

Spaceport News

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World record attempt to begin at Shuttle Landing Facility

GlobalFlyer to arrive Jan. 6 for historic flight

Kennedy Space Center will be the take-off site for an attempt to break the record for the longest non-stop flight of an aircraft or balloon. NASA and Virgin Atlantic Airways' agreement to use the Space Shuttle Landing Facility is the result of a pilot program to expand access to the shuttle's runway for non-NASA activities.

An exact takeoff date for Virgin Atlantic's GlobalFlyer aircraft has not been determined but is expected to take place in February.

Steve Fossett will attempt to fly solo around the world, non-stop without refueling, in the aircraft designed by Burt Rutan.



VIRGIN ATLANTIC'S GlobalFlyer will take off from the Shuttle Landing Facility for an aircraft world record attempt.

It is scheduled to arrive at Kennedy for pre-flight preparations on Jan. 6, 2006.

Fossett will depart from the runway, fly east around the world, pass over the Atlantic Ocean again, then land near London. The previous record was set earlier this year when the same plane, flown by Fossett, flew around the world non-stop after taking off from Salinas,

Kansas.

"We're thrilled that Steve Fossett and Virgin Atlantic selected the Shuttle Landing Facility as the take-off point for this world record attempt," said Kennedy Space Center Director Jim Kennedy.

"The project will further enhance our efforts to expand the facility's use."

The GlobalFlyer, built by

Scaled Composites Inc., is a single pilot, ultra-light aircraft designed for non-stop global circumnavigation. The plane will fly mostly at 45,000 feet at speeds faster than 285 miles per hour.

"Launching from the Kennedy Space Center at NASA will give both pilot and aircraft the ultimate launch pad for this (See GLOBALFLYER, Page 2)

Employees replace gap fillers on Discovery for STS-121

Processing continues for NASA's second space shuttle mission in the return-to-flight sequence, STS-121. At press time, launch was scheduled to occur no earlier than May 2006.

Technicians continue to remove and replace gap fillers in a main-priority area at a rate of about 100 gap fillers per day. This work is being performed due to two gap fillers that were protruding from the underside of Discovery on the first return-to-flight mission, STS-114.

New installation procedures are being developed to ensure the gap fillers stay in place and do not pose any hazard during the shuttle's re-entry to the atmosphere.



TECHNICIANS REPLACE gap fillers on space shuttle Discovery in Orbiter Processing Facility bay 3 in preparation for return-to-flight mission STS-121.

Wire inspections and chafe protection installation continue on the vehicle's reaction jet

driver. The nose landing gear has been cycled to support tile work on the shuttle's heat shield.

The Orbiter Boom Sensor System was installed in the vehicle last week.

Engineers are evaluating data from two catch bottles that indicate higher levels of oxygen than expected in the shuttle's aft compartment during this summer's launch. A total of six bottles automatically capture samples for two seconds in pairs at precise times after launch and through the first two minutes of flight.

During Discovery's launch, all three main engines performed normally, indicating there wasn't a significant oxygen leak from the engines in the aft compartment. Engine performance and the catch bottles are the only way to detect in-flight leaks.



Jim Kennedy
Center Director

The Kennedy Update

Happy holidays! As we close 2005, I just want to spend a few moments wishing everyone a happy holiday season. This has been a tremendous year for us. As my Dad used to say, "the days were long, but the weeks, months and now year, have flown by." How true!

I still can't believe that on January 8, I will have been lucky

enough to serve in my position for two and a half years.

I want to wish Dr. Woodrow Whitlow, our now former deputy director and my good friend, all the best in his new position as Director of the Glenn Research Center (GRC). Woodrow did great things while at KSC and will be sorely missed, but there is not a person in this agency better suited to be the GRC director.

KSC honors volunteers for dedicated service



JACK FOX (above) tells current and retired employees, who also serve as volunteers for special events, how vital their role is to the center's success at the Volunteer Breakfast held Dec. 13 at the Debus Center. The volunteers helped escort more than 1,000 media representatives from 36 states and 32 countries during the late July to early August return-to-flight STS-114 mission. They also assist with VIP tours that include elected officials and education groups. At right, the volunteers enjoy a buffet-style breakfast.



Godspeed, Woodrow!

Our selection process for the new deputy center director is in high gear and the results should be announced early in the new year. Although I am not at liberty to make any announcements here, I know you will be pleased with the selection when finalized.

As I reflect on this year, I have so much to be thankful for. I work with the top space professionals in the world. You make our nation and world a better place to live. Your work

"Take some time and spend it with loved ones and friends. They are truly the important aspects of life."

increases the knowledge of our universe and represents everything that is "good and right" about America.

