

*The Marshall Retiree Report*  
*November 2018*

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

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*Quarterly MRA Social*

**Tuesday, December 11, 2018 at The Ledges**

**Social & Registration: 6:00 p.m. – Dinner: 7:00 p.m.**

**\$30.00 per person**

*Menu:*

*Garden Salad, Sliced Roast Turkey with Cornbread Dressing,  
Sweet Potato Casserole, Sauteed Green Beans, Dinner Rolls,  
Coffee & Tea, Dessert: Southern Pecan Pie*

Please RSVP to Bennie Jacks no later than **noon on Friday, December 7, 2018**, at [benniejacks@att.net](mailto:benniejacks@att.net) or cell phone: 256-603-0894.

A 72-hour cancellation notice is required by the Ledges.

***Program:*** No speaker is scheduled to allow time for members to socialize and for storytelling.

## *From Parker's Desk.....*

Recently, I was in Morris Auditorium for a Fire and Smoke discussion moderated by Gene Goldman with panel members Gary Lyles, Robert Lightfoot and Patrick Scheuermann. Looking around that room at all our past Center Directors' portraits, I thought it would be appropriate that we should have a record in our MRA Newsletter files listing the names and service dates of our first 13 center directors. They were: 1) Wernher von Braun, 7/1960-1/1970; 2) Eberhard Rees, 3/1970-1/1973; 3) Rocco Petrone, 1/1973-3/1974; 4) William R. Lucas, 6/1974-6/1986; 5) JR Thompson, 9/1986-7/1989; 6) Jack Lee, 7/1989-1/1994; 7) Porter Birdwell, 1/1994-2/1996; 8) Wayne Littles, 2/1996-6/1998; Art Stephenson, 9/1998-6/2003; 10) David King, 6/2003-4/2009; 11) Robert Lightfoot, 8/2009-8/2012; 12) Patrick Scheuermann, 9/2012-12/2015; 13) Todd May, 2/2016-7/2018. Our congratulations go out to our current Center Director, Jody Singer.

I would also like to make you aware of a very bold undertaking that our association is considering for the Apollo 50<sup>th</sup> celebration in 2019. Rick Chappell is looking at ways to honor all the men and women that have worked at MSFC since the beginning, including those that started with the U.S. Army. Rick will be briefing the MRA Executive Board later this month and he will provide details at the MRA Christmas Social on December 11. What we need from each of our members is a list of names that you remember working with over the years you worked at Marshall. We will be working with the Center's Human Resources Office and other organizations to get names of both past and present employees; however, it would be most helpful for each of us to list those folks we were particularly close to during our careers. We want the names to be as complete as possible. Please start a list of your fellow workers.

Look forward to seeing you at the December meeting.

*Parker Counts, MRA President*



### Schedule of MRA Meetings in 2019: Mark Your Calendars

Tuesday, March 12, 2019 – Luncheon

Tuesday, June 11, 2019 – Dinner

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 – Luncheon

Tuesday, December 10, 2019 – Dinner

## Membership Dues Reminder

(Note: Please check the address label on this newsletter to find your dues status)

If not already paid, 2018 dues are now delinquent. Also, 2019 dues will be due beginning January 1, 2019. Dues are \$30 per year and may be paid by mailing a check, made to MSFC Retirees Association to: MSFC Retirees Association, P. O. Box 4492, Huntsville, AL 35815, or by paying at the December Social on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

Membership in the Association is open to former or retired MSFC and other NASA Center employees. New 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. Spouses of deceased MRA members may attain membership status with membership dues waived.

If your mailing address or e-mail address changes, please remember to let **Mary Spaulding** know by e-mailing her at: **md\_spaulding@comcast.net** or calling **256-883-2228** so we can keep our records up to date.

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### Spacelab Semi-Annual Reunion held on September 13, 2018 at Valley Hill Country Club



# 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of America Landing on the Moon



The Steering Committee and its various subcommittees for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lunar Landing Celebration, hosted by USSRC, continue to press forward preparing for the celebratory events of 2019. The Legacy Committee, chaired by Bennie Jacks, has defined its plan for the celebration. The MRA mainly supports the Legacy Committee history. Likewise, the German-American Heritage Committee, chaired by Heidi Collier, has defined activities involving MRA members and others.

The interesting news is that the Legacy Committee planned panel presentations have already begun, with Ed Buckbee presenting “Dr. von Braun: The Rocket Man: His American Journey” in the Space & Rocket Center’s National Geographic Theatre on 12/6/2018. Other panel presentations can be found on [www.rocketcenter.com/calendar](http://www.rocketcenter.com/calendar) (tap through months to reach 2019 dates) and Huntsville Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau <https://www.huntsville.org/apollo-50th-anniversary>.

