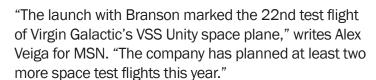
Common Sense

The Division of Adventure

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On Sunday, billionaire
Richard Branson became the
first person to ascend into
space in his own spacecraft
— assuming that myth, old
rumors and sci-fi stories of
god-kings and mad scientists
going to the Moon or Mars
remain just that, myth and
rumor and fi.



Well, explorers and adventurers did not wait till Europe's problems were solved to explore and settle the Americas. They pushed forward.

Thus Branson beat Jeff Bezos into space — depending how you figure. Later in the month Bezos's Blue Origin spacecraft is set to launch Amazon's less-than-beloved billionaire even higher above the planet.*

The billionaire space race is on, with the next level to be reached when regularly scheduled flights become the norm, ticket sales and all.

This is really "just" thrill-ride fare we are talking



about here — and likely when commercial space travel first becomes normalized. Neither man is aiming to rocket into orbital space.

Yet.

Which is not to say this is not of great significance.

Of course, the fledgling industry receives criticism. Why go to space now, some say, when we have so many problems on Earth?

Well, explorers and adventurers did not wait till Europe's problems were solved to explore and settle the Americas. They pushed forward.

Just as there is a division of labor in society, there is a division of ambition, of *venture*.

I will likely never go into space. But I am happy Richard Branson got there.

And I'll applaud if you, too, jaunt upwards.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

^{*} Branson and Bezos publicly squabble about what "space" is. Virgin Galactic went above the American standard of about 50 miles, while Bezos aims for the worldwide "accepted" standard of 62 miles.