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Creating a tastier menu for space travel

By Linda Herridge
Staff Writer

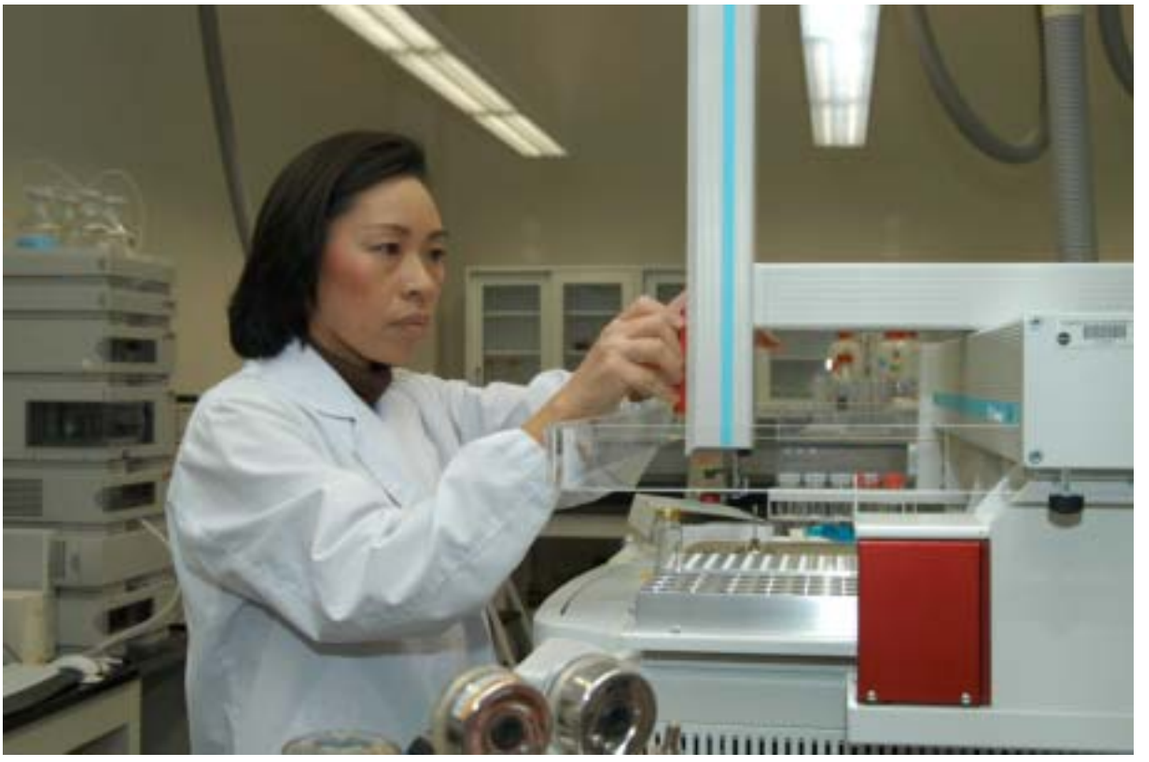
Astronauts can grow tired of eating freeze-dried food in space, so researchers at the Space Life Sciences (SLS) Lab are hoping a newly acquired machine will help create a better alternative.

"Chemical analysis to science is like water and air to humans," said Dr. Lanfang Levine, a senior research chemist with the Dynamac Corporation. "We cannot pack everything for a long-term exploration mission and will need a vital bioregenerative life support system, in order to grow high-quality food and recycle resources."

For that reason, she is excited about a new addition to the array of equipment in the Chemistry Labs at the SLS Lab.

Though its name is huge, the new ThermoFinnigan TRACE Gas Chromatography (GC)/DSQ Mass Spectrometer is small in size. The machine offers maximum flexibility to meet a wide range of analytical challenges and the updated model can perform several different analyses at the same time.

All of the components are controlled by a single PC using a powerful software program called "Xcalibur."



DR. LANFANG LEVINE, a senior research chemist with the Dynamac Corporation, operates the new ThermoFinnigan TRACE Gas Chromatography (GC)/DSQ Mass Spectrometer at the Space Life Sciences Lab.

"This is a great addition and complements the existing liquid chromatography mass spectrometer that is also from ThermoFinnigan," said Levine.