Several of the USSRC docents and MRA members have recently shared their histories and perspectives with students at Chaffee Elementary and Weatherly Heights Elementary schools. Other schools are interested in having MRA members speak to them in the months to come. Kenny Mitchell has now presented his “Rocket City USA” talk to several venues in the community.

The Polaris, Inc. Lunar Roving Vehicle (LRV) mobile replica and the Calhoun Community College static LRV model are progressing per schedule.

A space memorabilia auction is now planned as part of the Celebration Car Show on July 13. We are still looking for 1945 to 1975 cars owned by our space pioneers. Contact Jack Stokes at 256-881-4748, for more information. Visit: <http://www.rocketcenter.com/apollo50/carshow/nomination>.

Bennie Jacks, Jack Stokes, Heidi Collier



## MSFC Holiday Reception

The 2018 MSFC Holiday Reception will be on December 6<sup>th</sup>, from 2:30 – 5:30 pm, in Building 4316, MSFC Activities Building. All NASA retirees are invited!

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William (Bill) Grafton, age 92, chats with Liz Hurley of WAFF Channel 48, during the September MRA Luncheon. Grafton was Test Laboratory Manager with Heimburg/Tessman.



The NASA Ladies Luncheon was held on September 26th at Logan's restaurant. These ladies supported Dr. von Braun and the 9<sup>th</sup> floor management team. Seated: Wanda Carlen, Mary Spaulding. Back (left to right): Shirley Ellis, Jo Ann DeGroff, Jan Zelinski, Wanda Reed, Nancy Guire and AnneMarie Hall.



During a Sept. 27 event commemorating NASA's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Marshall Space Flight Center team members listen to a panel discussion themed, "Sixty Years of Smoke and Fire: Igniting Human Space Exploration through Engine Testing at Marshall and Stennis". Gene Goldman, former Marshall center acting director, left, moderated the panel, which included from left, Garry Lyles, NASA Space Launch System program chief engineer; Robert Lightfoot Jr., former NASA acting administrator; and Patrick Scheuermann, former Marshall center director. **(photo and article courtesy of NASA Marshall Star)**



MRA attendees at Smoke and Fire Presentation

# 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Wernher von Braun Memorial Dinner

The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Wernher von Braun Memorial Dinner was held on October 25, 2018 at the Space and Rocket Center under the magnificent Saturn V rocket. (Photos courtesy MSFC and 256 Magazine)



Dick Richardson and Jan Davis



Rick and Brenda Chappell



Parker & Debbie Counts



Jim and Joanne Splawn

## 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Wernher von Braun Memorial Dinner



MRA Docents and members of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Apollo 11 Committee: Front L-R): Dennis Foster, Linda Dinges, Heidi Collier, Bennie Jacks and Kenny Mitchell.  
Back: Mike Stallcup and Craig Sumner



## Welcome to the new members of MRA in 2018!

Randy Humphries, Jr.

Helen Eddleman

Adonna Mitchell

Elaine Hamner

Sharon L. Espey

Jerry R. Cook

Arthur G. Stephenson

Debbie King

Richard (Dick) N. Stone, Jr

Daniel L. Dumbacher

Donald P. Vallely





MRA Member Kenny Mitchell's book, *The Cradle of American Space Exploration: Huntsville, Alabama*, will be released in early December. Kenny gives his inspiration to write a book about Huntsville's history in space exploration below:

"In 2017, I became a member of two subcommittees reporting to Dr. Deborah Barnhart's Executive Committee on our city's planning for the 2019 celebrations. In my work on these two committees, my own personal experiences of working on our nation's space exploration since 1959 and my hobby of collecting space memorabilia for the past 60 years, a book narrative began to develop in my mind about Huntsville, Alabama's place in history regarding space exploration.

Although I am an Alabama native (born in Birmingham in 1941), my family didn't move to Huntsville until 1956 when my father was transferred from the Army Ordnance Depot in Anniston, Alabama to work at Redstone Arsenal. I began high school at Butler High in 1956 and graduated in 1959. I began my co-op experience with Auburn University and ABMA in that same year. I became a charter member of MSFC in July 1960. I was on a date with my high school sweetheart (my future wife of 57 years) the night America's first satellite (Explorer I) was put into earth orbit. We went downtown and celebrated with many other residents on the night of January 31, 1958. Little did I realize at the time that space exploration was going to be my primary career in life."

