



GRAA NEWSLETTER

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

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

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS: We meet at 11:15 AM on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the American Legion Post #136 at 6900 Greenbelt Road. **Reservations are required;** please contact graalunch@gmail.com (preferred) or call (410)-709-8889 **before Thursday, March 6th**.

March 11		Dr. Mehdi Benna , Principal Investigator University of Maryland, Baltimore County/NASA Goddard “Lunar Environment Monitoring Station for Artemis III (LEMS-A3)”
April 8		Dr. Jeremy Werdell , Project Scientist NASA Goddard “Life after launch: A snapshot of the first year of the NASA Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem (PACE) mission”

COMMENTS FROM TONY COMBERIATE AND CARL STAHLE

Our February meeting was canceled due to both our speaker being sick and the impending snowstorm. Dr. Melissa Trainer, the Deputy Principal Investigator for the Dragonfly mission has agreed to speak to us later this year. The NASA Dragonfly mission is planned to be launched in July 2028 to send a robotic [rotorcrafft](#) to the surface of [Titan](#), the largest moon of Saturn. Arriving in 2034, it will be the first aircraft to make a powered and fully controlled atmospheric flight on any [moon](#). It will study prebiotic chemistry and measure Titan 's potential to [develop](#) and sustain an environment hospitable to [life](#). It will use its vertical takeoffs and landings ([VTOL](#)) capability to move between exploration sites.

GRAA is on Social Media

With the encouragement of Dr. Makenzie Lystrup, Goddard’s Center Director, 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](https://www.linkedin.com) and search for NASA Goddard Retirees and Alumni Association. You are welcome to be a follower of this group.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

GRAA is delighted to welcome the following new members who have joined GRAA in the past month:

Ken Schwer
William A. Steigerwald
Pam Sullivan
Alfred L. Seivold Sr.
Lisa Bednarik
David M. Le Vine

DIRECTORIES AND NEWSLETTERS: Send your email address to 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 mailed hardcopies to members. These mailings are supported by donations to GRAA, P. O. Box 1184, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1184.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Jackie Gasch received donations from: William Bryant, Glenn Harris, Michael Tasevoli and Charles Woodyard.

FROM THE GODDARD ARCHIVES: On March 16, 1926, Robert Goddard launched the world's first liquid-fueled rocket from a snowy field at his Aunt Effie's farm in Auburn, Massachusetts, which was about 12 miles from his home in Worcester. The launch marked the beginning of modern rocketry. In his diary entry for that day, Goddard noted that the rocket, which was later dubbed "Nell", reached an altitude of 41 feet and traveled 184 feet in 2.5 seconds. The Goddard Space Flight Center was named in his honor in 1959.

REMEMBERING OUR FORMER COLLEAGUES:

William H. Browne, Jr., 82, of Rock Spring, GA died on April 30, 2024. William was born on June 27, 1941. He entered Cornell University in 1959 and graduated as a Mechanical Engineer in 1964. He initially worked at the Westinghouse Aerospace Division for three years before joining Goddard. His work at Westinghouse included participation in the development of the first lunar TV used on the first moon landings and the Phantom F4 radar employed by the Air Force during the Vietnam War.

Richard "Dick" Elwood Burns, 83, died on February 4, 2025. Born on January 19, 1942, Dick dedicated eight years to the United States Air Force, where he achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant. As a skilled aircraft mechanic, he worked on F-106s and F-4s, developing a deep passion for aviation. One of the greatest thrills of his life came during his time in Vietnam, when he was given the rare opportunity to ride in an F-106—an experience that remained one of his

most cherished memories. After his military service, Dick applied his mechanical expertise at Goddard, working on cameras for rockets and the space shuttle. Later, he transferred to Kennedy Space Center.

Susan "Sue" Chang, 67, died on February 11, 2025. Sue was born on November 29, 1957, in Queens, New York. Sue earned a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Applied Mathematics and held senior roles at Stanford Telecom, ITT Corporation, and Exelis, where she secured major NASA and Department of Defense (DoD) contracts. As Vice President and General Manager, she led a business unit specializing in space operations and radio frequency and spectrum engineering services for NASA, DoD, and other agencies. She later joined NASA, most recently serving as Director of Network Services, overseeing space communications and tracking operations critical to U.S. spaceflight missions.

Sahag Dardarian, 95, died on December 17, 2024. Sahag was born on February 18, 1929, in New York City. After graduating from The Cooper Union, he worked as an engineer at many companies before moving to Maryland and working for NASA. While with NASA, he was a Systems Engineer working on the mirror for the Hubble Space Telescope (HST), as well as on other projects. He retired from NASA in 1989 and then worked for Swales Aerospace.

Robert G. DiPalo, 62 died on February 4 in Olney, MD after a 2-1/2-year fight with Follicular Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Rob was a Logistics Specialist at Goddard and served honorably in the United States Air Force and many years later with the USAF National Guard.

Dorothy Fortna, 94, died on February 10, 2025. She was born on March 13, 1930 and was married to Dwight Fortna, who worked at the Naval Ordnance Lab in the early 1960s. Dwight, who died on October 13, 2015, gained notoriety for becoming one, if not the first, to become proficient in the use of what then was the new programming language - Fortran. He transferred to Goddard and was tasked with applying the new language to software projects for the Networks Division/Code 530.

William "Bill" Kneval, 87, died peacefully January 12, 2025. Bill graduated from Loyola College in 1959 with a BS in Physics. He worked for The Martin Company for five years before being recruited by Goodard in 1966. During his tenure at NASA, Bill was intimately involved in the Apollo Space program and recognized for his numerous achievements and leadership in his field, retiring in 1993.

Cookie Whang Namkung, 81, died on January 22 in Gyeongju, South Korea from pancreatic cancer. Cookie was born on July 21, 1943 and is survived by her husband Won Namkung. She and her husband Won moved to the US, first to Tennessee and then Maryland, where she studied Computer Science which led to a job as a computer programmer at Goddard. After 17 years in the U.S., they returned to South Korea when Won was hired by Pohang University of Science and Technology.

Richard Preston Puffenberger, 92, died on November 20, 2023. Mike, as he was known to friends and loved ones, was an Air Force veteran, served in the Korean War, and was one of the first Naval Research Center employees to transfer to the newly created NASA, where he spent his career as an Electronic Technician in the Engineering Directorate.