Ripped from the ROUNDUP

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

1970

During their exploration of the lunar hill country next February, the Apollo 14 astronauts will set off 21 small explosions on the surface and arm a mortar to launch four grenades after they leave.

Measurements of the resulting vibrations of the Moon, radioed to Earth, will give scientists new information on the shape, structure and thickness of the outer crust.

The Active Seismic Experiment, as it is called, will be set out by Lunar Module Pilot Edgar D. Mitchell during the first of two four-to-five hour ventures outside the LM with Mission Commander Alan B. Shepherd Jr., during their day-and-a-half on the Moon.

1980

JSC engineers have created a supermetal, lighter, stronger and stiffer than aluminum and carries a lifetime guarantee in space. It is made of aluminum or magnesium laced with thousands of hair-thin strands of graphite fibers. Technically named, "metal matrix composites."

Sandwiched between aluminum or magnesium, the feather-light graphite makes the finished materials stronger, about four times more rigid and up to 35 percent lighter.

Unlike other materials in space, the composite also provides thermal stability – remaining unaffected by heat or cold since graphite metal matrix composites will not expand or contract significantly.

1990

The words most commonly used to describe the STS-41 launch, landing and on-orbit operations were "near perfect."

Discovery and its five-person crew left launch pad 39B at 6:47 a.m. CDT Saturday and, after achieving its 160 nautical mile orbit, proceeded to deploy the Ulysses spacecraft on schedule six hours later.

At last report, Ulysses was performing extremely well, speeding toward Jupiter at the fastest ever Earth-orbit escape velocity. During the remainder of the STS-41 mission, Commander Dick Richards and his crew exercised the secondary experiments, all of which, again, were "near perfect."

Aranda, Ellington earn Secretarial Excellence Awards

NASA JSC Photo 2000-06248 by Benny Benavides

Margarita Aranda

NASA JSC Photo 2000-06249 by Benny Benavides

Brenda Ellington

Margarita Aranda of the Mission Operations Directorate and Brenda Ellington of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer each recently received the Marilyn J. Bockting Secretarial Excellence Award in recognition of their exceptional contributions, professional competence, and personal dedication.

Margarita Aranda was recognized in August for her contributions as the secretary in the Mechanical, Booster and Maintenance Systems Branch. She supports a large, diverse organization of civil service and contractor personnel in two different buildings. This job is one in which timetables are short, changes frequent, and branch personnel sometimes short-tempered and demanding.

Aranda has been entrusted with several division-level tasks. She is responsible for gathering quality metrics for the 15 shuttle and station flight control groups in the division and consolidating the data. These metrics attain high visibility throughout JSC.

Aranda is extraordinarily proactive in that she has offered to assist in meeting deadlines with database and word processing tasks to offload engineers under deadline pressure. In addition to the standard branch responsibilities, Aranda successfully coordinated the relocation of all the branch personnel. The planning and execution of the move was done flawlessly and was critical to the branch's ability to perform its technical duties without pause.

Brenda Ellington was recognized in September for her contributions as secretary to the Space and Life Sciences Directorate Resources Management Office. She has demonstrated her capabilities for excellence in her area of coordination of the SLSD Technical Cost Review. She updates the TCR "call" and its numerous attachments, including Excel spreadsheets, CFO format, TCR PowerPoint charts, memorandum, work breakdown structure, distribution list, and word attachments, which make her the backbone of this bimonthly activity. In addition, as she is the focal point for SLSD TCR data gathering, the entire SLSD directorate senior management provides the inputs directly to Ellington, and she reformats and edits the presentation and prepares an integrated 200-page set of charts that are viewed electronically for the TCR meeting. This saves the presenters' time and makes for smooth speaker transitions at this two-day meeting. The quality and quantity of work of this TCR assignment including the numerous interfaces greatly exceed normal secretarial duties.

Ellington also does an excellent job on a number of routine but key assignments such as compiling the weekly activity report, preparing presentation material, preparing and processing personnel actions, planning and coordinating travel arrangements, coordinating numerous moves, and maintaining current and accurate timecards via the Time and Labor Collection System and assuring their timely submittal. ■

JSC's new time and labor collection system coming to a Web browser near you

TLC is JSC's new electronic, Web-based, time and labor collection system. It will replace the old system of timecards and labor distribution records. The system was successfully piloted and interfaces to the NASA personnel/payroll system and the labor distribution system were tested over the summer. The centerwide, phased implementation of the system begins October 8. The entire center is expected to be using the new system by March 2001.

Users will access TLC through the Internet from a link on the TLC homepage. This will be especially convenient for remote users who are detailed to another center or are on TDY. These users can access the system as long as they have dial-in access to the JSC network. The TLC implementation team asks that no employees attempt to access the system before their organization's go-live date.

Links to the TLC homepage can be found on the JSC and CFO homepages. In addition to providing access to the TLC system, the homepage contains news, information and helpful hints concerning TLC. The TLC homepage address is: http://www4.jsc.nasa.gov/org/la/cfo/NewTandL/NewTandLSys.htm.

A TLC Lab has been established. The lab opens October 10 in Bldg. T-585, Rm. 129. The lab will be open on a limited basis by appointment to provide one-on-one assistance to employees whose organizations have implemented TLC.

Users guides and quick reference guides have been developed for user assistance. The training guides can also be accessed electronically from the TLC homepage.

The TLC Help Desk is available to help users with questions and problems they may have using the TLC application. The Help Desk is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Help Desk can be reached by calling 281-483-2029 or via email, tlchd@ems.jsc.nasa.gov. ■

NASA awards new travel management contract

Recent airline commission reductions are causing historically "free" booking services to be eliminated and replaced with "fee-for-service" contracts. The existing NASA agency-wide travel services contract is a no-cost contract where income is obtained through commissions. Over the last year, airlines have dropped commission rates considerably.

Since the existing contract with American Express expired on September 30, NASA elected to award an agency-wide, fee-for-service contract for travel management services to CI Travel. Contract effective date was October 1. This contract provides agency-wide travel services to NASA centers using a central reservation call center located in Norfolk, Virginia. The scope of this effort includes the following types of travel support:

- Official travel for all NASA personnel
- Official travel for other government personnel
- Official travel for on-site and near-site NASA contractors
- Leisure travel

Under a call-center environment, travelers will make official travel reservations by calling a 1-800 toll free number. The traveler will receive a reservation itinerary via E-mail or fax. As an additional value-added service, on-line booking will be available within 120 days of contract start date.

A temporary help desk will be located in the Bldg. 1 Travel Office to ensure a smooth transition to the new contract.