of the most popular film classics from Hollywood are based on history or biographies. The movie studios used some of history’s most interesting people and events and made box office blockbusters from them. But how much truth is there on the silver screen?

*The Birdman of Alcatraz and Sergeant York*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Bonnie & Clyde*, the Battle of the Little Big Horn in *They Died with Their Boots On*, the world of the Mercury Astronauts in *The Right Stuff*, Mutiny *on the Bounty*, and the action-packed *Top Gun* are typical films in which Hollywood chose to follow its own path to truth. Film historian Mark Carlson shows you the real story behind the movie, the history on the silver screen.

WITH POWERPOINT

• In Defense of the Book

Since ancient times humans have felt the need to communicate, to collect, record and distribute the knowledge of their cultures and experience. From the earliest clay tablets more than 5,000 years ago, to the scrolls of papyrus and bound books we found ways to preserve our legacy for the future. They are all readable even today.

With the ever-faster advance of technology the knowledge preserved is increasing. But the storage life of that same information grows shorter with each generation. And much of it is already lost forever.

‘In Defense of the Book’ is a profound, award-winning essay on the risky electronic path humanity has chosen its limitations and its consequences for the future.

WITH POWERPOINT

• Three Jewels in America’s Natural Crown

A visual and geological tour of the most stunning and interesting attractions at three National Parks. Oregon’s Crater Lake, Wyoming’s Yellowstone and California’s Yosemite. Learn how these places were formed and see the beautiful and unique wonders that nature bestowed on America.

WITH POWERPOINT

☺ Topics with Verbal Presentation

• The Best of Paul Harvey- vignettes from history and legend. Find out the ‘rest of the story’ as you may or may not have heard it before. Guaranteed to make you say “Wow, I never knew that!”

• American Folk Tale Heroes

How well we remember the old folk tales of Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill and Rip van Winkle. Or how about John Henry, Johnny Appleseed and Casey Jones? Were they totally fictional? Or were they based on real people? The truth may surprise and amuse you. Come and hear the story behind some of America’s most enduring and endearing folk tale heroes.

• The Whole Kit and Caboodle – The Story behind Idioms and Phrases

This is it, lock, stock and barrel, the scuttlebutt, the whole nine yards about some of the most interesting and odd idioms and clichés in common use today. Have you ever wondered where the phrase “letting the cat out of the bag,” or “dead ringer” came from? How about “Skid Row,” “two bits,” “upper crust,” “sleep tight” and “right side up?” Each one has its own unique etymology and origin. No need to go off half-cocked or fly by the seat of your pants. Lecturer and author Mark Carlson is going to get down to brass tacks and make the grade for you. So don’t look a gift horse in the mouth, just jump on the bandwagon and learn the ropes.

• Electronic Alzheimer’s – A humorous and compelling essay on how electronic evolution is affecting human evolution

Can you find an address without GPS? Or remember a phone number? Do you know which way is north? Do you forget things you just read? A thousand years ago humans had phenomenal memories and could tell the time, date and navigate by the sun and stars.

Starting three million years ago, tools made us the master of our world. The Human race today is the culmination of environment, heredity and our technology. Mankind has learned to gather and store information in ways that have been both a blessing and a curse. Our dependence on electronic ways of storing and using information is affecting our evolution. What you learn here will amuse and surprise you.

“Mark Carlson is a top-notch presenter. Not only will the audience learn from his wealth of knowledge, but his perspective may cause you to question what you have previously believed about history. Mark successfully creates a wonderful balance of facts, philosophy and humor.” - Sarah Cushman, Program Manager OASIS of San Diego

Some topics work well as a series, such as Pearl Harbor and the Doolittle Raid, or Apollo, Eyes on the Universe and Palomar. *Titanic*, *Lusitania*, *Hindenburg* and the *Andrea Doria* are closely related topics. You may wish to schedule Flights to Fame and Amelia Earhart if your group is interested in aviation. Building the Great Monuments, The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and Mysteries of the Ancient World also work well as a series, just as do the Brooklyn Bridge, Hoover Dam and the Statue of Liberty. For those who want whimsical and lighthearted topics, try the Whole Kit & Kaboodle, The Best of Paul Harvey and American Folk Tale Heroes for your group. Anything is possible.

Mark Carlson, CL, ACS is a past president and award winner in Toastmasters International.

He has been a popular speaker since 2009, giving presentations for OASIS of San Diego, The Continuing Education Center (CEC), Belmont Village, Seacrest Village, Casa de las Campanas, Golden Door Resort & Spa, San Diego Air & Space Museum, Order of Daedelians, Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Fighter Aces Association, *USS Midway* Aircraft Carrier Museum and the Mensa National Conference. He has been a frequent presenter at the Seattle Museum of Flight, National Museum of the United States Air Force, and Unite For Sight International Vision Conferences at Stanford and Yale Universities.

Mark can do presentations on Zoom or in person.

The lectures can run from 1 to 2 hours. Most are accompanied by detailed, colorful and compelling Power Point presentations, but a few, such as “The Whole Kit and Kaboodle” and “The Best of Paul Harvey” are purely verbal. The slide shows are intended to be easily read by persons with visual impairments. Mark provides his own laptop and LCD projector. In some cases, an existing video system with projector and HDMI cable can be utilized.

All that is usually required is a table and/or lectern and a screen.

Fees are reasonable.

Mark can be reached at: 858-472-5419or at: markcarlson2222@outlook.com

“Whatever he’s selling, I’m buying it!” - Wanda Smith