

GRAA NEWSLETTER

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

July 2026 <https://GoddardRetirees.org> 42nd Year of Publication

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS: We will meet at 11:15 AM on July 14th at the American Legion Post #136 at 6900 Greenbelt Road. **Reservations must be made no later than the Wednesday before the luncheon** by contacting graalunch@gmail.com (preferred) or calling 410-709-8889 by **Wednesday, July 8th**.

July 14		Dr. Shawn Domagal-Goldman Director of the NASA's Astrophysics Division at NASA HQ <i>"NASA Astrophysics Portfolio and Plans"</i> <i>Note: A sample of our Goddard summer interns and their mentors will attend this luncheon.</i>
Aug 11	 	Dr. Jennifer Wiseman HST Senior Project Scientist, NASA Goddard Jim Jeletic HST Deputy Project Manager, NASA Goddard <i>"The Hubble Space Telescope: Eyeing the Future"</i>
Sep 8		Dr. Ira Thorpe Project Scientist, Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (LISA), NASA Goddard <i>"Listening to the Dark Universe with LISA"</i>

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jackie Gasch received donations from: Joseph Hennessy, Sr., and the following people gave in memory of Carmie Peavler: Bill Anselm, Kathleen Beres, Miller Einsel, Ron Browning, Deane Charlson, Chuck Cote, Rex Elliott, Kevin Grady, Karen Halterman, Jim Heaney, Linna Jamison, Jan Kalshoven, Arlin Krueger, John Oberright, Dave Olney, Howard Pedolsky, Dick Schneider, Elain Shell, Ralph Welsh, Tom Williams, and Bill Worrall. Please know that all GRAA operating costs are covered by donations. Donations can be made in person at a GRAA luncheon, or by check to GRAA mailed to P. O. Box 1184, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1184.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

- Linda Glusing

- Keith Jahoda
- Nick Jedrich
- Deborah J. Stanley
- Randall M. Stanley

RETIREMENT BADGES:

The Security Office has ALL RETIREE badges completed and ready for pickup. A recent retiree who retired on 12/31/25 went on 6/24/26 to pick up her retiree badge and it took 30 seconds – Easy Peasy!

For those members officially retired from Federal service, you can get a retirement badge from the Goddard Badging Office (Greenbelt: Bldg. 17, 301-286-1347; Wallops: Bldg. N-1, 757-824-2222, Hours of Operation, Mon-Fri, 7 am to 3 pm). The retirement badge will allow you access for GEWA sponsored events (examples: Music and Drama Club theater, Running Club 2-mile Fun Run, events at the Recreation Center) and the public areas of the campus (examples: Building 1 at Greenbelt, auditoriums for colloquia, recreational areas) where you show your badge to the security guard at the gate and tell them why you are coming on campus. If you are specifically visiting an employee, you should arrange for a visitor's badge.

WHAT'S UP WITH OUR MEMBERS:

Your colleagues and friends 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, photos welcome) to Pam Sullivan (zsullivan@alum.mit.edu). Inputs may be edited for content and length.

Jim Irons was selected as a recipient of the 2025 William T. Pecora Award for his outstanding leadership and pioneering research that revolutionized the Landsat program and advanced global land-change monitoring. The prestigious award is sponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey and NASA. The award recognizes outstanding scientific contributions toward understanding the Earth through remote sensing, which is the science of gathering information about Earth's surface from satellites and aircraft. Jim is an emeritus scientist at Goddard and a regular attendee at our GRAA luncheons. He continues to dedicate time to outreach at NASA and elsewhere, helping the next generation of scientists find their place in Earth science.

<https://lnkd.in/eXxTbYXx>

Stephen Talabac retired in 2012 after a rewarding 39-year aerospace engineering career with NOAA/NESDIS, the private sector and GSFC. He now enjoys having more opportunities to pursue his longtime hobby: nature and wildlife photography. He has served as Director, Assistant Director and Education Coordinator of the Central Maryland Photographer's Guild; given

presentations on creative flower photography; led workshops for photographing birds-in-flight; and, as an invited instructor at Longwood Gardens, has taught students how to photograph abstract foliage patterns, forms and textures. His photographs have been published by Outdoor Photographer magazine, Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, and the Howard County Conservancy. You can visit his website at: <https://sitphotography.com>

FROM THE GODDARD ARCHIVES: on July 15, 2004, a Delta-II launched the AURA satellite into a sun synchronous polar orbit. The mission was part of the Earth Observation System Program and was a collaboration between NASA, the Netherlands, Finland and the UK. It is expected to continue science operations until at least mid-2028.