The purchase was driven by the increasing demand on chemical analyses. The process to acquire the new equipment began when Dr. Levine carefully evaluated the needs of both in-house and visiting scientists, and the current state of new technology. Subsequently, she worked with the manufacturer's

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Donatello joins its roommates in the SSPF

By Linda Herridge
Staff Writer

There are no "normal" days inside the Space Station Processing Facility.

But workers in the SSPF thrive on that, according to Tip Talone, NASA director of International Space Station (ISS) and Payload Processing at KSC.

A standout among the exciting days came Feb. 13, when the Multi-Purpose Logistics Module (MPLM) Donatello

(See SSPF, Page 6)

THE MULTI-PURPOSE LOGISTICS MODULE Donatello is safely in place on a work stand in the Space Station Processing Facility.

Jim Kennedy
Center Director

The Kennedy Update

Hello everyone! Now that we've had a month and a half to hear and read about President George W. Bush's new vision for space exploration, I'd like to share my views on the subject.

I believe it's incredibly important to understand what the vision is about, especially while so many different views are being expressed in the various media outlets throughout the country.

First and foremost, the new vision is not about a destination; it's about our destiny as explorers. We're a nation of explorers and the universe is calling. We all yearn to answer the fundamental questions, "How did we get here?" "Are we alone?" and "Where are we going?"

NASA has expanded human knowledge, revolutionized our understanding of the universe and produced technological advances that have benefited everyone. This new bold vision can help us attract and motivate the best young minds of this century to even higher accomplishments.

Historically, America has reaped great benefits when the power of human intellect is focused on a great challenge and opportunity.

As President Bush said on Jan. 14, "Mankind is drawn to the heavens for the same reason we were once drawn into unknown lands and across the open sea. We choose to explore space because doing so improves our lives and lifts our national spirit. So let us continue the journey."

Another aspect to realize is this vision is a journey and not a race. We'll travel from the Earth to the Moon, Mars and beyond, one stepping stone at a time. Exploration of the Moon or Mars is not an end in itself, but a piece of a much larger exploration vision.

We'll begin with robotic missions as trailblazers, then follow with more complex human and robotic missions, creating a sustainable presence in space. While Mars is only one destination, future objectives may include asteroids, the moons of Jupiter and deep space sites suitable for large observatories.

This vision is affordable, achievable and sustainable. Funding for exploration will come from small budget increases and by reorienting existing NASA programs.

This investment in NASA will continue to represent less than one percent of the total federal budget.

Some people might think we can explore space with machines alone. My response is that both people and machines are needed in space. You can give robots intelligence, but people bring judgment to every situation. Machines will never replace our imagination, sense of adventure, our ingenuity and our ability to adapt and solve problems while in space.

> Machines will never replace our imagination, sense of adventure, our ingenuity and our ability to adapt and solve problems while in space.

There is no doubt that robotic missions will serve as trailblazers and advance our progress into the unknown. Probes, rovers and other vehicles will continue to prove their worth, sending spectacular images and vast amounts of data back to Earth.

But again, as President Bush said, "The human thirst for knowledge ultimately cannot be satisfied by even the most vivid pictures or the most detailed measurements. We need to see and examine and touch for ourselves. And only human beings are capable of adapting to the inevitable uncertainties posed by space travel."

In the end, space impacts our lives on a daily basis and will continue to do so. Space exploration is arguably the most productive of all the sciences. In the past 30 years, NASA has accounted for eight percent of the world's scientific discoveries in all fields of science, according to a *Science News* survey.

I can't predict the future, but I do know this: every significant accomplishment in our nation's history started with a vision. The Wright Brothers visualized manned flight and President Kennedy envisioned a man on the Moon. Now we have a new bold vision to make a reality.

As you can see, I am very excited about the President's Exploration Vision and believe it is good for the nation, the Agency and the Kennedy Space Center. Let's not lose sight, however, of the fact that the first steps of the vision include a safe return to flight for the Shuttle and completion of the International Space Station.

We must complete this job correctly to achieve the vision. I know I can count on each of you to make this a reality.

Unlocking a big door to the ISS

Surrounded by workers in the Space Station Processing Facility, Chuck Hardison (left), Boeing senior truss manager, presents the "key" for the starboard truss segment S3/S4 to Scott Gahring (center), ISS Vehicle Office manager (acting) for Johnson Space Center. The trusses are scheduled to be delivered to the ISS on mission STS-117. Holding the tip of the key at right is astronaut Patrick Forrester, who is a mission specialist on the flight.

