

# GRAA NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1184, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1184

August 2025 <https://GoddardRetirees.org> 41<sup>st</sup> Year of Publication

**UPCOMING LUNCHEONS:** We meet at 11:15 AM on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the American Legion Post #136 at 6900 Greenbelt Road. **Reservations are required;** please contact [graalunch@gmail.com](mailto:graalunch@gmail.com) (preferred) or call (410)-709-8889 **before Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup>**.

August 12		<b>Dr. Makenzie Lystrup</b> , GSFC Center Director (recent) <b>“Reflections on Goddard’s Recent History”</b>
September 9		<b>Jeff Volosin</b> , Director of the Astronautical and Space Engineering Undergraduate Program, Capitol Technology University, GRAA Member <b>“Capturing the History of NASA’s Explorer Program”</b>

## COMMENTS FROM TONY COMBERIATE AND CARL STAHLE

Ten Goddard Summer Student Interns attended our July meeting, along with 7 mentors. Each intern spoke to our retirees about their background and interests and described their intern project for the summer. Their educational backgrounds spanned Engineering and Science fields including Computer Science, Computer and Software Engineering, Biology, Physics, Optics, Nanoscience, Applied Optics, Electrical Engineering and others. They represented universities from across the country, including the University of Hawaii. The interns represented organizations evenly split between Code 500 and Code 600 with several investigating technologies which are planned for The Habitable Worlds Observatory, Goddard’s next flagship mission. To show the interns how our GRAA members spanned the entire history of Goddard, we had our members identify what decade they began working at Goddard. The interns were impressed to see some original (1959) Goddard employees in the audience, along with several from each decade since. From some of the audience questions, the interns realized that the retirees had a significant interest in Goddard’s future and the people that would carry on their legacy. It is always fun and inspiring to hear the excitement and passion that these students bring to our Goddard community.



### ***Advocacy***

GRAA wants to be a strong advocate for Goddard and the NASA community. The proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget from the administration cuts the NASA's Science Mission Directorate's (SMD) budget by nearly 50% and NASA's overall budget by 25%. Hundreds of Goddard civil servant employees have recently accepted the offer to leave the Agency through the options of a Deferred Resignation Program (DFP), Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA), and/or the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP).

**Good News:** The Senate and House Subcommittees for Commerce, Justice, and Science have restored the budgets of NASA to \$24.9B and \$24.8B and NASA Science to \$7.3B and \$6B. The Senate budget for NASA Science is the same as FY25 while the House budget represents a cut of 18% from FY25.

As a high-level summary for NASA, the Senate bill reverses the proposed cuts included in the President's budget and protects NASA Science, including Goddard missions. The bill provides \$24.9 billion for NASA, which is \$6 billion above President Trump's request and \$61 million above the fiscal year 2025 enacted level. The bill rejects the administration's devastating proposal to cut NASA Science by 47% and terminate 55 operating and planned missions and instead provides \$7.3 billion. The bill provides \$1.6 billion for Astrophysics, including \$300 million to complete the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope to investigate dark energy and the formation of galaxies and stars and \$150 million to ramp up development of the Habitable Worlds Observatory that will search for potentially habitable planets, both of which are being developed at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. The bill also provides \$500 million for the Dragonfly mission to explore Titan, the largest moon of Saturn—led by the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory—and \$100 million to ramp up development of the Geospace Dynamics Constellation (GDC) to better understand the Sun's impact on the Earth—led by Goddard. The bill continues support for a new "Earth Observatory," which is a collection of five missions to implement the Earth Science Decadal

Survey, and the Landsat Next mission to ensure continuity of the longest space-based record of Earth's land surface.

Members are encouraged to contact (meet/call/letters) their elected representatives in the House to urge them to restore the NASA Science budget to its FY25 level as the Senate bill does. You can visit the Planetary Society link for guidance: <https://www.planetary.org/save-nasa-science>

### **Voyager Declaration**

GRAA's Board of Directors sent an email to GRAA members on July 20, 2025, with the subject title: Call to Action - Consider signing Voyager Declaration in support of NASA employees. The Voyager Declaration was sent to NASA Interim Administrator Duffy on July 21 with this opening:

*"Dear Interim Administrator Duffy,*

*In light of your recent appointment as Interim NASA Administrator, we bring to your attention recent policies that have or threaten to waste public resources, compromise human safety, weaken national security, and undermine the core NASA mission. We, the signatories of this letter, dissent from these policies, and raise these concerns because we believe strongly in the importance of NASA's mission, which we are dedicated to uphold."*

<https://www.standupforscience.net/nasa-voyager-declaration>

There are 363 total signatories from NASA employees and former NASA employees. There are 183 public signatories. GRAA members contributed 86 public signatories.