COMMENTS FROM TONY COMBERIATE AND CARL STAHLE

June Speaker Highlights NASA's PoSIR Mission to Study Ice Clouds

Our June speaker, **Dr. Dong Wu** of NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, introduced members to the Polarized Submillimeter Ice-cloud Radiometer, or PoSIR, a NASA mission designed to improve understanding of ice clouds and their role in weather and climate ([Presentation Video](#)).

Planned for launch in 2027, PoSIR will study ice clouds in the tropics and subtropics over a three-year mission. These high-altitude clouds play an important role in Earth's radiation balance, but they remain one of the major uncertainties in climate prediction. By observing how ice clouds change over the course of a day, PoSIR will help scientists improve Earth system models and environmental forecasts.

The mission will use two small satellites, known as 16U CubeSats, each about the size of a compact carry-on case and weighing roughly 36 kg. Each spacecraft will carry a cross-track scanning polarized submillimeter radiometer operating near 325 GHz and 684 GHz. Flying in low Earth orbit with a 3- to 9-hour separation, the two satellites will work together to sample the full daily cycle of ice clouds across latitudes between $\pm 35^\circ$.



Dr. Wu also helped clarify why ice clouds are so challenging to study. Water clouds are made of liquid droplets, usually form below 20,000 feet, and tend to be thick, dense, and puffy, with well-defined edges. Because they are more opaque, they block more sunlight. Ice clouds, by contrast, are made of solid ice crystals and usually form above 20,000 feet at very cold temperatures. They are often thin, wispy, and translucent, allowing sunlight to pass through. Their particle size and shape can vary widely, and some cloud ice is difficult for traditional microwave and infrared

sensors to observe. That is where submillimeter radiometry and polarimetry become especially valuable.

PolSIR builds on earlier work by NASA's 883 GHz IceCube mission, a cloud radiometer on a 3U CubeSat, that was successfully deployed from the International Space Station in May 2016. As a follow-on effort, PolSIR is a \$38 million Class-D mission made up of two identical CubeSats. Using two satellites will allow the mission to capture changes throughout the day more completely than a single satellite or sun-synchronous observations, which cover only two local times.

The science goal is both practical and far-reaching: better observations of ice cloud properties can lead to more accurate cloud parameterizations, stronger climate models, and improved predictions over the important 10- to 40-year range. Dr. Wu's presentation showed how a pair of small satellites can make a big contribution to understanding Earth's atmosphere—and how Goddard continues to develop innovative approaches for future spaceflight missions.

Suggestions for Luncheon Topics and Speakers

We welcome your suggestions for specific topics and speakers for our monthly luncheons. It can be a speaker outside of Goddard and NASA as well as on a non-technical topic you think would be of interest to our luncheon attendees. Please contact Carl Stahle (carl.m.stahle@gmail.com) who has the responsibility to organize our Luncheon Speakers' Program.

Assessment of Technical and Scientific Capabilities at NASA Goddard: Community Input Due by July 10

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine are conducting an assessment of the technical and scientific capabilities at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC). More information about the assessment, including the statement of task, can be found here: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/projects/CAST-PSSI-26-04>

To inform the assessment, the National Academies invite input from interested stakeholders on topics related to the condition of GSFC facilities, workplace environment, infrastructure, and other factors that may affect the Center's ability to carry out its scientific and technical mission.

All submissions will be posted on a publicly accessible website maintained by the National Academies and will be available in the project's Public Access File. Please do not include proprietary, confidential, classified, controlled, or copyrighted material in your response. **Comments received by July 10, 2026** will be shared with the study committee and may inform discussions at future committee meetings. You may remain anonymous by simply not filling in the name field in your submission.