The book will be available at USSRC in early December and all proceeds will benefit the USSRC. A book signing will be scheduled later and the books will be available at the MRA December meeting. Congratulations Kenny!

## USSRC Events

**\*Dec. 6, 2018 2:30 to 3:30 pm Wernher von Braun - The Rocket Man: His American Journey**

Hear Ed Buckbee, former public affairs officer for the von Braun team and first executive director of the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, speak about how Huntsville facilities became the cradle of American spaceflight under the leadership of Wernher von Braun. He will address von Braun's interest in what his team was thinking & doing during the time and his willingness to participate with NASA and worldwide activities.

**\*Dec. 9, 2018 1:00 – 4:00 pm Cosmic Carols and Cocoa**

The U.S. Space & Rocket Center is offering a magical start to the holiday season with Cosmic Carols and Cocoa Sunday. Guests can grab a cup of hot cocoa, decorate out-of-this-world cookies, create festive holiday crafts and enjoy Dr. Osborne's magic show. The event in the Davidson Center for Space Exploration is free for museum members and NASA retirees with badge and \$5 for non-members. Children ages four and under get in free.

**\*Now – Jan. 21, 2019 9:00 am -5:00 pm Alien Worlds and Androids**

Ignite your curiosity and explore the possibility of life beyond Earth in “Alien Worlds and Androids” at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center.

In this exhibit, guests join scientists in their search for alien life in and beyond our solar system and discover strange alien-like creatures found here on Earth. With content that showcases the cutting-edge science taking place at organizations such as Jet Propulsion Laboratory and NASA, “Alien Worlds & Androids” brings guests face-to-face with worlds far beyond their own and introduces the technology that takes them there. Enjoy hands-on experiments in nine themed galleries and take a simulated journey on the Mars Rover. Then discover how science fiction can influence reality with life-size models of iconic robots from blockbuster films. From deep-sea exploration to artificial intelligence and robotics, let your imagination run wild in this newest featured exhibition.



## Obituaries of *Marshall* Retirees

**Baldwin**, William P., 88, Huntsville, died Nov. 1. Retired as an aerospace engineer.

**Bayless**, Ernest O., 80, Petersburg, TN, died Aug. 30. Retired 1992 as an aerospace engineer.

**Belew**, Herschel W., 91, Huntsville, died Sept. 8. Retired 1989 as a mechanical engineer.

**Bernier**, Sonja D., 57, Madison, died Aug. 15. Retired as an aerospace engineer.

**Blevins**, Calvin, 94, Huntsville, died Aug. 12. Retired as an aerospace engineer.

**Brock**, Ronald C., 89, Harvest, died Sept. 16. Retired 1997 as a technical manager.

**Darwin**, Charles R., 82, Dadeville, died Sept. 7. Retired 1993 as Director of Program Development.

**Funkhouser**, John, 86, Huntsville, died Sept. 12. Retired 2012 as an aerospace engineer.

**Hembree**, Ray Van, 95, Huntsville, died Nov. 6. Retired 1983 as a physicist and photographer.

**Kirby**, Clifton A., 82, Huntsville, died Oct. 30. Retired as an aerospace engineer.

**Knadler**, John M., 87, Huntsville, died Sept. 26. Retired 1989 as a materials engineer.

**McInnis**, Erich L., 91, Decatur, died Aug. 15. Retired 1983 as an assistant executive officer.

**Percival**, David J., 71, Madison, died Sept. 16. Retired 2010 as a financial program specialist.

**Verschoore**, Charles (Chuck), 84, Madison, died Oct. 8. Retired 1995 as an aerospace engineer.

# **NASA/MSFC Retiree Association**

**P. O. Box 4492**

**Huntsville, AL 35815**

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

### **OFFICERS: 2017-2019**

President: Parker Counts, parkercounts@knology.net

Vice-President: Rick Chappell, rick.chappell@vanderbilt.edu

Secretary: Bennie Jacks, benniejacks@att.net

Assistant Secretary: Deledia Perry, deeperry99@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Linda Dinges, linda.l.dinges@gmail.com

### **BOARD MEMBERS: 2017-2019**

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### **PAST PRESIDENTS/STANDING BOARD MEMBERS:**

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### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

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**Program**: Gene Goldman, arthur.goldman@leidos.com

**Newsletter**: Jean Lee, Bjeanlee@aol.com

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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](mailto:Bjeanlee@aol.com) Jean Lee, Newsletter Editor**