GRAA NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1184, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1184

June 2025 **https://GoddardRetirees.org** **41st Year of Publication**

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS: We meet at 11:15 AM on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the American Legion Post #136 at 6900 Greenbelt Road. **Reservations are required;** please contact graalunch@gmail.com (preferred) or call (410)-709-8889 **before Thursday, June 5th.**

June 10	 **Dr. John Degnan,** Technical consultant NASA Goddard Retirees and Alumni Association **"Evolution of Single Photon Lidar: From Satellite Laser Ranging to Airborne Lidars to ICESat-2"**
July 8	**Summer Student Interns,** NASA Goddard **"Short Descriptions of their Summer Projects"**

COMMENTS FROM TONY COMBERIATE AND CARL STAHLE

Our May speaker was Dave Pierce**,** Director of NASA's Wallops Flight Facility. Dave's presentation entitled, "Update from Wallops Flight Facility" described Wallops as it approaches its 80th anniversary. Wallops was enacted by Congress on June 27, 1945. In the 1940s, its focus was supersonic aircraft design tests. It began doing early human spaceflight tests in the 1950s and 1960s. Wallops' first satellite launch, *Explorer IX,* occurred in 1961. From the 1970s to the present, Wallops' core business evolved to supporting scientific investigations, as well as technology demonstration flights.

The 6,000-acre facility includes a 1,900-acre main base. Wallops, which has $1.4 billion in assets, employs 282 NASA civil servants, 751 NASA contractors and about 600 tenant personnel from other agencies and companies, including the U.S. Navy, the Coast Guard, NOAA, Virginia Space, Rocket Lab, FireFly, and Space Centre Australia. Wallops' annual budget of $290 million has an economic impact on the surrounding area of $1.4 billion and 6,092 jobs.

Wallops is NASA's only fully owned and operated launch range, uniquely positioned to provide agile, low-cost suborbital, orbital, and hypersonic missions for NASA, the Department of Defense, and commercial partners. Wallops is a national incubator for the next generation of space systems, keeping the U.S. at the forefront of exploration and innovation.

Wallops has the program and project leadership role for NASA's Sounding Rockets and Scientific Balloons program to provides scientific, technical, and educational contributions to the nation's space program. In addition, Wallops has the responsibility for the Heliophysics Strategic Technology Office (HESTO) to develop transformative technologies and facilitate flight opportunities for these technologies. NASA's Pioneers Program**,** started in 2020, is another Wallops program responsibility which has the goal to do compelling astrophysics science at a lower cost using smaller hardware than missions in the Explorers Program. In 2025, Wallops will launch missions from remote places on 5 continents, including 19 Sounding Rockets (5 launch campaigns worldwide); 12 Balloons: (4 campaigns worldwide); and 2 Aircraft missions.

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Wallops is sponsoring 40 STEM Internships to build a stronger national science capability, student and teacher workshops, Virginia Space Coast scholars, 5 Student Flight Missions (150 students), and a Junior Achievement program with more than 10,000 students.

From right to left, our photo shows Dave, Nick Chrissotimos (new GRAA member), and Tony Comberiate. This trio of colleagues represents over 120 years of contributions to NASA.

Summer Interns at GRAA Luncheon

We'll have a few of Goddard's Summer Student Interns with their mentors join us for our GRAA Luncheon on June 10. It is always fun and inspiring to hear the excitement and passion that these students bring to our Goddard community.

Advocacy

GRAA wants to be a strong advocate for Goddard and the NASA community. The proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget from the administration cuts the NASA's Science Mission Directorate's (SMD) budget by nearly 50% and NASA's overall budget by 25%. Such a drastic reduction would inflict immediate and irreparable damage upon the nation's space science enterprise. If enacted, these cuts would necessitate the premature termination of dozens of currently operating, highly productive scientific spacecraft and could halt the development of nearly all future NASA science missions.

