

# GRAA NEWSLETTER

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

September 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, September 4<sup>th</sup>**.

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| September 9 |  <p><b>Jeff Volosin</b>, Director of the Astronautical and Space Engineering Undergraduate Program, Capitol Technology University, GRAA Member<br/><i>"Capturing the History of NASA's Explorer Program"</i></p>                            |
| October 14  |  <p><b>Dr. Richard Kelley</b>, US PI, X-ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission (XRISM), NASA Goddard<br/><i>"How the Goddard Space Flight Center built the coldest spectrometer ever to observe the hottest objects in the Universe"</i></p> |
| November 4  |  <p><b>Dr. Melissa Trainer</b>, Deputy PI/Dragonfly mission<br/>NASA Goddard<br/><i>"Dragonfly: Flights of Exploration on an Exotic Ocean World"</i></p>  |

## COMMENTS FROM TONY COMBERIATE AND CARL STAHLE

Dr. Makenzie Lystrup, recent Goddard Center Director, spoke to a large audience about her thoughts regarding Goddard's recent history. Dr. Lystrup said she resigned because she decided that she was not the right person to lead Goddard at this time. She believes Goddard is in very capable hands with Acting Center Director Cynthia Simmons. She stressed the importance of the Center's relationship with and support from national, state, and local leadership. For thirty years starting in the late 1980's, Goddard had fantastic support in Congress (both in the House and Senate) with Maryland legislators having leadership positions on key appropriation committees. Senator Barbara Mikulski was a key leader to support Goddard and NASA Science and worked collaboratively with Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama who supported Marshall Space Flight Center and human space exploration. Since then, without that power base, the number of new start science projects and programs has decreased. With NASA's focus on the Artemis program, the Science budget recently took a \$1B cut and 5 major projects at Goddard were canceled or paused including On-Orbit Servicing, Assembly, and

Manufacturing 1 (OSAM-1), Mars Sample Return (MSR), and Geospace Dynamics Constellation (GDC). The President's FY 26 budget request and workforce reduction policies through the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) have reduced the Goddard workforce by 32% or ~1000 civil servants since February. If the FY26 President's Budget Request is passed, the Goddard CS workforce could be reduced by another 500 employees for a total workforce reduction of 48%. It will take a concentrated effort to ensure that the early to mid-career employees are ready to lead as many of the employees who left were in senior leadership positions. Makenzie emphasized that while policies come and go, Congressional committees have staying power, and it will take the entire community to ensure a bright future for Goddard. This includes efforts like the "Goddard for Life" initiative, which will provide a means for retirees and alumni to continue contributing through mentorship, research, or advisory roles to preserve institutional knowledge and promote continuity. Current issues under discussion include cyber security and physical access to the Center. GRAA members have been and should continue to be strong advocates for a strong Goddard in the future.

In a lively Q&A session, Dr. Lystrup first answered a question about the proposed closing of facilities at Greenbelt (GB) and Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) that include the cafeterias (GB/WFF), Vending Services (GB), Motor Pool Services (GB/WFF), Barney and Bea Recreation Center (GB), Rocket Club (WFF), Visitor Centers (GB/WFF), and Dormitory Facilities Bldg F-4 (WFF). The GB Fitness Center will be closed on December 1. The Center operating funds have been cut 60% so Management is making hard decisions. Facilities which are subsidized and not self-sustaining will be shut down.

Goddard has not been asked to shut down buildings or projects yet, but plans have been submitted. Makenzie said the big question will be what happens on October 1 when the new fiscal year starts.

### **GRAA's Future**

With the large number of retirees this year, GRAA membership has the potential to increase by the hundreds. We plan to publish our GRAA Directory later this year and include the latest new members. Please help support GRAA with a tax-deductible contribution to GRAA PO Box 1184 Greenbelt, MD 20768.

Last month, we lost a dear GRAA alumnus, Dick Baker, who died on July 29<sup>th</sup>. Dick spent 47 years working for Goddard and was the first GRAA Vice President. His support and contribution to GRAA was instrumental to its success. He will be dearly missed.

### **Roman Space Telescope**

A major gateway test is underway! Roman's core assembly (SCIPA) has officially entered the Space Environment Simulator (SES) at Goddard for its 70-day thermal vacuum (TVAC) test. This is the most comprehensive endurance test for the core assembly before final integration. For the next two and a half months, the hardware will live in an environment that mimics the harsh vacuum and extreme temperature swings of space, verifying that all its systems work together flawlessly. This is an incredible milestone made possible by the round-the-clock dedication of the Roman team.



**Photo credits:** NASA/Jolearra Tshiteya

## **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%. Although both the Senate and House of Representatives committee version of the budget have restored most of the NASA Science Budget, about a 1,000 Goddard civil servant (CS) 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).

Members are encouraged to contact (meet/call/email) their elected representatives in the House to urge them to restore the NASA Science budget to its FY25 level as the Senate bill does. Members should also urge Congress to pass the NASA budget before October 1. You can visit the Planetary Society link for guidance: <https://www.planetary.org/save-nasa-science>.

The Planetary Society and nearly a dozen partner organization have announced a congressional visits event in Washington, D.C. on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. The goal is to support the congressional budgets that reject cuts to NASA and to prevent premature mission terminations. <https://www.planetary.org/advocacy/day-of-action>.



### **Workshop from Goddard Strategic Partnerships Office for Entrepreneurs**

The Goddard Strategic Partnerships Office (SPO) is hosting a half-day workshop for former, or soon to be former, civil servants interested in trying their hand at becoming an entrepreneur for the next chapter in their professional careers. Many civil servants assume that government ethics rules preclude them from being able to license and commercialize NASA patented technologies. However, this is not actually the case for most civil servants. There is a pathway for those that are interested. This workshop will show you how you can get started.

