

GRAA NEWSLETTER

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

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

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS: We will meet at 11:15 AM on March 10th 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, **March 5th**.

March 10	 A photograph of Dr. Keith Gendreau, a man with a beard wearing a light blue polo shirt, standing in a laboratory or museum setting with various equipment and displays.	Dr. Keith Gendreau , Principal Investigator for NICER Mission NASA Goddard <i>"The Neutron Star Interior Composition Explorer (NICER)"</i>
April 14	 A portrait photograph of Dr. Antti Pulkkinen, a man with a beard wearing a light blue button-down shirt, against a dark background with some light effects.	Dr. Antti Pulkkinen , Director, NASA Office of JPL Management and Oversight NASA HQ/JPL <i>"Space Weather: The New 'Weather' of a Technological Society"</i>
May 12	 A portrait photograph of Ray Rubilotta, a man with short hair wearing a suit and tie, with an American flag visible in the background.	Ray Rubilotta , Associate Center Director NASA Goddard <i>"Goddard's Transformation for the Future"</i>

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jackie Gasch received donations from: Keiji Tasaki and Frank Bauer, who gave in memory of Semion Kizhner.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

- William Conn
- Dennis Dillman
- Julie Hostetler
- Kevin M. Jones
- Kaleem Kawaja

- Jack Kaye
- Bill Ochs
- Wesley Powell
- Bernard J. Rauscher
- Conrad Schiff

RETIREMENT BADGES:

For those members who left Goddard through the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) and are now officially retired from Federal service, you can get a retirement badge from the Goddard Badging Office. A recent retiree visiting the Greenbelt Badging Office in Building 17 (Hours of Operation, Mon – Fri, 7 am to 3 pm, 301-286-1347) was able to get her retirement badge printed immediately with no paperwork or appointment needed. The retirement badge will allow you access to the public areas of the campus (auditoriums, cafeterias, recreational areas) where you show your badge to the security guard at the gate. If you are visiting offices of employees, 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) and a photo to Tony Comberiate (abcomberiate@verizon.net) and Carl Stahle (carl.m.stahle@gmail.com) who reserve the right to edit for content and length.

Dennis Dillman: "I retired from Goddard in April 2025. Since then, I've been volunteering at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum on the National Mall. It's the ultimate kick for this longtime aerospace history geek! I am also writing short space history blurbs for the Space 3.0 Foundation's "Mission Mail" e-newsletter. And I wrote an article for the Fall 2025 issue of "Quest: The History of Spaceflight Quarterly" on some of the work I did at JSC prior to coming to Goddard and am working on a second article. Life is good!"

GRAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION:

GRAA will hold an election at its May 12th Luncheon meeting to elect its Board of Directors. GRAA is administered by a Board of Directors (BOD) of seven GRAA members elected by the membership. The BOD shall elect the Director of the Board, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Director of the Board serves as the President of GRAA. If you are interested to serve on the BOD, please contact Tony Comberiate (abcomberiate@verizon.net) for further information and encouragement. Submissions of candidates for the GRAA Board of Directors are due by April 15th.

We could also use your volunteer help with other GRAA activities where you don't have to serve on the BOD. Examples include to serve as our lunch coordinator, and assistance with our website and membership. You would work with one of our BOD members. We have a growing and dynamic community.

FROM THE GODDARD ARCHIVES: On March 25, 2000, Explorer 78, the Imager for Magnetopause to Aurora Global Exploration (IMAGE) was launched on a Delta into a highly elliptical polar orbit. It was a MidEx mission to study the global response of the earth's magnetosphere to the solar wind. Signals were received from IMAGE in 2018 although science operations had ended in 2005.

COMMENTS FROM TONY COMBERIATE AND CARL STAHL

Our February speakers were **Dr. Brad Cenko**, Principal Investigator for the Swift Mission and **Dr. Russell Carpenter**, Deputy Project Manager/Technical, Space Science Mission Operations (SSMO) at Goddard. Their Presentation, entitled "*The Swiftly Mission: SWIFT Lift in a Year*" described their concept for lifting the orbit of the Neil Gehrels SWIFT spacecraft before its slowly decaying orbit causes it to make an uncontrolled re-entry and crash back to Earth later this year. SWIFT was launched in 2004 and has been a crucial piece of our space science observations, discovering over 1700 gamma ray bursts, the most powerful explosions in the universe. Performing as a wide-field, gamma ray monitor with a rapid-response X-ray + UV follow-up, SWIFT is a critical component of NASA's Time-Domain and Multi-Messenger endeavour. Even after 20 years, it has more observing requests each year than any other mission except JWST. Late 2024 solar activity has significantly hastened SWIFT's re-entry predictions to mid to late 2026. Last June, the Swiftly team proposed their concept to NASA HQ to launch a robotic rescue mission within one year, utilizing a new way of doing business. Their market research surveyed promising paths to accomplish this technical feat in a streamlined timeframe, including a mission concept using a booster spacecraft and leveraging a dedicated launch, required to reach SWIFT's unique inclination. Within 30 days, they awarded SBIR Phase III awards to both Katalyst and Astroscale and held a Baseline Review in August, one month later. The requirements included reaching the >550 km altitude before this June, while assuring that there would be no harm to the SWIFT spacecraft or the space environment. By last September, a \$30M implementation contract was awarded to Katalyst.