In addition to the signatories, the Voyager Declaration has a growing list of supporters that includes Nobel laureates, National Medal of Science Awardees, and Members of the National Academy of Sciences.

The Voyager Declaration made the national news:

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/07/21/science/nasa-trump-voyager-declaration>

### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:**

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

Emma Antunes  
John Bane  
Arlindo da Silva  
Steven DePalo  
Bill Hayden  
Sam Hetherington  
Tupper Hyde

Joanna Joiner  
Ralph Kahn  
Jeffrey Lubelczyk  
Steve Naus  
Diep Nguyen  
Ken Perko  
Michael Ryschkewitsch  
Joanne Santiago  
Timo Saha  
Azita Valinia  
George Winkert  
Lisa Wood

### **ACTIVITIES FOR MEMBERS:**

**Pawan Bhartia** volunteers as a docent at Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art, aka Freer/Sackler Galleries. It is located within a short walking distance from Smithsonian metro station. He invites GRAA members to the museum for a special tour of the exhibits. He can design the tour based on your interests. Visit [Asia.si.edu](http://Asia.si.edu) for an overview of the galleries. Weekends are best for him. Other days after 2 pm are also okay. Feel welcome to email him at [paunb1@icloud.com](mailto:paunb1@icloud.com) to schedule a visit.

**Jan Kalshoven**, one of GRAA's board members, became the president of what is now called the Goddard Tennis and Pickleball Club (GTPC) this past year. There are no fees to play at the Goddard Tennis complex which now has lines and a rollable net for pickleball (Access to the center is by showing your Goddard retiree badge as you drive in). Courts are open to all, but if you want to join GTPC and get on WhatsApp and TeamReach to find other Goddard players, send an email to [Kalshoven@gmail.com](mailto:Kalshoven@gmail.com).

### ***GRAA is on Social Media***

GRAA has extended its reach to social media. We are now on LinkedIn which is the world's largest professional network. Members can visit [linkedin.com](http://linkedin.com) and search for NASA Goddard Retirees and Alumni Association. You are welcome to be a follower of this group.

### **WHAT'S UP WITH OUR MEMBERS:**

Your colleagues and friends would enjoy hearing about your life experiences after Goddard before they see your name in our "Remembering Our Former Colleagues" section. News of interest to our members could be professional, volunteer activities, awards and recognition, a personal achievement, or an unusual adventure or hobby. Please feel welcome to send a concise message (<100 words) to Tony Comberiate ([abcomberiate@verizon.net](mailto:abcomberiate@verizon.net)) and Carl Stahle ([carl.m.stahle@gmail.com](mailto:carl.m.stahle@gmail.com)) who reserve the right to edit for content and length.

**Howard Branch** has published his first book “A Pot And A Window” which is non-fiction and non-technical. The author captured life for him and his siblings in a light-hearted way as they grew up as a large African American family in rural Mississippi during the mid-nineteen-hundreds. They are children of a sharecropper. The book chronicles their life on the farm by exploring births, work, housing, food, clothing, school, church, idioms, and other aspects of their life. Life was hard and made harder in part due to the systemic inequities of the time. However, they did not dwell on their circumstances but rather their aspirations. Their story is presumed to be representative of their community’s story. The book is available on Amazon.

**Bill Glenn** has been retired since October 2021, but just recently joined GRAA. His 14-year tenure at GSFC culminated in Code 400 (Mission Support Manager) following posts in Codes 221, 224 and 227 Facilities Management Division, Mission Operations Directorate. Shortly following retirement, he moved from Ellicott City, Maryland to Amherst, New Hampshire. He and his partner (NSA Retiree) purchased a historic property in the Amherst Village, once owned and occupied by an in-law of President Franklin Pierce, Silas Akins. Akins own notoriety was as the first Pastor of the Congregational Church that occupies the quaint common. As an architect, Bill quickly volunteered for membership of the Amherst Historic District Commission, charged to enforce the regulations governing Amherst's 1982 National Register admittance. He has begun to pen his personal memoirs and family history, currently at 300 pages.