The survey form is at: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8889957/Assessment-of-Technical-and-Scientific-Capabilities-at-NASA-Goddard-Space-Flight-Center-Community-Input>

ACTIVITIES FOR MEMBERS:

Fly with the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope! Submit your name for a boarding pass for the Roman Space Telescope mission. The Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope is NASA's next space observatory, launching to a point in space ONE MILLION MILES away. Submitted names will be uploaded to an SD card attached to the observatory. **Submit your name by July 12.**

<https://my.nasa.gov/specialevents/s/send-your-name-with-nancy-roman>



Volunteering Opportunity: The **Goddard Visitors Center** has a need for someone to cover the Front Desk of the Visitors Center on Friday mornings from 10am to 1pm. They would greet visitors as they arrive, answer the phone, and hand out and then check scavenger hunts. Please contact Amanda Harvey at 301-286-9041 or amanda.c.harvey@nasa.gov

Medicare Presentation Materials Available: GRAA had a virtual presentation on Medicare on May 18th by Patrick Hamilton from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), within the Department of Health and Human Services. The webinar was expertly tailored for our audience. You can request the presentation charts and Q&A document from Carl Stahle (carl.m.stahle@gmail.com).

Job Opportunity: McCallie Associates is the Systems Engineering (SEAS II) prime contractor for GSFC's Engineering and Technology Directorate (Code 500). McCallie is looking for experienced design and development systems engineers that may be interested in either full time or part time employment to support mission and instrument systems engineering opportunities. If interested, please contact the SEAS II Program Manager, Roger Prokic at 443-570-8849 or rprokic@alutiiq.com.

GRAA IS ON SOCIAL MEDIA: We are now on LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network. Members can visit [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) and search for NASA Goddard Retirees and Alumni Association. You are welcome to be a follower of this group.

DIRECTORIES AND NEWSLETTERS: Send your email address to goddardretirees@gmail.com to get our monthly Newsletters. 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 mailed hardcopies to members. These mailings are supported by donations to GRAA, P. O. Box 1184, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1184.

REMEMBERING OUR FORMER COLLEAGUES:

Stephen M. Derdeyn, 89, passed away on May 15, 2026. Steve served in the U.S. Marine Corps before starting a career at GSFC that would last 37 years. He worked as a mechanical engineer in the Laboratory for High Energy Astrophysics (Code 660). Steve supported more than 30 balloon campaigns, including the Gamma-Ray Imaging Spectrometer (GRIS), which launched into the stratosphere to study the high energy universe.

Jerry Evans, 93, passed away on May 19, 2026. Jerry served in the U.S. Coast Guard before joining NASA at the Wallops Flight Facility (WFF). During his 36-year career there, he worked in the Engineering (Code 820) and Operations (Code 830) Divisions and was recognized for his work on the Spacelab 2 mission.

Don Feller, 96, passed on May 27, 2026. Don served in the U.S. Naval Reserves before attending the U.S. Naval Academy. After graduation, he served as a fighter pilot primarily overseas on an aircraft carrier. He joined NASA at Wallops Island in 1960 and became the director of air operations and head of the Aeronautical Programs Branch (Code 831), managing the programs that utilized the Wallops Flight Facility airport until his retirement in 1985.

Andrew Murray Smith, 90, passed away on June 2, 2026. Andrew began his career at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) in 1962, where he designed an ultraviolet (UV) photometer for APL's 5E-5 satellite which conducted one of the first UV surveys of the celestial sphere. He joined GSFC's Space Sciences Directorate (Code 600) in 1966 and carried out research at the forefront of astronomical study, researching star formation, interstellar clouds and plasmas, and ultraviolet instrumentation. A pioneer in his field, he was an integral part of many important NASA missions which included the design and building of the Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope that flew on two Space Shuttle missions and the design of the High Resolution Spectrograph for the Hubble Space Telescope. Andrew retired from Goddard in 2007.

Brantley Eugene "Gene" Furness, 77, passed on June 6, 2026. Gene's NASA career began in 1968 and extended over 30 years. He was an electronics technician in the Wallops Flight Facility Code 803 Safety Office. His work took him around the world, including assignments in China, Africa, and Australia, where he assisted with the launch and maintenance of weather balloons.

Kaitlyn "Katie" Lyle Ryder, 32, passed away on June 7, 2026. Katie was an intern at GSFC in 2018 and 2019 before completing her doctorate degree and starting full-time at GSFC in 2021. Katie was a radiation effects engineer in Code 561, working to ensure that a wide variety of instruments and missions would survive the hostile space environment.

Beverly "Bev" Louise Wildoner, 69, passed on June 11, 2026. Bev started work with the federal government just after high school, and eventually came to GSFC, where she worked as a Legal Technician in Office of the Chief Counsel (Code 140). Bev retired in 2012 after 36 years of service.