

Ripped from the ROUNDUP

Ripped straight from the pages of old Space News Roundups, here's what happened at JSC on this date:

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The Space Shuttle Program is committed to the development and successful repeated flights of a complex combination of systems. These systems require the use of similarly complicated avionics systems, subsystems and components. To provide proper test and evaluation of these systems, the Shuttle Avionics Integration Laboratory is currently being established at JSC.

The SAIL will provide a central facility where avionics and related hardware (or simulation of this hardware), flight software, flight procedures and associated ground equipment can be fully integrated.

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Preparations are in high gear at Kennedy Space Center to roll *Discovery* over to the Vehicle Assembly Building for mating with the rest of the STS-29 shuttle components, a move that may occur Jan. 19.

Discovery is scheduled for launch no earlier than Feb. 23, according to internal working targets. The exact date won't be released until after the Flight Readiness Review scheduled for Feb. 8-9.

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Four years and five space walks after it was first put into orbit, the Hubble Space Telescope is now fully operational and capable of producing images "as perfect as engineering can achieve and as the laws of physics will allow."

NASA Administrator Daniel S. Goldin, backed by Dr. John H. Gibbons, assistant to the President for science and technology, and Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski, D-Md., chair of the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies appropriations subcommittee, last week declared the STS-60 mission to service the Hubble Space Telescope successful in correcting the vision of the telescope's optical components.

The announcement, accompanied by the first new images from HST, followed the initial five weeks of engineering check-out, optical alignment and instrument calibration.

What would you say if...?

By Mary Peterson

Forget that mother told you never to talk to strangers. You could be approached by one soon, and we all hope you will have the right answers. With just a little effort, you will.

What would you say if you were asked, "Do you receive regular safety and health training?" "If so, how often?" "What are the center's safety rules?" "What happens if an employee disobeys a safety rule?" "What are you supposed to do in an emergency?" "Can you tell me what the safety and health policy is at this worksite?"

These are just some examples of the types of questions that could come your way when OSHA visits JSC as part of the approval process for attaining the OSHA Voluntary Protection Program Star status. And, in keeping with our space industry tradition of being the best, Star status is VPP's best. That's what we're shooting for.

"We're proud of our safety and health efforts," says Rich Dinkel, deputy director of the Safety Reliability and Quality Assurance Office and VPP coordinator, "but these are 'living' programs and, as such, are always subject to change and improvement. For VPP, we are essentially in the mode of fine-tuning the level of excellence we have already established." This means, in large part, being sure the workforce is educated to the expectations of the VPP Program.

Most JSC workers are well aware of VPP, and some directorates have already made great strides in drawing their employees into "thinking VPP." Suddenly, such things as glitter VPP stickers, VPP magnets, VPP 19-elements cards, and video pens with safety slogans and emergency numbers are popping up on desks like mushrooms after rain, as unified thinking and team spirit begin to merge toward the goal of Star status.

A good example is the Life Sciences Directorate. Rachel Windham and Mary Petrovics are a formidable team when it comes to putting things into action, and much of the credit goes to them for the strong program they have been developing.

"We bring up VPP at just about every meeting of any kind," said Petrovics, "and

the 'tutorials' can range from five minutes to a twenty-minute presentation. We've put out a brochure on our emergency action plan and have also given everyone a copy of the VPP information booklet." And, she said, "we try to make learning fun and rewarding." This includes a "passport" activity where an employee must accomplish 35 tasks, which can range from giving a brief safety presentation to organizing a VPP meeting, and any number of things in between. The supervisor signs off on tasks done, and a substantial award is made when the passport is completely filled.

"We've also instituted a 'good housekeeping' program," continued Petrovics. "We do a housekeeping survey regularly, and if the office passes muster, it is identified with a 'VPP & JSC Good Housekeeping' award." "In fact," she laughed, "it has almost become a status symbol. Several people have asked when and how they can get one." No one, it seems, wants to fall short.

Life Sciences is just one of several directorates that have taken up VPP training with flair and creativity, and the results are evident in the high response they get when random questions are asked. When the OSHA on-site review is done, it is hoped everyone will be as well prepared.

A lot of imagination has gone into the planning of upcoming VPP events, even to the point of designing them around a mission theme. The employee planning team has decided that the dry run (a pre-OSHA visit self-evaluation) will be equated to a flight readiness review; the opening ceremony will be the launch; the OSHA on-site review will be the mission; and the closing conference provided by OSHA will be the landing.