A separate Space Science Mission Operations (SSMO) project was created for this effort, which is being managed as an R&D mission, with a 'procurement of a service' philosophy. The spacecraft, designated LINK, will be launched on the last Northrop Grumman Pegasus, and rendezvous with SWIFT in 2 weeks. After some proximity operations, it will capture SWIFT by launch +3 weeks, and raise the orbit over the following 7 weeks, using Xenon thrusters. SWIFT was not designed for on-orbit servicing and has no built in attachment hooks, so LINK will grab it in three places around the bottom perimeter of the spacecraft. The grabbing process will be autonomous, but

multiple attempts can be made. If successful, the SWIFT spacecraft will immediately resume its critical function, with an extended lifetime.

Recognizing that Swiftly would be the first ever capture of an uncrewed U.S. government satellite by a private commercial spacecraft, Brad and Russell's final thoughts were that Swiftly is a unique opportunity, with a tremendous payoff and a limited downside risk. Its success is much broader than just the technical aspect. Regardless of the outcome, NASA will learn a tremendous amount from this experience and Swiftly will be an excellent example of how NASA will approach doing missions faster and cheaper, and will be a model for the agency's future missions.

ACTIVITIES FOR MEMBERS:

Volunteering Opportunities:

The **Goddard Visitors Center** has a need for someone to cover the Front Desk of the Visitor 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

The **National Capital Section/OPTICA** (formerly OSA) is looking for special judges for the recognition of outstanding optics, lasers and photonics projects showcased by students at local area science fairs. The Science Fairs play a crucial role in fostering the curiosity and passion for science among many young minds. Your expertise and experience would be invaluable in evaluating the student projects and providing constructive feedback. As a volunteer, you will join fellow judges to interview the presenters at the fair and select winners in the 'Outstanding Achievement' and 'Notable Achievement' categories. Fairs are upcoming over February to May at MD, VA, and DC locations. For more information, please contact: james.a.corsetti@nasa.gov.

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](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, which include synopses of the talks, special community announcements, 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.

REMEMBERING OUR FORMER COLLEAGUES:

Jordan B. Camp, 69, died on December 29, 2025. Jordan was born on June 11, 1956, He completed his PhD at the University of Chicago as a nuclear physicist and subsequently worked at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. He later worked at Cal Tech as an astrophysicist where he became involved in the Laser Interferometric Gravitational-Wave Observatory, which detected the theoretically predicted existence of gravity waves (confirming Albert Einstein's 1916 General Theory of Relativity). Following CalTech, he joined Goddard in 2003, where he became invested in the emerging field of Gravitational Wave Astronomy, he was Principle Investigator of the ISS-TAO and Transient Astrophysics Probe proposals, and of the Goddard LIGO Scientific Collaboration group, and was the Instrument Scientist of the US laser contribution to "LISA", a space-based observatory under development by ESA and NASA for detecting low-frequency gravitational waves. He had recently retired from Goddard.

Anthony Grandi, 96, of Timonium, MD, died on January 31, 2026. Tony was born November 29, 1929 in McKeesport, PA, and attended the University of Pittsburgh on an ROTC scholarship. He began his career at RCA before serving in the U.S. Army for two years, and then working for the Martin Company, during which he earned a master's degree from Drexel University. Tony joined GSFC in 1961, where he worked on the Mercury, Apollo, Space Shuttle, Space Station, and Hubble Space Telescope programs. He was the Assistant Branch Head of the Systems Development and Compatibility Test Branch and later was the Chief of the Flight Mission Support Office. He retired in 1992 after 31 years at Goddard.

Richard W. Stewart, 87, died on November 18, 2024, at his home in Columbia, Maryland. He began his professional career as a research scientist in 1967 at the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York. He transferred to the Upper Atmosphere Branch, Goddard Laboratory for Atmospheric Sciences in 1978. He retired in 2009, after a 42-year career researching and teaching atmospheric physics. *(Note: repeated from last month, with corrected spelling.)*