Members are encouraged to contact (meet/call/letters) their elected representatives to urge them to restore the NASA Science budget as well as the overall NASA budget. We understand that there should be adjustments to more effectively spend NASA $$ but enacting the proposed deep funding cuts is a giant leap backwards that will surrender America's global leadership in space and earth science. GRAA has members in over 40 states so we can be effective advocates. You can visit the Planetary Society link for guidance: https://lnkd.in/enGXK8kb

GRAA will also be active on social media on its LinkedIn group and encourages members to use their social media platforms to communicate greater awareness of the importance of NASA Science to the country. Adopting to the language and themes of the current administration, we can show: NASA Science Makes America Great; NASA Science Makes America Safe; NASA Science Makes America Rich; NASA Science Makes America Healthy.

Feel welcome to contact Carl Stahle (carl.m.stahle@gmail.com) and Tony Comberiate (abcomberiate@verizon.net) for your comments and ideas. We welcome your help.

GRAA is on Social Media

GRAA has extended its reach to social media. We are now on LinkedIn which is the world's largest professional network. Members can visit linkedin.com and search for NASA Goddard Retirees and Alumni Association. You are welcome to be a follower of this group.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

Ken Anderson
Dan Berry
Damon Bradley
Jeffrey Didion

Brenda Dingwall
Norman Dobson
Sandra Irish
Manuel Maldonado
Barbie Medina
William Potter
K. Jon Ranson
Tim Van Sant
Donald Shinners

ACTIVITIES FOR MEMBERS:

Premier of Film "Cosmic Dawn" on James Webb Space Telescope at Greenbelt Theater, June 11

A feature film "Cosmic Dawn" by James Tralie for NASA will be premiering near Goddard Space Flight Center at the Greenbelt Theater on Wednesday, June 11. Be sure to RSVP for the free tickets - https://lnkd.in/euaa6ZdM.

Cosmic Dawn is the incredible true story of the James Webb Space Telescope – humanity's largest and most powerful space telescope – on a mission to unveil the early universe, against all odds. The 90-minute documentary brings viewers on an unprecedented journey through Webb's delicate assembly, rigorous testing, and triumphant launch, showcasing the sheer complexity and breathtaking risks involved in creating a telescope capable of peering billions of years into the past. Follow the telescope from an idea developed at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center all the way to the launchpad in French Guiana, with never-before-seen footage captured by the Webb film crew offering intimate access to the challenges and triumphs along the way.

Trailer for the film can be viewed here: https://lnkd.in/e-rFXgjj

Other events around the film include:

6:00 PM: Doors Open, Exhibit Tables and Networking with NASA
7:00 PM: Welcome Remarks
7:10 PM – 9:00 PM: Film Screening
9:00 PM – 9:30 PM: Panel Discussion with NASA subject matter experts

If you plan to attend, send a note to Carl Stahle (carl.m.stahle@gmail.com) and we'll try to connect with the GRAA members at the event.

Jan Kalshoven, one of GRAA's board members, became the president of what is now called the Goddard Tennis and Pickleball Club (GTPC) this past year. There are no fees to play at the Goddard Tennis complex which now has lines and a rollable net for pickleball (Access to the

center is by showing your Goddard retiree badge as you drive in). Courts are open to all, but if you want to join GTPC and get on WhatsApp and TeamReach to find other Goddard players, send an email to Kalshoven@gmail.com.

WHAT'S UP WITH OUR MEMBERS:

We are starting a new section in our monthly newsletter for members to give us short updates on their lives since retirement from Goddard and federal service. We thought your colleagues would enjoy hearing about your life experiences after Goddard before they see your name in our "Remembering Our Former Colleagues" section. News of interest to our members could be professional, volunteer activities, awards and recognition, a personal achievement, or an unusual adventure or hobby. Please feel welcome to send a concise message (<100 words) to Tony Comberiate (abcomberiate@verizon.net) and Carl Stahle (carl.m.stahle@gmail.com) who reserve the right to edit for content and length.

Pawan Bhartia volunteers as a docent at Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art, aka Freer/Sackler Galleries. It is located within a short walking distance from Smithsonian metro station. He invites GRAA members to the museum for a special tour of the exhibits. He can design the tour based on your interests. Visit Asia.si.edu for an overview of the galleries. Weekends are best for him. Other days after 2 pm are also okay. Feel welcome to email him at paunb1@icloud.com to schedule a visit.

