

The Marshall Retiree Report
February 2016

NASA/MSFC Retiree Association P. O. Box 4492 Huntsville, Alabama 35815



Quarterly MRA Spring Luncheon

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

11:30 Social – Lunch at Noon

\$20.00 per person

Menu: Romaine Salad, Chicken Alfredo with green onions & snap peas, Dinner rolls, Coffee & Tea, Dessert: Carrot Cake

Please RSVP to Bennie Jacks no later than noon on February 26, 2016, at benniejacks@att.net or cell phone: 256-603-0894. A 72-hour cancellation notice is required by the Ledges.

NOTE: These are the dates and times of the MRA quarterly meetings for the remainder of 2016. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend:

Tuesday, June 7 - Dinner

Wednesday, Sept. 7 - Luncheon

Tuesday, Dec. 13 - Dinner

Registration & Social 6:00 - 7:00; Dinner @ 7:00

Registration 11:30 - 12:00; Lunch @ 12:00 Noon

Registration & Social 6:00 - 7:00; Dinner @ 7:00

Program:

“The Big Picture - Huntsville, AL”

**Speaker: Dennis Madsen, Manager of Urban & Long-Range Planning,
City of Huntsville**

Dennis Madsen grew up throughout the Northeast/ Midwest States, but after getting his Masters In Architecture from Georgia Tech, he settled in Atlanta for almost 20 years. While there, he worked for Urban Collage. His experience in the private sector exposed him to projects ranging in scale from single-tract redevelopments to city-wide comprehensive plans. Dennis, his wife, Laura Lester and son Adlai – relocated here in January of 2013, in part so Laura could return to her hometown, but in large part because the Mayor of Huntsville laid out a vision for smart growth and engaged planning and advertised a once-in-a-lifetime position to promote this vision in Huntsville. Dennis applied for – and was ultimately offered – the position of Manager of Urban and Long-Range Planning for the City of Huntsville. Since then, the City’s Long-Range Planning group has been conducting the BIG Picture effort (www.bigpicturehuntsville.com), a community-oriented process designed to shape and guide the growth of Huntsville over the coming decades.

Spacelab Retirees Hold Semi-Annual Reunion



The Spacelab Retirees (38) met on January 14, 2016, for their Semi-Annual Reunion at Valley Hill Country Club. If you are interested in joining this group, contact Mickey Allen at: mickballen@yahoo.com

From Gerald's Desk.....

As we look forward to a new year of MRA activities, a preview of things to come in our community would provide insight into where we might focus our efforts. The City of Huntsville has been actively engaged in long range planning and what Huntsville's future should look like. As a consequence, we have scheduled Dennis Madsen, the City's Long Range Urban Planner, to be our March 2 speaker. This should be an interesting and informative program, and I encourage all members to attend.

2016 MRA MEMBERSHIP DUES

MSFC Retirees Association (MRA) membership dues of \$30 per year are payable by **January 1 each year for that calendar year**. Dues may be paid at the **March social** or mailed to MSFC Retirees Association, P. O. Box 4492, Huntsville, AL 35815. Checks should be made out to MSFC Retirees Association.

Membership in the Association is open to anyone who is a retired MSFC or other NASA center employee. Spouses of deceased MRA members may attain membership status with membership dues waived. New MSFC retirees are automatically offered a free membership for the remainder of the year in which they retire. If retirement occurs after the first day of September, membership will be free for the remainder of the current year and for the entire upcoming year. Point of Contact: Mary Spaulding; e-mail md_spaulding@comcast.net, or phone 256-883-2228.

This is a repeat of an article published last August, but might be valuable as you prepare taxes, financial information and estate planning:

NASA Help With Death Notifications

The Human Resources Office at MSFC (Deborah Allen) can help with death notifications to the Office of Personnel Management. She is also the one to contact for Life Insurance policy changes. She can be reached at: **Tel: 256-544-7536, Cell: 256-652-8826, e-mail: deborah.a.allen@nasa.gov**.

OPM should be notified concerning all NASA related death benefits. She can do the filing electronically, but she will need various information to do so. After filing, it will take 4-6 weeks to receive a package that will outline the areas in which to make claims such as insurance, social security benefits, adjustments to retirement benefits, etc.



MRA Profile:

JAN DAVIS - ASTRONAUT & BEYOND...

Mention the name “Jan Davis” and members of the MSFC family swell with pride as we share her many successes. She has represented MSFC and Huntsville throughout her career, and we are extremely proud of her. We know her successes in space flight, having logged almost 700 hours in space. She flew as a mission specialist on STS-47 in 1992 and STS-60 in 1994 and was the payload commander on STS-85 in 1997. After her flights, she spent time in Headquarters and returned to MSFC in 1999 as Director of Flight Projects Directorate. After the Columbia accident, she was named head of Safety & Mission Assurance, where she assured the safe return to flights of the Space Shuttle. She currently works for Jacobs as Vice President and Deputy Manager.