Dovale dreams of launching more than rockets

By Linda Herridge
Staff Writer

Chuck Dovale's secret ambition is to become a professional guitar player. Though his musical career hasn't yet launched, he excels in his day job as launch director for eastern and western range launch sites in KSC's Launch Services Program (LSP).

Dovale has been in this position since March 1999.

"The Launch Services Program came from a consolidation of the Expendable Launch Vehicle and Payload Carriers Programs," said Dovale. "The work hasn't really changed much with the consolidation. We're looking toward the future with a major focus on unmanned launches."

Dovale's responsibilities include providing the contractor with the single go/no-go decision for the NASA community during the launch campaign. His team also oversees spacecraft testing and integration with launch vehicles, while he provides NASA Headquarters the manifest support for launch schedules.

Current programs in progress within the LSP include the Orbital Space Plane (OSP) and the Jupiter Icy Moon Orbiter (JIMO) mission. The projects require interface with NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center for OSP and the Jet Propulsion Lab's "Prometheus Program" for JIMO, which is scheduled to launch as early as 2012.

NASA LAUNCH DIRECTOR Chuck Dovale (center) confers with Jim Meyer (right), launch operations manager and James Wood, chief engineer during a recent mission.

Dovale is involved in a significant future mission, the Mercury Surface Space Environment Geochemistry and Ranging (MESSENGER) spacecraft, which will perform two flybys and then orbit Mercury. The mission, scheduled to launch in May, is historic because it will be the first orbital study of the innermost planet. Mariner 10 made the last flybys of Mercury in 1974 and 1975.

Dovale, a native of Long Island, N.Y., left the state in his last year of high school and settled in Brevard County. He started as a summer hire with NASA at KSC in 1982 and became a co-op in the expendable launch vehicle directorate in 1984.

Twenty years later, Dovale still calls the ELV program home. His responsibilities as LSP director have taken him to launch sites in Kodiak, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., among others.

His love of rock music keeps him traveling around the country as well.

Dovale's moment of fame includes an appearance in a music video filmed at Hard Rock Live in Orlando for the rock group "Staind," and meeting David Letterman in New York in 1998, where they discussed the Mars Observer mission.

Dovale, married to wife Laura for 14 years, has two children: Paige, 8, and Kaley, 6. He enjoys spending time with them and playing his acoustic and electric guitars.

February Employees of the Month

STANDING IN THE BACK ROW, from left, are: Maria Bland, Cape Canaveral Spaceport Management Office/Chief Financial Office; Nancy Zeiltin, Spaceport Engineering and Technology; Michael Payne, Shuttle Processing. Standing in the front row, from left, are: Penny Chambers, Chief Council; Lisa Brawn, ISS/Payload Processing; Maxine Johnson, Executive Staff . Not shown are: Juan Busto, Information Technology and Communications Services; Michael Wheeler, Procurement Office; Don Slayman, Spaceport Services; Tom Palo, Launch Services Program.

Are you ready to take control of your health?

The KSC Fitness Centers now offer two new ways to get in shape.

During the month of March, participate in the Spring 2004 Indoor Triathlon for individuals or relay teams. The Distance Triathlon consists of 10-miles on an upright bike, a 1-1/4 mile row on a rowing machine and 3.1 miles on a treadmill.

The Sprint Triathlon for individuals includes a 5-mile upright bike ride, a ¾-mile row on a rowing machine and two miles on a treadmill. Prizes will be awarded. For information, call 867-7829 (O&C) or 861-3028 (OSB).

Also, join the KSC Fitness Centers' new nutrition lecture series, "Changing Weighs." The hour-long sessions take place in the O&C Mission Briefing Room (MBR). All talks begin at 11 a.m.

Mar. 10 - Getting Back On Track with Nutrition Basics (alternate location: O&C Room 1055)
April 14 - Psychology of Overeating and Eating Normally (alternate: O&C Room 1055)
May 12 - Dangers of Fad Diets
June 9 - Dissecting Food Labels
July 14 - Functional Eating: Foods to Prevent Disease
Aug. 11 - Setting Goals: An Inspirational Story

Kennedy 'explores' NASA's vision with Tampa students

By Jeff Stuckey
Editor

Tampa seventh-grade student Melissa Brewster, dressed in a blue NASA astronaut training suit, has her sights set beyond Mars exploration.