I feel honored and privileged to drive through the gate every day and represent you when I meet with political leaders, distinguished visitors and our fellow Americans. They all appreciate and admire your accomplishments.

So please, before the hustle and bustle of 2006 arrive and the "days get long again," take some time and spend it with loved ones and friends. They are truly the important aspects of life.

Please be safe because we need everyone back healthy and rested to take on the challenges of space exploration for 2006.

From Bernie and me, we wish you the very best and may God bless you and your family. Happy new year!



JIM KENNEDY listens to a child's holiday wishes at the Holiday Celebration and Dinner held at KARS Park (see page 4).

Safety and Mission Assurance offers holiday tips

Employees in the Safety and Mission Assurance directorate offer these safety tips:

- Stress – Make realistic expectations for the holidays. Budget your time as well as your money; make a list to prioritize activities.
- Personal safety – When shopping, be aware of your surroundings. Establish a place to meet in case you

become separated from children. Stow your purchases out of sight in the car.

- Lights and decorations – Use only UL-approved lighting. Inspect for frayed wires or cracked sockets. Do not overload extension cords. Always unplug all lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Fire in the fireplace – Don't burn wrapping materials; doing so can create toxic fumes.

GLOBALFLYER . . . (Continued from Page 1)

ultimate flight," said Sir Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic Airways. "We're excited to be able to partner with NASA on this attempt, as it is a perfect combination of innovation and aspiration."

For information about the GlobalFlyer record attempt on the Web, visit: <http://www.virginatlanticglobalflyer.com>.

Work force honors Whitlow at farewell reception

By Linda Herridge
Staff Writer

During a recent farewell reception for Kennedy Space Center Deputy Director Woodrow Whitlow, co-workers praised him as a "scholar and a gentleman." Dr. Whitlow is departing Kennedy Space Center to become director of the John H. Glenn Research Center in Cleveland.

Friends and colleagues gathered on Dec. 12 at the KSC Learning Institute to give Whitlow a spirited send off and wish him the best in his new role at Glenn.

Directors from several of KSC's program offices presented Whitlow with mementos and gifts commemorating his contributions to the center and its programs. Steve Francois, director of the Launch Services Program office, presented a framed plaque of pins from the last 16 launches (plus one for the next launch in 2006).

Mike Wetmore, director of Shuttle Processing, presented a plaque containing a "hold down stud frangible nut" from mission STS-86 to commemorate the launch of Atlantis on Sept. 25, 1997.

Center Director Jim Kennedy presented a belt buckle that included stone from the space shuttle crawlerway.

"He has been a great addition to KSC," Kennedy said. "He cares about everybody and has made a difference across this center."

Cathy Gieseler said it was a pleasure to serve as Whitlow's secretary for the past two years. "For those who haven't had an opportunity to work with Dr. Whitlow, I want you to know that he is, by far, one of the most ethical, hard-working and respectful gentlemen you will ever meet in your NASA career," she said. "I'm thankful to have had this opportunity."

Whitlow said KSC is a very welcoming place and has been like a second family to him.

"My time at Kennedy has been exciting and lots of fun," said Whitlow. "To have a leadership role in the world's greatest space program has been a great honor."

Whitlow said the KSC work force is outstanding and shows great commitment to the center. He commended the way everyone works in unison to ensure mission success.

In his new role of director at



DR. WOODROW Whitlow (at podium) talks about his tenure as deputy director at KSC to well-wishers in the Learning Center during a farewell reception. Whitlow will be the director of the Glenn Research Center beginning next month. At left, Center Director Jim Kennedy presents Whitlow a belt buckle that included stone from the space shuttle crawlerway.

Glenn, Whitlow said one of his major goals will be positioning the center to stay healthy long into the future by using the work

force to lead major contributions in space exploration, science and aeronautics.

My Story

By Kelly Boos
NASA procurement engineering support



This column provides Kennedy Space Center employees and retirees a chance to tell a story about their life. Readers are encouraged to submit a first-person article between 400 and 500 words. E-mail "My Story" submissions to Bruce Buckingham-1@ksc.nasa.gov.

The date was Jan. 28, 1986, and I was in my high school biology class. Excitement was buzzing about Challenger's launch and the first teacher going into space. Our own biology teacher applied for the position, so our class was

especially interested.

We watched the launch live on TV, and I remember seeing the smoke split and wondering if it was supposed to do that. Our excitement changed to

sorrow, and the memory imprinted in my mind.

My government career began just three years later, when I went to work for the Department of Defense at West Point in New York. I started as a GS-4 procurement clerk, but soon realized I would not be satisfied. A position

as a contracting officer became my goal.

My first hurdle came in the form of a new education requirement. Although I was going to school, I didn't meet the criteria. Fortunately, I qualified as a purchasing agent, setting me on the path to becoming a buyer. But then I faced another hurdle: I moved to a new state and a new agency.