She is also a member of the Association of Space Explorers, an association with membership composed of individuals who have completed at least one Earth orbit in space. Current membership stands at 320 from 34 different countries. Countries that have an individual in the association host a conference each year.

When asked to name an individual who had mentored her during her career, she named several, including Jim Odom and Wayne Littles, who continue to mentor her today. While she was completing her full time study for her PhD at UAH, Bill Lucas and Alex McCool supported her and made sure she stayed on track.

When asked to recall her most exciting moment in space, Jan responded that there were two. First was her project to grow super fine insulin crystals in space. She recalls staying up all night to make sure the crystals were successful. The crystals provide scientists with a view of insulin's structure that is equivalent to seeing grains of powdered sugar on a doughnut - instead of just the doughnut, and hopefully reduce health risks to diabetics. The second most exciting moment was flying over Huntsville and seeing her hometown from space.

MRA Profile: Jan Davis – Astronaut and Beyond... (Continued)

Most of us know the astronaut side of Jan, but few know her other interests, including quilting. While working in Houston, she was introduced to the quilting guild. Houston is the world center for quilting in the country and hosts huge quilting festivals each year. While she had a life-long interest in art and crafts, this form of art gave her an opportunity to “paint, using fabric.” She has created quilts for friends and family using “space” as the theme. **Shown below are two of her favorite quilts: Left: 20 Space Shuttles and Right: Baby Quilt for friend.** She continues to quilt as time permits.



Looking ahead, her interest has turned to pets, and her newly rescued dog, Davis.

She would like to train Davis to be a PAL dog. PAL (Partners Achieving Literacy) is a program which uses dogs to improve a child's reading skills. It targets 2nd-4th grade students in the Huntsville School System who are poor readers. The student practices reading to the dog and then is allowed to take the book home. In most cases, this may be the only book the child has at home. She also continues to speak at schools and universities, specifically, to encourage females to enter the science and math

fields. **Shown below with husband, Dick and dog, Davis.**



USSRC Breakfast Honoring Our Docents

The Rocket Center recently held a breakfast in the Davidson Center for Space Exploration to recognize NASA Emeritus and Military Emeritus Docents.

Todd May, Acting Director of Marshall Space Flight Center, and Gen. Larry Wyche, Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, attended the breakfast, with May presenting the NASA Emeritus Dedicated Service Award to Mike Pessin. The Center also gave out some fun-spirited awards, including the “Three Musketeers” honor to docents Skeet Vaughan, Sonny Morea and Craig Sumner for sharing their knowledge of the moon rover project. Paul Weaver received the “Docent in Orbit,” and Lowell Zoller was named “Professor Z” for his work with Space Academy for Educators. **Congratulations to our NASA Emeritus Team.**



Todd May with Mike Pessin, Dedicated Service Award



Craig Sumner, Sonny Morea, Bennie Jacks and Skeet Vaughan



Lowell Zoller, Professor Z



Paul Weaver, Docent In Orbit

2015 In Review -----Marshall Space Flight Center

Excerpt from *Marshall Star*, January 6, 2016:

Letter from Acting Center Director Todd May to Employees:

.....In 2015, our advances included:

The Space Launch System successfully completed its Critical Design Review, posting a landmark for this and the next generation. For the first time in nearly 40 years a human-rated vehicle has reached this stage and is authorized for full production. The RS-25 Core Engine blazed through a successful test series, and the SLS rocket booster -- the most powerful ever built -- completed a major-milestone ground test. A 215-foot-tall structural test stand for the SLS liquid hydrogen tank continues to rise at Marshall, and Michoud has more than 50 pieces of flight and qualification hardware for liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen tanks ready for welding. Your accomplishments are bringing us closer to Mars every day.

The International Space Station completed 15 years of continuous human occupation this year, which our Payload Operations Integration Center team supports 24/7. Because of you, this science laboratory in the sky is a test bed for the technologies needed to leave Earth dependence for the Proving Ground, and eventually for Earth independence.

We tested components for an engine that could be powered with methane -- a fuel never before used to propel a NASA spacecraft. We are focused specifically on developing a viable lander propulsion system to support a human mission to Mars and landing payloads 20-30 times heavier than Curiosity.

Through activities such as the annual Human Exploration Rover Challenge, Student Launch competition, Mars Ascent Challenge, Alabama A&M University mentor-protégé event and Auburn University signing of a Space Act Agreement to advance their STEM education and additive manufacturing capabilities, we elevated institutions' and individuals' ability to feed the pipeline with talent essential for NASA and Marshall's future -- in fact, vital for the American economy.

I know we will continue to explore and expand the realm of the possible to greater heights in 2016.

