Community News

Outreach volunteer urges all employees to carry NASA story back home

Proving that the saying "You can't go home again" is off the mark, JSC's Extravehicular Mobility Unit Laboratory manager recently returned to his hometown of Columbia, S.C., to share the wonder and excitement of his job with today's students.

Johnny Sanders, who works for JSC space suit prime contractor Hamilton Standard in supporting Engineering's Crew and Thermal Systems Division, went back to his old school, Lyon Street Elementary, in March for a follow-up visit with the current fifth-grade class. Teacher Betty Mack, who helped Sanders on two previous visits, had shared the students' request that he return to the school he graduated from in 1965.

The return visit was prompted both by the students' interest in his vocation and by a promise made in 1996 that he would return to talk about NASA and bring space candy if they stayed in school. When Sanders returned, he took with him 30 bags of space candy purchased at Space Center Houston.

"The support by JSC, CTSD, and Hamilton Standard has brought NASA into the world of these young people," Sanders said. "All space employees should go back, to your birth home and bring NASA to town. The small light that shines on JSC and contractor personnel is a big glow in your hometown."

Sanders said he began his morning with a live closed-circuit television feed to the entire school, with students directing and performing anchor desk reporting functions. Joined by his wife, Barbara, who works for United Space Alliance and was making her first education outreach visit, Sanders presented an autographed picture of Astronaut Winston Scott to the school on behalf of all JSC employees

Following that, he shared an educational videotape about "Camping in Space," because "the content is excellent for child development classes aimed at children 4 years old and below," as are NASA highlight tapes and the " Andy the Astronaut" video.

The culmination of the visit was an opportunity for the fifth graders (and their teachers) to don a space suit, helmet and gloves.

Although the students at Lyon Street had written letters asking if an astronaut could come to their school, there was none available on that date. However, former Astronaut Charlie Bolden's, mother Mrs. Charles Bolden Sr., who lives in the area, helped fulfill the request.

Following his visit to the elementary school, Sanders said he spent the next day at C.A. Johnson High School for an off-the-cuff talk with retired Air Force Col. Charles Watson's R.O.T.C. class. Astronaut John Young wore a high altitude suit originally designed for Watson's use in the SR-71 "Blackbird" on STS-1, Sanders siad.

Above: Teacher Betty Mack and fifth-grade students at Lyon Street Elementary School in Columbia, S.C., try out some space hardware during a visit by alumnus Johnny Sanders, now Hamilton Standard's manager of the JSC Extravehicular Mobility Unit Laboratory. Below, Sanders and his wife, Barbara, a United Space Alliance employees, show some of the space equipment they shared with the students.

Oceaneering expands in Clear Lake

NASA contractor Oceaneering International Inc. recently announced an expansion and reorganization resulting from the addition of contracts for commercial launch vehicle thermal protection.

Art Stephenson is the new president of Oceaneering Advanced Technologies. Formerly vice president and general manager of Oceaneering Space Systems in Clear Lake, Stephenson now oversees three divisions that comprise Advanced Technologies: Oceaneering Space Systems, Oceaneering Thermal Systems and Oceaneering Technologies. The space and thermal systems divisions are based in Clear Lake, which the technologies division, which supports the U.S. Navy, Department of Energy and the entertainment industry, is based in Maryland.

Stephenson

Mark Gittleman is the newly appointed vice president and general manager of Oceaneering Space Systems.

Ron Welch is vice president and general manager of Oceaneering Thermal Systems, which recently separated from the space systems division as a stand-alone business to address significant expansion. The thermal division is on contract in Clear Lake to provide insulation products to protect launch vehicles such as the Atlas, Delta, Titan, X-34 and Kistler K-1 from overheating. To handle the expansion, Oceaneering recently leased an additional 7,000 square feet in Webster for manufacturing to augment its 55,000 square foot building on Space Center Blvd.

"We are very pleased with the added contract we have received in our commercial launch vehicle thermal protection business," Stephenson said. "Oceaneering is committed to continue our strong support of NASA and NASA's contractors in development of extravehicular activity tools for astronauts, robotics, life support and specialized equipment for human space flight such as refrigerator/freezers for shuttle and space station."

McKay to keynote AIAA's annual Technical Symposium

The Houston Section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics will host its annual Technical Symposium from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. May 28 at Space Center Houston.

This year's theme will be "Technologies for the 21st Century," and more than 50 speakers and six technical sessions are planned.