"I would like to be a pilot and learn to fly future spacecraft," Melissa says. With confidence and no hesitation, she adds, "I also want to be the first woman to walk on Venus."

Melissa and 60 of her fellow students were a captive audience as KSC Director Jim Kennedy and NASA astronaut Kay Hire spoke to students at Stewart Middle Magnet School, a NASA Explorer School (NES) in Tampa, on Feb. 20.

The event was part of the Agency's effort to share President George W. Bush's new vision for space exploration with the next generation of explorers.

Twenty-six of the students, dressed in identical astronaut suits, comprise the school's John Glenn Top Gun Academy. This group learned even more about NASA last summer when the NES school, only one of four in Florida, toured KSC.

KSC DIRECTOR JIM KENNEDY addresses students, teachers and parents at Stewart Middle Magnet School, a NASA Explorer School in Tampa, Feb 20.

Each year, NES education teams work with NASA personnel to develop action plans for staff and students. The plan promotes the use of NASA content and programs that address the teams' local needs in mathematics, science and technology through authentic experiences.

Kennedy's presentation focused on NASA's stepping stone approach to exploring the Moon, Mars and other planets. He also discussed ways space impacts our lives and how people and machines rely on each other in space.

"We want you to be a part of our program one day, if you would like to be," he said. "As part of the vision the President announced last month, we are going to take people to Mars and it's going to be done with you, in the middle school age group, who will be the astronauts for that mission."

The center director then introduced an inspiring 5-minute video highlighting the President's announcement at NASA Headquarters. He then reminded the students to take advantage of the opportunity they have been given as students in an Explorer School.

"There are only 50 Explorer schools in the world and one of them is right here in Tampa, Florida, at the Stewart Middle Magnet School," Kennedy said. "I am so proud of you and your teachers, who I know worked so hard to compete with all the other contenders for this program."

As excited as the students were to hear from the center director, they were equally excited to meet a NASA astronaut.

"Although I love my work, I also love coming to spend time with you because I can tell that you are interested in space," Hire said. "We need new technology that does not exist today. We need your creative minds to come up with new ideas and to come and share those ideas with NASA. We need you on our team."

For information about NES on the Internet, visit: **http://explorerschools.nasa.gov**

O'Keefe tours proposed NASA site in Orlando

AT LEFT, NASA ADMINISTRATOR Sean O'Keefe (center) listens to Congressman Tom Feeney (second from left) during a tour of the Central Florida Research Park, near Orlando. At right is U.S. Congressman Dave Weldon. Central Florida leaders are proposing the research park as the site for the new NASA Shared Services Center. Six sites around the U.S. are under consideration by NASA. Above, KSC Director Jim Kennedy makes a presentation to NASA and other officials about the benefits of locating the new center in the Central Florida Research Park, near Orlando.

Rescuers respond to mock Shuttle mishap

By Anna Heiney
Staff Writer

When it comes to launching and landing Space Shuttles, NASA and the U.S. Air Force expect the best. But they also know the importance of preparing for the worst.

They put themselves to the test Feb. 18 when they rescued seven injured "astronauts" from a Shuttle orbiter that landed short of its runway at KSC. Fortunately, it was just a simulation. The astronauts were healthy volunteers and the orbiter was only a life-sized mockup of the crew compartment.

Called a "Mode VII," the exercise is meant to give NASA and the Department of Defense hands-on experience in responding to Shuttle emergencies.

Emergency personnel and landing team members were readying for landing when Landing and Recovery Director Robert Holl declared the emergency: The orbiter had come down south of the Shuttle Landing Facility.

NASA's fire-rescue helicopter began a search from the air and spotted the crash site in an area full of small ponds. Four Air Force search-and-rescue helicopters arrived next. Normally based at nearby Patrick Air Force Base, the helicopters are always present at KSC for Shuttle launches and landings.

One by one, the Air Force helicopters landed and deployed teams of para-rescuers. Wearing gas masks and silver suits for protection, the rescue team entered the crew compartment through the top hatch. Some crew members were evacuated that way; others were carried out the side hatch.