PHOTO GALLERY

2015 Christmas Social



**Dr. Williams & the Oakwood
Academy Choir**



Jack & Becky Stokes



**Debbie Counts – Thank you for the
beautiful table arrangements**



**Angela & Sonny Morea (Check out
the bow tie)**

A Special "Thank You"



Mary Spaulding, Membership Chair

Mary has served as Membership Chair for 10 years, collecting dues, maintaining a database and an e-mail database to accompany the newsletter to the printing. She handles all the changes we toss at her, and she tracks down members to get updates that we have failed to report. Thank you, Mary, for your dedication to MRA.



Bennie Jacks and Deledia Perry, MRA Secretary and Secretary's Assistant

Bennie and Deledia are responsible for the huge task of handling reservations for our quarterly events. They always have a smile, even when members show up with no reservations, or fail to show with reservations, or call to make a reservation at the last minute. Thank you for your dedication to MRA.

USSRC OPENS “ISS: SCIENCE ON ORBIT” EXHIBIT

The U.S. Space & Rocket Center held an opening ceremony for its new exhibit, “ISS: Science on Orbit,” Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2016. Dr. Deborah Barnhart, CEO of the USSRC, Dr. Julie Robinson, NASA’s chief scientist for the International Space Station, and Dr. Dwight Mosby, Teledyne Brown’s Program Manager for the Mission Operations and Integration Contract at Marshall Space Flight Center made opening remarks. The scientists overseeing the 150 payloads currently on board the station were also on hand for the opening.

“ISS: Science on Orbit” is a NASA grant-funded exhibit that includes a model of MSFC’s Payload Operations Integration Center as well as two mockups of ISS modules. A connecting node contains a full-scale replica of the Cupola Observation Module, which provides ISS astronauts their view of space and the Earth below.

“ISS: Science on Orbit” is open to guests during regular USSRC operating hours and is included in museum admission or membership.



Did You Know??? MSFC has archived all issues of the *Marshall Star* back to January 22, 1997. They are available on-line at: <https://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/about/star>. Check it out and walk down memory lane.



Obituaries of *Marshall* Retirees

(Courtesy of the *Marshall Star*)

- Baggs**, Ellis T., 92 of Decatur, died Dec. 24. Retired in 1995 as an aerospace engineer.
- Baker**, William P., 92 of Fayetteville, died Nov. 18. Retired in 1988 as an aerospace engineer.
- Carr**, Arthur M., 84, died Dec. 1. Retired in 1988 as an aerospace engineer.
- Chubb**, William B., 84 of Harvest, died Dec. 22. Retired in 1994 as an aerospace engineer.
- Cooper**, Doris M., 79, of New Hope, died Dec. 8.
- Fletcher**, Norman, 83, of Huntsville, died Nov. 10. Retired in 1994 as a computer engineer.
- Hightower**, Clyde M., 95 of Huntsville, died Jan. 4. Retired in 1989 as an employee relations specialist.
- Hurst**, Paul O., 82, of Huntsville, died Dec. 18. Retired in 1995 as an aerospace engineer.
- Jones**, Robert E., 95, died Jan. 11. Retired in 1983 as an aerospace engineer.
- Layne**, Billy A., 84, of Huntsville, died Dec. 7. Retired in 1984 as an a/c mechanic.
- Lusk**, Dewey L., 93 of Huntsville, died Dec. 23. Retired in 1999 as an aerospace engineer.
- Marks**, Lloyd B., 91, of Huntsville, died Jan. 2. Retired in 1979 as an aerospace engineer.
- Martin**, Edward E., 83, of Huntsville, died Nov. 12. Retired in 1980 as an aerospace engineer.
- Osborne**, Leroy T., 87 of Huntsville, died Dec. 29. Retired in 1988 as an executive assistant.
- Pentecost**, James C., 89 of Gallant died Nov. 15. Retired in 1989 as a construction representative.
- Rorex**, James E., 90, of Huntsville, died Nov. 12. Retired in 1980 as an aerospace engineer.
- Samaniego**, Ramon J., 89 of Huntsville, died Dec. 30. Retired in 1994 as an architect.
- Selvidge**, Wilma J., 80 of Fayetteville, died Nov. 21. Retired in 1985 as a personnel specialist.
- Stewart**, Harvey R., 92 of Winston Salem, NC, died Dec. 2. Retired in 1981 as a budget analyst.
- Taylor**, Phillip, 80, of Albertville, died Nov. 10. Retired in 1993 as a contract specialist.
- Thornhill**, Bruce E., 79, of Arab, died Nov. 19. Retired in 1997 as a computer engineer.
- Worrell**, Donald O., 92 of Huntsville, died Dec. 16. Retired in 1981 as a public affairs specialist.

NASA/MSFC Retiree Association

P. O. Box 4492

Huntsville, AL 35815

MRA OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS, PAST PRESIDENTS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (with e-mail addresses)

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Editor's note: If you have articles of interest, photographs or suggestions for this newsletter, please contact me at 256-852-7336, or e-mail: Bjeanlee@aol.com Jean Lee, Newsletter Editor