The keynote speaker will be the internationally recognized planetary scientist Dr. David McKay, of JSC's Space and Life Sciences Directorate, who will provide an update on the "Evidence for Life on the Planet Mars." Dr. Ken Cox, assistant to the JSC Engineering Director, will present "A Futurist Perspective for Space" at 3:30 p.m.

Participants may register early or at the entrance to Space Center Houston the day of the conference.

Sessions will include: "International Space Station: The Next Logical Step," "Space Shuttle: Better, Faster, Cheaper," "Earth Science Remote Sensing—New Opportunities with the ISS," "The Earth Science Enterprise," "New Technologies for New Environments: Systems Engineering, Robotics," "Space & Life Sciences: Humans in Space," and "The Red Planet: Mars or Bust!"

Each attendee will subsequently receive a CD-ROM with a copy of all symposium presentations and related information.

Cost for the whole day, including lunch, is $25 for members, $35 for non-members. Cost for a half day is $20 for members, $25 for non-members. Space Center Houston parking is free for participants. JSC civil servants may show their NASA badges at the AIAA registration booth for complimentary admission; the cost will be covered by subsequent voucher through the JSC Human Resources Office.

More information and electronic registration are available on the Internet at: http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/aiaa/ or contact Edward Jablonski, AIAA JSC ATS '98 general chairman, at 336-4294.

To register by phone, call Janet Stewart at 333-6724 or Miros Garza at x30934.

JSC Safety Alert

Keep Your Modifications Safe, and Watch Your Step

What Happened

On April 8, 1998, a JSC employee walked between two computer equipment cabinets and stepped into an uncovered cable access opening (approximately 8 inches by 10 inches). The employee fell, suffering injuries to the right shin, knee, leg, and hip that resulted in a Lost Time Incident. A more serious injury could have resulted—a broken leg, knee, or hip.

Results of the Investigation

The space between the two computer equipment cabinets was created when another computer equipment cabinet was removed. As a result, an uncovered cable access opening in the floor was exposed. An orange cone was placed beside the opening but was later removed. Although the area is well illuminated, the black-bordered access, together with the dark underfloor, created the illusion that the opening was covered.

What You Can Do

When building or modifying equipment, facilities, or systems, ensure that you do not create any hazards for area occupants during your work activities, prior to leaving the area, or prior to releasing the work area back to the area's occupants. When working in floor holes or openings, use one (or a combination) of the following safety measures to ensure that area personnel are not exposed to tripping or falling hazards: constantly guard (standby and monitor) the work area while you are performing your work; cover floor holes or openings that are not being constantly guarded; install a barrier system (not just a cone) that reliably prevents area occupants from inadvertently entering the areas adjacent to holes or openings that are not constantly guarded; or close access to the entire work area to prevent occupants' entrance into work sites where holes or openings are not constantly guarded. Even if you are familiar with an area, be aware that it can change or be modified quickly. Always be aware of the potential for fall and trip hazards. In unfamiliar areas, take extra precautions against hazards.

Give the 'Gift of Life'

Next Onsite Blood Drive at JSC coming up June 2-3

The next JSC Onsite Blood Drive is set for June 2 and 3 and employees are encouraged to give the gift of life.

Employees wishing to donate blood may visit the Teague Auditorium lobby anytime between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., including lunch time. Appointments are only necessary if employees plan on donating platelets or plasma but no appointments are necessary for whole blood donations.

For those who have never donated blood, the process is pretty simple. It starts with a blood sample. Afterwards, one pint of blood is drawn. Drawing whole blood takes seven to 10 minutes, with the overall process usually taking around 45 minutes including screening. The donated blood undergoes several tests, including the tests for hepatitis and HIV. If there are positive test results donors are notified by mail. All results are kept confidential. Usually there are no negative reactions to giving blood, but trained personnel are always available in case a donor becomes light-headed.

Generally, donors can give blood every eight weeks. In some cases, a donor may be deferred if, for example, their blood is low in iron or they've been on certain medications. If prospective donors have questions, about how a medical condition may affect their ability to give blood, they may call St. Luke's Blood Donor Center at 791-4483.

Under the St. Lukes's agreement, with NASA and contractors, the hospital provides blood assurance coverage for all JSC personnel and their immediate families. Coverage includes all fees associated with blood products for blood transfused in any Houston area hospital. Immediate family is considered to be the spouse of an employee, any dependent children and parents of an employee and spouse.

For more information about the JSC on-site blood drive, call Amy Mendez at x32604.