"Main access was through the top, then we opened the side hatch from the inside," said Norb Kuhman, fire chief and rescue operations commander with Space Gateway Services. "We were just making sure we exercised both elements."

The crew members were taken by helicopter or M-113 armored personnel carrier to a nearby emergency treatment area.

Only 43 minutes elapsed from the time the emergency was declared until all crew members were rescued from the orbiter.

"They did great," Lt. Col. John Bickett, commander of Department of Defense Management for Space Shuttle Support. "But we're going to see what we did as planned, and what could be done even better."

EMERGENCY CREW MEMBERS (above) lower a volunteer "astronaut" from the top of the orbiter crew compartment mock-up that is the scene of a Mode VII emergency landing simulation at KSC. Below, an "injured" rescue worker is lifted into an M-113 armored personnel carrier provided for transportation during the Mode VII simulation.

A HELICOPTER RESCUE TEAM prepares another "injured" astronaut for transportation to a local hospital, part of an emergency landing simulation to exercise emergency preparedness personnel, equipment and facilities.

Celebrating the successes of African-Americans

KSC's Black Employee Strategy Team (BEST) hosted the 2004 African-American History Month Luncheon Feb. 20 at the Debus Conference Center. The event was open to all NASA civil servant and contractor employees.

Dr. Woodrow Whitlow, KSC deputy director, opened the program by saying, "I'm very pleased to see such a diverse group of people here to celebrate African American History Month."

During a delicious buffet lunch, attendees viewed a moving video retrospective of significant events and contributions by African-Americans.

Keynote speaker Dr. Dorothy Hayden-Watkins, assistant administrator for Equal Opportunity Programs at NASA Headquarters, spoke to a sold-out crowd at the event.

"We have come a long way," Hayden-Watkins began, "and we have a long way to go. But we have to stop occasionally and celebrate the successes, progress and achievements we have made. And we have to honor those, such as Thurgood Marshall and those, black and white, who worked together to made the strides that we celebrate."

Hayden-Watkins stressed the importance of promoting the similarities people of color share with other races, rather than seeing differences that are divisive.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER Dr. Dorothy Hayden-Watkins, assistant administrator for Equal Opportunity Programs at NASA Headquarters, spoke to a sold-out crowd at the 2004 African-American History Month luncheon.

Elaine Johnson, daughter of the late former KSC EO Deputy Director Evelyn Johnson, awarded two scholarships in her mother's name to college students Monique Bland and Tiffany Lindsley, who are in the Stay-in-School Program. Both work in the External Relations and New Business Directorate and are attending Brevard Community College.

BEST Chairperson, Derwood McKinley, announced the BEST Leadership Recognition award winners are William Gary, an engineer in the International Space Station/Payload Processing Directorate, and Kimberly Jenkins, an engineer in the Safety, Health and Independent Assessment Directorate. The award recognizes two members who represent contributions within BEST, NASA and the local community.

Johnson Controls wins Florida video award, nominated for national recognition

Johnson Controls, the visual information contractor at the Spaceport, recently received three Crystal Reel Awards at the Florida Motion Picture and Television Association annual awards banquet. The group's television documentary, "John Glenn Recalls the Flight of Friendship Seven," took honors in categories including Best Produced Script for a Documentary, Best Editing for a Documentary and Best Musical Score. The documentary will next be judged in the American Film Industry Silver Doc film festival in June.

The team used original NASA-archived film footage for the project, worked on by Director Jim Cain, executive producer Bud Wellman, video editor Mike Chambers, retired newscaster Bill Larson and beauty consultant Maureen Mulholland.

MEMBERS OF award-winning production team include (from left) Jim Cain, Mike Chambers, Maureen Mulholland, Bill Larson and Bud Wellman.

SSPF ...

(Continued from Page 1)

was transferred from a storage area in the Operations and Support Building to a test stand in the high bay of the SSPF. For the first time since its arrival at KSC in February 2001, Donatello now sits in the SSPF with its fellow modules, Raffaello and Leonardo.

Since Donatello has never flown on a Space Shuttle mission, the module will undergo preparations for risk mitigation, or active MPLM testing, to confirm it will function properly in space. Power, data and cooling service will be provided to as many as five rack locations to simulate the Shuttle side of the interface.

Tests and upgrades will verify all systems work and reduce the risk of incompatibilities during its first active mission, currently scheduled for 2007.