When does it all happen? According to Dinkel, "We have submitted the applica-

tion for Star status to OSHA, and the rules of the game are that OSHA can follow up and visit at any time. So, we don't know exactly when they will show up. Right now, we are waiting for an OSHA response." Although the date isn't known, best guesses are that it will be soon, so no time should be wasted in

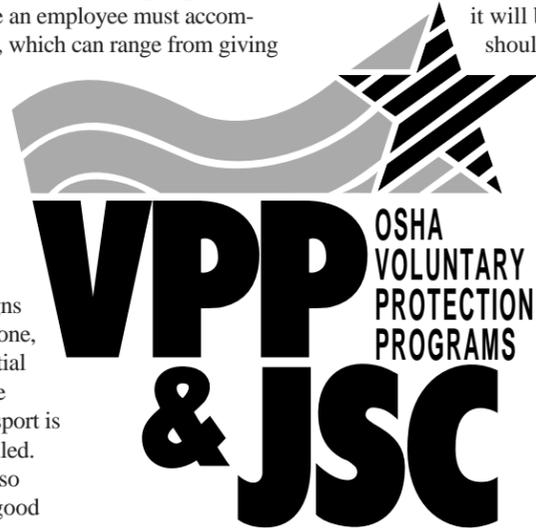
preparation and making sure that all employees are familiar with the VPP goals, objectives, the 19 elements, and their own safety and health programs.

"The point can't be emphasized enough," said Dinkel, "that the VPP incentive is truly the product of employee ownership. Everyone can

have a say, and we encourage this. It is not management's program. It's the employees' program. And that's why it works so well. If everyone does a little, as their way of routinely doing business, nobody has to do a lot."

In keeping with Dinkel's words, Center Director George Abbey, one of safety and health's most outspoken advocates, said, "Our most important resource at JSC is you. We have worked hard to keep our astronauts safe, and we've come a long way in ensuring their safety. But, it is equally important that we keep our employees, who are here on the ground, safe and healthy as well. For this reason, I strongly desire that JSC participate in the OSHA Voluntary Protection Program, and I think we can set the proper example by doing that. Considering the depth and breadth of our operations, it is a tremendous task, but nonetheless, very achievable. Winning Star status will go a long way toward proving JSC's merits as a safe, healthful, and caring environment in which to work."

Think VPP. Just keep in mind what you would say if... ■



World of discovery awaits future engineers

Next month, JSC will celebrate eight years of observing National Engineers Week when some 185 civil service and contractor employees visit elementary and middle school classrooms to encourage students to pursue careers in engineering, science, math and technology as part of a national outreach program called Discover "E" ("E" for engineering). For the first time astronauts will visit local area high schools to discuss engineering careers. JSC will celebrate National Engineers Week the entire month of February.

The volunteers will share their unique space-related expertise and experience with students and teachers as part of JSC's commitment to the local educational community. They will provide close to 350 classroom presentations.

"The goal in my presentations is to stimulate the students to imagine themselves as engineers," said JSC employee Wallace Tuthill. "That's the real challenge since too many students I have met have low or no expectations for their future. They seem to have trouble imagining that they will be reaping the bounty of their efforts today in the near future. I try to let them see my career history as a real life

success story that has been fun, interesting and rewarding in many ways, a life that they could live also."

Tuthill and the other volunteers are expected to interact with about 15,000 students at more than 100 schools in 20 school districts in the local educational community.

"I always make sure that I am enthusiastic about what I am discussing and I do my best to use terminology that the students understand," said Steve Rickman, deputy chief, Thermal Branch. "I hope that I can convey the excitement of the space program. I show them I am proud of what I do."

Retired JSC employee Norman Chaffee offers some additional tips to the volunteers. "I always take some promotional items from the Public Affairs Office library. The bookmarks that list the Internet sites are great, as are the small space shuttle triangular decals. A crew picture from the last flight or for the upcoming flight also works well."

Many volunteers use props as points of departure for their presentations. "A great prop I use frequently is the poster of an astronaut in a space-walking suit with the backpack," added Chaffee. "The poster

may be used as a point of departure to talk about several topics including the space environment and why we need a space suit, the features and systems of the suit and the backpack, and the astronaut's ability to do things in the suit."

JSC employee Rodney Rocha offers some pedagogical advice to the volunteers. "Make an agreement with the teacher in advance as to how your presentation will be conducted, especially handling questions and student-volunteers. Sometimes the teachers want to be in charge, screening all the questions as to their appropriateness or controlling classroom etiquette. But I prefer to build an easy-going atmosphere with the kids. I allow almost any question to be asked, even those unrelated to my talk. In addition, it's very helpful to repeat the question aloud."

National Engineers Week is an annual event to increase public awareness and appreciation of engineers and their work. For more details, visit the National Engineers Week Web site at <http://www4.jsc.nasa.gov/projects/eweek/moreinfo.htm> or contact Mae Mangieri at x32929. ■

