

Director's Message



Finding happiness

As we approach the end of October, the date Nov. 10 starts preying on my mind. To most folks that date is of little significance, but for Marines it's a big deal: It's the birthday of our beloved Corps. On or near that date all over the

world, no matter where they are – in bases, embassies, big-city hotels, ships or even foxholes – Marines dressed in their best will take time out to cut a birthday cake with a Marmaluke sword, recognize the youngest and oldest Marines present and read a message written in the 1920s by Gen. John H. Lejeune who was then their Commandant. If the situation permits, they will also celebrate with great vigor!

Why do Marines love their Corps? Why do they put up with low pay, grueling training and long separations from family, and still reenlist for more? Why are they willing to face death and give their lives to help their buddies? Why is their motto "Semper Fidelis" (Always Faithful) so sacred to them? My answer to these questions: Because being Marines makes them happy.

In his book *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*, Tom Morris states that the compelling motivation of all people is their desire for happiness. While many of us equate happiness with a combination of wealth, fame, power and the pleasure we can derive from possessing them, Morris concludes that the real key to happiness is "PARTICIPATION IN SOMETHING FULFILLING."

What is a fulfilling activity? It takes Morris an entire book to answer this question, but simply stated, a fulfilling activity is one that satisfies the four dimensions of human experience:

- 1) The intellectual dimension, which aims at truth.
- 2) The aesthetic dimension, which aims at beauty.
- 3) The moral dimension, which aims at goodness.
- 4) The spiritual dimension, which aims at unity.

I doubt that any of us will become rich or famous or powerful because of our activities here at Johnson Space Center. However, we do have the satisfaction of being part of a noble endeavor that is unique in history. A noble endeavor that is incredibly challenging, that embodies great risks and that requires us to be the bearers of truth no matter how unpopular that might make us. A noble endeavor that requires us to use our very best talents and to pull together in unity to get the job done. A noble endeavor that will culminate in an instrument of majestic beauty that will contribute to the betterment of humankind.

Being part of this noble endeavor makes me very happy! I hope you feel the same.

Beak sends...

APPEARING THIS MONTH IN OUR

Guest Space

Col. James Halsell

Lead of the Space Shuttle Return to Flight Planning Team



With the release of the first iteration of the NASA Implementation Plan, we have reached a milestone in our Return to Flight efforts: we are moving forward from planning to action. We now know where we need to go and how we can get there.

The Implementation Plan is the way that we will communicate to the rest of the world about how we're going to return to flight. It will also be a way for us to gauge our own progress. Copies of the Implementation Plan can be found online at <http://www.nasa.gov/news/highlights/returntoflight.html>.

Our Return to Flight Plan has two key elements: technical and human. The first part focuses on engineering and technical improvements, while the second part focuses on the NASA culture, management and decision-making. Some of these actions are called for in the *Columbia* Accident Investigation Board's report; others respond to needs that we have identified internally to "raise the bar." When we launch the Space Shuttle again, we will not only have met all of the CAIB Return to Flight requirements, we will have gone beyond them.

Many people throughout NASA have been working on parts of the technical areas of the Plan for a long time, and we added a number of new elements after the final CAIB report was released. Most of the new areas deal with the critical issues of management and culture, things that are harder for NASA to address. Because we are only now beginning to address these complex issues, our plans will evolve over the next several months as we prepare to Return to Flight. As we move forward, we will be working together to ensure that our management, culture and decision-making skills are on par with our technical expertise.

Some of the key themes on which we are focusing in each area are:

Improving the NASA culture

- Strengthening engineering and safety support
- Improving communication and decision-making
- Strengthening the Shuttle management organization
- Managing the Shuttle as a developmental vehicle
- Enhancing our benchmarking with other high-risk organizations
- Expanding technical and cultural training for mission managers

Returning safely to flight

- Eliminating critical ascent debris
- Improving our ability to assess vehicle condition and operational status
- Providing the capability to repair the thermal protection system on orbit
- Enhancing crew safety by developing procedures for keeping the Shuttle crew on the International Space Station if they can't return safely to Earth and by applying lessons learned to improve crew survivability

Enhancing our technical excellence

- Hardening the Shuttle against minor damage
- Improving vehicle processing
- Extending the Shuttle's life
- Addressing the risk of public overflight
- Improving the Certification of Flight Readiness process

As this list demonstrates, the work that we are doing goes beyond the Space Shuttle Program and Johnson Space Center, touching all areas of NASA. This NASA-wide effort is building new bridges among different centers and programs as we work together to Return to Flight. We still have hard work ahead of us to ensure that the changes we identify are implemented and institutionalized throughout the Agency. But with the talent, experience, hard work and dedication of all of NASA and our contractors, we can and will accomplish our shared goal of flying safely again.

As we move forward, we need to remember that the Implementation Plan is going to change as we learn more and work more on the issues that we, and the CAIB, have identified. There are no shortcuts; we have to consider all of the options for each challenge, both technical and human, and go through the process of finding the best solution. I am confident that we will; and when we do, we will know that we have honored the legacy of the *Columbia* and her crew.



Employees encouraged to use JSC Lessons Learned Database

The Johnson Space Center Lessons Learned Database (LLDB) is active and ready for new lessons to be recorded. The site can be accessed from the JSC homepage or directly at <http://iss-www.jsc.nasa.gov/ss/issapt/lldb/>. This has been a challenging year with some projects ending and new projects emerging. Passing along past experiences can be a great help to those charged with these new programs and projects. All employees are encouraged to document their experiences in the LLDB.

For more details on using the LLDB, visit JSC Features at www.jsc.nasa.gov/jscfeatures.