"The upgrades and verification testing of Donatello will confirm that the ISS can support the new Space Policy, by providing a much greater capability to launch and return a large variety of life science experiment, and redirect or refocus the research to exploring factors affecting astronaut health," Talone said.

Workers from the Space Shuttle and ISS programs from KSC, Johnson Space Center and Marshall Space Flight Center are working on the upgrades and testing.

Raffaello, the second of three MPLMs built by the Italian Space Agency, was transferred to a cargo element test stand inside the high bay to make room for Donatello.

Talone said the MPLM system will evolve from a passive provider of logistics and science to a complete service to the ISS science community. The enhancements and future missions associated with it, along with the planned integration and testing of the ISS Node 3 module, will continue to add to the existing assembly and resupply schedule for the next six years.

"It will challenge the NASA and contractor workforce in new and more exciting ways," Talone added.

After post-delivery inspection and testing in 2001, Donatello was stored in the Operations & Checkout Building to make room for other segments scheduled for delivery to the space station.

The MPLMs are reusable logistics carriers that carry equipment and supplies requiring a pressurized environment to and from the Station.

Remembering Our Heritage: ESSA-9

Using an out-of-the-way flight path

By Kay Grinter
Staff Writer

Bows and flows of angel hair, and ice cream castles in the air, and feather canyons everywhere,
Iíve looked at clouds that wayÖ

Those lines filled radio airwaves in December 1968, when Judy Collins topped the music charts with the folk ballad, “Both Sides Now.”

Joni Mitchell, one of countless sky-gazers that year, penned the tune. NASA may have been her muse.

Soon after, on Feb. 26, 1969, NASA launched ESSA-9 into a polar orbit from Cape Canaveral. It was the ninth and last Environmental Survey Satellite in the TIROS Operational Satellite system.

Its primary purpose was to photograph daytime global cloud cover from space for use in operational weather analyses and forecasts.

The Environmental Science Service Administration, the forerunner of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, was the customer.

John Neilon, then KSC’s deputy director of Unmanned Launch Operations, recalls: “To get the desired inclination from the cape, we had to launch toward the southeast to avoid flying over such places as Miami, and then make a right turn for a flight path over Cuba, Central America, and down the west coast of South America. From a practical standpoint, it was not economical. Turns are not energy efficient. Even more to the point, safety (officials) did not like the idea of flying over populated areas.”

Don Sheppard, a member of the launch team for payload coordination at the time, concurs. “I believe the rather fantastic success rate of the Delta launch vehicle entered into the considerations for approval of this approach.

“The Delta program began with a 12-vehicle contract. And there we were in 1969, launching ESSA-9 on Delta 67. Why? Because the vehicle was so dependable.”

The cameras on the ESSA satellites proved reliable.

The photographs transmitted from four previous satellites in the series were instrumental in preparing 3,979 advisories.

ESSA-9 WAS LAUNCHED Feb. 26, 1969, at 2:47 a.m. from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. Its purpose was to photograph daytime global cloud cover from space for weather analyses. Below, the payload is shown during final checkout prior to being placed aboard the launch vehicle.

Womenís History Month speaker can help you become a master of change

As part of Women’s History Month, Marcia Steele will present “Change: Mastering the Possibilities” at 1 p.m. March 3 in the Training Auditorium. This power-packed presentation will help everyone become a master of change, rather than a victim of circumstance.

“When the desire for success exceeds the pain of change, anything is possible,” said Steele. “Learn how to fuel the flames of passion, and watch unstoppable determination make the impossible possible.”

A member of the National Speakers Association, Steele earned degrees from Hunter College and Rochester Institute of Technology, both in New York. She encourages people to raise the bar and take responsibility for being a contender in the marketplace of the future.

Also, the Space Coast Chapter of Federally Employed Women is awarding scholarships for high school or college students currently attending college or enrolling in the fall semester.

The deadline is March 27. For information, contact Betty Valentine at 861-2016/e-mail: Elizabeth.Valentine-1@nasa.gov

MENU ...

(Continued from Page 1)

engineers on the custom configuration of the new research equipment.

According to Levine, one of the important advantages is that the instrument is able to simultaneously acquire data from both traditional GC detectors and the mass spectrometer in a single run. “This gives you more information on a sample in less time,” said Levine.