Bill Dickinson retired from Goddard in 1994 after a 34-year career. He then worked for Global Science and Technology in Greenbelt for 15 years where he rose to the position of VP for Technical Programs and helped grow the small business from 20 to nearly 200 employees. Bill and Linda, his wife of 63 years, live in a separate house on their daughter's 30-acre farm in Mt. Airy, Maryland, near their 3 additional generations of extended family. They've owned a residence in a gated community in southwest Florida for 23 years and spend their winters there. Both are very active in league bocce ball programs in Florida and in Howard County, Maryland.

Note from editors: Bill sent us additional historical information which was informative about Goddard's early history:

"As an undergrad at UNH, I worked on a Physics Department sounding rocket contract/grant that moved from the NRL to Goddard not long after NASA was formed in 1958. Partly through that relationship, I was hired by Goddard with an EOD of 10/03/1960. Only GSFC's Building 2 had been built by then, so the group I was assigned to was physically located in NRL facilities at the Anacostia Naval Air Station in DC. I relocated to the GSFC campus in late 1961 when Building 3 was complete."

DIRECTORIES AND NEWSLETTERS: Send your email address to goddardretirees@gmail.com to get our monthly Newsletters**,** which include synopses of the talks, special community

announcements, news from members, and obituaries. Past Newsletters and links to videos of the talks are on our website https://goddardretirees.org. Multi-month abstracts of Newsletters are mailed to the retirees with only residential addresses in our files. We depend on retirees to furnish their home addresses to be listed in the biennial GRAA Membership Directories, only available as a mailed hardcopies to members. These mailings are supported by donations to GRAA, P. O. Box 1184, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1184.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jackie Gasch received donations from: Andy Anderson, John Haberman in memory of Hasso Niemann and Nancy Ryder in memory of Ralph Ryder and Alberta Moran.

FROM THE GODDARD ARCHIVES: June 17, 1985, Shuttle Discovery STS 51-G deployed and after 45 hours retrieved Spartan 1 which was an X-ray mission to observe our galactic center region. Spartan was a Goddard developed low-cost method to conduct short duration science from Shuttle.

REMEMBERING OUR FORMER COLLEAGUES:

George Harris, 95, died on April 25 in Las Cruses, New Mexico. George was a NASA project manager building a system for the Man in Space program, throughout the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo missions. In 1968, George was offered a key position as Head of the Satellite operations department with the 10 nation European Space Agency in Darmstadt Germany. In 1975, he was offered a position by the U.S. Dept of Interior United States Geological Survey (USGS) to head up the Earth Resource Observation R&D team developing the next generation Software for Earth Imaging. He moved to Las Cruces in the fall of 1979 where he was acting Vice President for operations and Flight Director for SPACECOM at the NASA TDRSS Facility in the White Sands Complex. In summer 1985, he moved to France as the Liaison Officer Between the French Arianne Space organization which built and launched the Arianne series of rockets and the Intelsat US/ International communications group. George retired in Las Cruces in 1999.

Marilyn Joyce Power Mack, 81, of Loudon, Tennessee, passed away on April 15, 2025. She was a trailblazer for women in technology, demonstrating that there is no glass ceiling for women and that learning is a lifelong journey. Born in Queens, New York, Marilyn graduated as the valedictorian of The Mary Louis Academy in Jamaica Estates, New York. She earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Marymount Manhattan College, a master's degree in mathematics from Georgetown University, and both a master's degree and a Doctor of Science in computer science from The George Washington University. She worked as a mathematical analyst for Westinghouse. Later, she joined Goddard as a computer programmer on the Landsat satellite project. She also was a director of student enrichment programs, which focused on inspiring and supporting students interested in or already pursuing careers in science and technology. While working at NASA, she also taught programming at Capitol Technology University. Marilyn retired in 2012 after a fulfilling career.

Shirley V. Ponder, 91, passed away on May 9, 2025 at her home in Cape Coral, Florida. Shirley was born in Washington DC, graduated from Eastern High School, and began a 38-year career in the Federal Government at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She transferred to NASA GSFC in 1963 where she worked in various positions and made many dear friends. She worked in the NASA Communications (NASCOM) division and retired as a Communications Management Specialist in August 1989.