**Jonathan Ormes** retired from GSFC in 2004 and moved to Colorado, where he connected with the University of Denver. He taught some classes and developed a course on “Physics of Climate.” When Jonathan could no longer handle the work of teaching, he challenged himself to write, starting with a memoir called *Jonny’s Journey*, followed by a novel called *The Impatient Genius*, a science fiction story about solving the climate crisis. Both are available on Amazon, self-published through a press his father created called Hardlea Press. The most affordable way to get his novel is on Kindle.

**Susan Sparacino** is leading a team for the Walk to End Alzheimer’s in her town of Southern Pines, North Carolina. The walk, held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide, is the largest event to raise funds and awareness for the care, support, and research efforts of the Alzheimer’s Association. Feel free to lead or join a walk in your local area, or you can join or donate to Susan’s team at [https://act.alz.org/site/TR?team\\_id=938742&pg=team&fr\\_id=18746](https://act.alz.org/site/TR?team_id=938742&pg=team&fr_id=18746).

*Editor’s Note: We may have to start a GRAA Book of the Month Club! In addition to our new authors Howard Branch and Jonathan Ormes, we also have the books from John Baniszewski (July Newsletter) and Semion Kizhner (April Newsletter).*

**DIRECTORIES AND NEWSLETTERS:** Send your email address to [goddardretirees@gmail.com](mailto:goddardretirees@gmail.com) to get our monthly Newsletters, which include synopses of the talks, special community announcements, and obituaries. Past Newsletters and links to videos of the talks are on our website <https://goddardretirees.org>. Multi-month abstracts of Newsletters are mailed to the

retirees with only residential addresses in our files. We depend on retirees to furnish their home addresses to be listed in the biennial GRAA Membership Directories, only available as a mailed hardcopies to members. These mailings are supported by donations to GRAA, P. O. Box 1184, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1184.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Jackie Gasch received a donation from Roberta Valonis.

**FROM THE GODDARD ARCHIVES:** On August 25, 1997, Delta launched the Advanced Composition Explorer (ACE) which continues to provide space weather and magnetic storm data after more than 20 years of operation.

**REMEMBERING OUR FORMER COLLEAGUES:**

**Jon Harold Arneson**, 87, died on July 1, 2025. He was born on February 5, 1938. He served for 30 years with NASA, 20 years at Goddard followed by 10 years at the Kennedy Space Center. Following NASA, he worked at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) from which he retired.

**Patrick Bourke**, 78, of Baltimore, Maryland, died on July 20, 2025. He was born on July 17, 1947, and served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam in 1968. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam. Upon returning from the war, he attended Kent State University and the University of Maryland. For most of his work life, he was a mechanical designer. He worked on projects at Goddard and designed parts for the Hubble Space Telescope.

**Allen "Al" Keith Berndt**, 93, died on June 17, 2025, after a short illness. Allen was born in Evansville, Indiana on October 7, 1931. In 1958, after completing military service as a sonar technician in the U.S. Navy, he earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Indiana University, majoring in Physics. After college, he worked for the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) and the Vanguard mission. Allen joined the newly created Goddard Space Flight Center in 1960. As one of Goddard's earliest employees, Al had a distinguished 54-year career as a software engineer and System Engineer. During the 1960-1970s, he was a member of the NASA Network Engineering Division, developing satellite tracking and commanding systems for the worldwide tracking network of ground stations. In the 1980-1990s, he played a key role in the evolution of the ground station network to the satellite-based Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System (TDRSS). He was also the System Engineer for the modernization of the TDRSS ground terminals at the White Sands Complex in New Mexico. He retired in 1995.

**Charles Edward Cockrell**, 82, died on July 24, 2025. After a brief tour in the National Guard and Army, he went on to the NASA Apprentice School as a Sheetmetal Worker. He received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering and a Master of Engineering Management from Old Dominion University and rose from an apprentice Sheetmetal worker to retire as a Chief Engineer. Along the way, he worked on numerous tasks relating to both space and aeronautics. Upon his civil service retirement in 1999, he helped form the Risk Management Corporation which developed NASA's Risk Management program.

**Wesley Calkins Ellis**, 58, died suddenly on July 7, 2025. He was born on February 17, 1967. He worked at the Goddard as an Analyst, but his passion was always in media.