The new equipment will serve ongoing research projects and a metabolite profiling initiative. According to Levine, identifying and quantifying metabolites is important to the study of cellular regulation of plant biochemical pathways and gene functions under normal and stressful environments.

Volatile fatty acids and nitrous oxide from the compost exhaust will be quantified to evaluate the performance and the completeness of de-nitrification under experimental conditions. Production of the fatty acids and nitrous oxide will also have environmental implications.

What does this new research equipment mean for the Space program and deep space exploration?

“Many questions in a biological or non-biological system are ultimately chemically related,” said Levine. “Application of this new equipment is continuing to grow, and is only limited by our imagination and time.”

NASA astronaut prepares for one of history's most important Space Shuttle flights

By Anna Heiney
Staff Writer

NASA astronaut Andy Thomas is preparing to serve as a mission specialist on Shuttle Discovery for STS-114, the mission slated to return the Space Shuttles to safe flight.

During a recent training visit to KSC with his fellow crew members, the seasoned spaceflight veteran commented on important topics NASA faces with space exploration.

The objectives of STS-114 differ greatly from those of previous flights. The seven crew members will test newly developed Shuttle safety procedures during a visit to the International Space Station.

"We have a lot of requirements on this flight that no other flight has had to deal with," said Thomas. "There are new procedures for doing inspections, for doing repair, for evaluating the integrity of the vehicle. We're going to be the first people to ever do those, and that's a new task."

The groundbreaking team includes Commander Eileen Collins, Pilot Jim Kelly and Mission Specialists Charlie Camarda, Wendy Lawrence, Steven Robinson, Thomas, and Soichi Noguchi, representing the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency.

However, Thomas can see beyond the Shuttle's safe return to flight. He spoke with enthusiasm about the recent success of NASA's Mars Exploration Rovers and how their mission fits into the new, broad plan for human space flight set forth by President George W. Bush.

"I think, ultimately, the answer for exploration is a balance between human exploration and robotic exploration, using the robotic probes as the pathfinders to lay the groundwork to help define where people should go," explained Thomas. "And then ultimately, I think you do want people to do the exploration, because there are tasks that you will need people for…You need people able to make real-time decisions if we're going to do this exploration."

Thomas made his first space flight on STS-77 in 1996. He went on to spend 141 days in Earth orbit on Russia's Mir Space Station in 1998. In 2001, he performed a spacewalk during STS-102, installing components to the exterior of the International Space Station.

"This, of course, is undeniably a very important flight, perhaps the most important Shuttle flight since Challenger," said Thomas. "It's a great thrill to be a part of the team that's supporting return to flight."

IN THE SPACE STATION PROCESSING FACILITY, STS-114 Mission Specialists Andrew Thomas (left) and Soichi Noguchi work with equipment for the next Shuttle flight. Thomas' last space flight was in 2001.

Shuttle launch date targeted for March 2005

NASA's Space Flight Leadership Council, which is charged with the oversight of the Agency's return-to-flight efforts, moved the target window for the next flight of the Space Shuttle to March 2005. More time is needed to assess the condition of the rudder speed brake actuators on the Space Shuttle orbiters; research, analyze and test a larger area of the Shuttle's external fuel tank for potential foam insulation loss; and design and build a new camera/laser boom that would be used by the Shuttle's robotic arm to help inspect for possible damage while in orbit. The new STS-114 launch-planning window, which extends from March 6 to April 18, is designed to focus the efforts of Space Shuttle employees working toward return to flight.

National Space Club nominations for Kurt H. Debus Award due next week

The National Space Club Florida Committee is now accepting nominations for its premier award, the Dr. Kurt H. Debus Award, for significant contributions to the advancement and improvement of aerospace in Florida. The 2004 award will be presented at the annual Debus Dinner on April 3.

Criteria for nominations include: 1) being a U.S. citizen, as well as a Florida resident at the time of the nomination; 2)having a professional career associated with technical achievement, education or management of aerospace activities; and 3) being recognized by the aerospace community for current significant contributions to aerospace.

Nominations must be made in writing and should be mailed to Florida Space Club – Florida Committee, att: Debus Award Selection Committee, PO Box 2933, Titusville, FL 32781. Submission deadline is March 5.

John F. Kennedy Space Center
Spaceport News

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