The SPO workshop will be held on the morning of September 25, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Godard's Greenbelt campus. Topics and speakers will include:

- *Applying for a NASA license and the level of commitment it will entail*  
- Darryl Mitchell (SPO)
- *Government ethics issues which a civil servant must address when licensing NASA patented technology*  
- Office of General Counsel (OGC)
- *Local resources available to help launch a new tech startup company*  
- UM Ventures, University of Maryland  
- Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGC EDC)

- The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO)

For more information, or to sign up, please contact Jessica Shiamraj ([jessica.s.shiamraj@nasa.gov](mailto:jessica.s.shiamraj@nasa.gov)) or Scott Leonardi ([robert.s.leonardi@nasa.gov](mailto:robert.s.leonardi@nasa.gov)) in SPO. They can arrange a visitor's badge for you to come on the Goddard campus.

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:**

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

Stewart Alphonso

Troy Ames

Shanta Arur

John Baker

Mark Beckman

Victor Bigio

Julie Breed

Sandra Cauffman

Rob Chalmers

Keith Chamberlin

Mian Chin

Will Conn

Jamie Cook

Ann Cooter

Gerry Daeleman

Jean-Marie Denis

Jason Derleth

Janine Dolinka

Jason Dworkin

Kevin Gilbert

Vincente Gilberto

Teri Gregory

Bill Guit

Julie Halverson

Leslie Hartz

Randy Hedgeland

Pamela Henderson

Michael Herman

Mary Hopkins

Jeff Hosler

Martin Houghten

Evelyn Ho

Wen-Ting Hsieh

Scott Janz  
Muzar Jar  
Kelly Jeletic  
Alpana Jenne  
Steve Jenne  
Cameron Jerry  
Alicia Joseph  
Todd King  
Matthew Kirichok  
Sergey Krimchansky  
Rishi Kurichh  
Laddawan Miko  
Darryl Mitchell  
Donna Montgomery  
Tina Montt De Garcia  
Jim Odom  
Brian Ottens  
Bert Pasquale  
Steve Platnick  
Katie Poole  
Haris Riris  
Rajeev Sharma  
Dave Sheppard  
Ryan Simmons  
Wade Sisler  
Susie Strege  
Jerry Sterling  
James Sturm  
Florence Tan  
Deanna Trask  
Tonjua Hines Watts  
Dave Wilcox  
Michael Wilks  
Frank Wilson  
Richard Von Wolff  
Gilberto Vicente  
Bill Yuknis  
Will Zhang

**ACTIVITIES FOR MEMBERS:**

**100<sup>th</sup> Running of the Goddard 2-mile Fun Run on October 8<sup>th</sup>**

Come out to run, walk, or volunteer at this Milestone Event and celebration for the Goddard community. The Goddard 2-mile Fun Run was started in 1976 and has been run in the Spring and Fall just about every year since. Multiple volunteers will be needed so please consider signing up.

You can register as a participant or as a volunteer at:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/MD/Greenbelt/NASAGoddard2Miler>

If you have a retirement badge, you have access to the campus. If you don't have a retirement badge, we/GRAA will try to get you a visitor's badge. Please contact Carl Stahle – [carl.m.stahle@gmail.com](mailto:carl.m.stahle@gmail.com) to let him know if you plan to run/walk or volunteer.

**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.

**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 Ed Griego.

**FROM THE GODDARD ARCHIVES:** OSIRIS-REx was launched on Atlas Centaur September 8 ,2016 to capture and retrieve a regolith sample from asteroid Bennu. On September 24, 2023 the sample was returned to Earth in the Utah desert. The mission has been renamed OSIRIS-APEX and will explore asteroid Apophis.

**REMEMBERING OUR FORMER COLLEAGUES:**

**Richard Baker**, 87, formally from Silver Spring, MD, and Martinsburg, WVA, died on July 29, 2025. Richard spent 47 years working for NASA on projects including the Hubble Space Telescope, the Delta Rocket Project, GOES, and UARS, as well as other weather and science satellites. Dick was the first GRAA Vice President and a long time GRAA Board member and will be missed dearly.

**Maria Olvido Parsons**, 85, of Lanham MD, died on June 12, 2025. Born in Spain on November 28, 1939, Maria had a dedicated career as a spacecraft scheduler at Goddard.

**Robert G. DiPalo**, 62 died on February 4. He was the Logistics Specialist with Goddard after serving in the United States Air Force and many years later with the USAF National Guard.

**John G. Maruschak** died on December 4th. He was born on September 1, 1941 and grew up in Harper Woods Michigan. He had been a coop student at Goddard, while pursuing a degree in electrical engineering at the University of Detroit, an experience that would lead to his remarkable lifelong career with NASA until he retired in 1999. John was part of the team that designed instrumentation for the COBE satellite which measured the background radiation that confirmed the Big Bang theory.

**Betty H. Fitchett**, 92, of Richmond, VA, died on November 10, 2024. She was born on October 25, 1932 and explored several aspects of nursing before working at NASA, Wallops for 30 years.

**Frederick Grant Thorne, Sr.** 97, died on June 27, 2023. He was born on October 1,1925. After serving in World War II from 1943 -1946, he joined the Vanguard Project. After tours of duty in both Florida and Maryland, he returned to Florida in the early 1960's and was the Launch Complex Manager for Delta Launch Complex 17 until retiring in 1972.

**William "Bill" Herbert Watson**, 95, of Atlantic, Virginia, died on June 16, 2025. He was born June 12, 1930, in Salisbury, Maryland and lived on Wallops Island. After serving in the Army National Guard, Bill worked as a Telemetry Technician at the Wallops Flight Facility Telemetry Receiving Complex, GSFC Code 840 and retired after 33 years of service in 1990.