**Jack Galleher**, 89, died on June 25, 2025. He was born on December 21, 1935, in Springfield, Massachusetts. At 19, he became the youngest field engineer, servicing shipboard radars for Sperry Gyroscope company. Jack worked for a variety of companies as a reliability engineer including Westinghouse, Rixon, Bradford, ERC, and finished the last 20 years of his career at Goddard, working on the Small Explorer (SAMPEX) mission. Before retiring in 2008, Jack was proud to have worked on the reliability aspect of the James Webb Space Telescope.

**Raymond Krebs**, 77, was born in Washington, D.C. on August 6, 1948, and raised in District Heights, MD. After graduating from Suitland High School in 1966, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving aboard the USS Belknap during the Vietnam War. He later worked as a welder at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, eventually retiring as Head of Facilities Management, Underground Utilities.

**Michael Micciolo**, 60, died on January 28, 2022. He was born on April 15, 1961, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He began working at Goddard in 1999 as an Engineering Technician in the Thermal/Vacuum Operations Group. The major projects he worked on included the Hubble Space Telescope and the James Webb Space Telescope.

**Mary Anne Guyther Robertson**, age 89, passed away on July 8, 2025, at her home in Odenton, MD. She was born in Washington, DC, on June 18, 1936. Her government career started as a secretary for the CIA in the mid to late 50s. Her career with NASA Goddard began in 1971 as Secretary & Stenographer. In 1977, working under Buck Arneson, she became the supervisor of 25-30 people of what was then the Administrative Correspondence Center (ACC). Moving from there she became the division secretary for John Green, Chief of Financial Management Division until 1980. In 1981-1983 she wanted to try something new and was hired as a budget analyst. She then moved onto the Department of Justice for a couple years before returning to Goddard to be closer to home. For the rest of her career at Goddard, she was secretary to Joe Rothenberg/Carroll Dudley who were Chiefs of Mission Operations Division. In the early 90s, she took a buyout, but she continued to work outside of the government for Chesapeake, Landscape and Design as well as EMCO elevator for many years. She was a GRAA member and among her surviving children is another GRAA member, Denise White.

**Joseph E. Ryan**, 87, of Pleasanton, CA, died June 16, 2025. Joe joined Goddard in mid-1960. His first assignment was to serve as NASA's on-site representative at RCA Astro in Hightstown, NJ, during the pioneering years of the TIROS weather satellite program. He joined the project at TIROS 4 and stayed through the launches of ITOS and TIROS M in 1978, helping to advance early weather forecasting from space. Joe moved on to the International Ultraviolet Explorer (IUE) and the Dynamics Explorer missions 1 and 2, contributing to breakthroughs in understanding Earth's magnetosphere and the upper atmosphere. He also led a team that integrated Hubble's scientific instruments and operating systems at Lockheed Martin in Sunnyvale, California, originally for one year, extended to three due to the Challenger disaster. Joe remained

dedicated to Hubble through its troubled launch, the famous repair of its flawed mirror, and every servicing mission that followed. Joe earned the NASA Exceptional Service Medal in 1991 awarded for “significant sustained performance characterized by unusual initiative or creative ability.” In 1993, he received the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, recognizing his outstanding management of complex missions and his mentorship of young engineers.

**Gail Dean Smith**, 97, died on July 20, 2025. He was born on October 16, 1927, and started his first job as an Electronic Engineer at the Naval Ordnance Lab in 1951. He worked at Goddard from 1961-1965, where he designed and constructed electronic instruments for twelve of the earliest satellites. He also worked at NASA HQ from 1977 to 1983.

**Nancy Marie Smith**, 83, died on July 14, 2025. She was born on July 5, 1942. Over four decades, she served as an account executive at Goddard where her commitment and expertise contributed to the advancement of space exploration.

**Ray Stanford**, 86, died on June 14, 2025. He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Sheila M. Stanford. Ray gained respect as a backyard paleontologist and [his most widely publicized fossil discovery occurred in April 2012 at Goddard](#). Approximately 110 million years ago, dinosaurs, mammals, and even flying reptiles (pterosaurs) walked across a once-muddy surface, leaving behind an astonishing array of tracks; likely over a span of no more than two weeks. At the time of the discovery, only three other locations worldwide had yielded mammal tracks of that age, with no more than three footprints at any one site. At Goddard, over 30 mammal tracks were identified.