My new employer didn't have purchasing agent positions, so I was placed again as a clerk. I had to take a lower grade and start over. Disappointment came when a new hiring freeze took effect and I knew I would be staying in this position for a couple of years. Through prayer and faith, I didn't give up. I kept working toward my degree and employment goals. When the hiring

freeze lifted and new positions opened, my co-workers would tell me not to bother applying because only those with degrees were promoted. I never joined their negative bandwagon because I never believed my promotions came from man, but from the Lord.

When I was one of the fortunate people selected for an intern program for contract specialists, I was not amazed but filled with gratitude to the Lord who enjoys giving people the desires of their heart.

I finished the intern program years ago and have since moved many times. Back in my high school biology class, I would have never imagined that someday I would not only work

(See MY STORY, Page 6)

Holiday Dinner and Celebration commemorates

Whitlow, Combined Federal Campaign recognized for success at celebration

By Linda Herridge
Staff Writer

NASA civil servants at Kennedy Space Center were treated to a holiday dinner and celebration on Dec. 16 at KARS Park, where they enjoyed the theme of "sharing holiday traditions."

Children from KSC's Child Development Center started the event with a recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Center Director Jim Kennedy welcomed everyone and thanked the NASA Exchange for its sponsorship. He recognized the Change Leaders Network, led by Gloria Marsh, for helping to plan and organize the event.

"It is an extreme honor to be part of KSC," Kennedy said. "Our administrator, Mike Griffin, cherishes all of you."

Ray Lugo, Launch Services

Program deputy director and Combined Federal Campaign chairperson, presented a check representing KSC's civil servant contributions of more than \$434,600 to United Way of Brevard President Rob Rains.

"Your generosity will impact the community through the programs of the United Way," Rains said. "Thank you so much for your generosity."

Kennedy also noted that Dr. Woodrow Whitlow, the center's deputy director, soon will be departing for his new position as director of Glenn Research Center in Cleveland.

"We're not losing a friend. He's only moving to GRC," Kennedy said. "He is a man of great integrity, intellect, and he cares about each and every one of you. We wish him the best of luck."

Whitlow said the money

raised through the Combined Federal Campaign was impressive and the participation was outstanding.

"I also thank each and every one of you for the support you've given me and my family during the 27 months I've been here," Whitlow said.

He presented a certificate of appreciation to Lugo for his leadership and efforts in the campaign.

Participants were treated to a special display designed to increase cultural awareness of the many holidays and traditions of the season. The display included holiday decorations made by civil servants and a showcase of traditions of Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Los Tres Reyes Magos.

Workers also shared their favorite holiday desserts, in addition to enjoying a full holiday meal that included turkey, ham and all the trimmings. Door prizes and musical entertainment from local band Saturn V added holiday cheer.



MORE THAN 1,250 guests attended the Kennedy Space Center holiday dinner. Many guests wore jackets and sweaters as cooler temperatures made



THE \$434,627.40 check shown represents the highest amount the NASA civil service work force has ever donated to the Combined Federal Campaign. Standing with the check, from left, are Center Director Jim Kennedy; Dennis Burns, United Way of Brevard vice president of resource development; Frank Ramsey, United Way of Brevard campaign director; Rob Rains, United Way of Brevard president; and the Launch Services Program's Ray Lugo, who served as KSC's campaign chairperson.



rates successful year for NASA civil servants



...d the Kennedy Space Center Holiday Dinner and Celebration at KARS Park. Attendees ...r temperatures made it feel like the holiday season.



GOOD FRIENDS, live music and delicious holiday food was enjoyed by civil servant employees and their families at this year's holiday celebration.



ABOVE, TWO children enjoy a holiday dinner and a pair of reindeer ears. At left, employees displayed holiday items at the celebration to showcase traditions of Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Los Tres Reyes Magos.



CENTER DIRECTOR Jim Kennedy (right) thanks Deputy Director Dr. Woodrow Whitlow for his invaluable service during his tenure at KSC. Whitlow will be the director of the Glenn Research Center in Cleveland next month (see page 3).



Kennedy engineers set skydiving world record

Trio part of 81- and 85-person formation over Lake Wales

By Charlie Plain
Staff Writer

Three Kennedy Space Center engineers helped set two new world records in the parachuting sport of "canopy formation" on Nov. 25 and 26. Dave Hillebrandt of United Space Alliance, Kevin Keenan of Lockheed Martin and NASA's Jim Bolton were part of the record-setting, 81- and 85-person formation dives that took place over Lake Wales, Fla.

Canopy formation is a branch of skydiving in which flyers team up to form geometric shapes in the air.

The historic 81- and 85-person jumps were planned by a group called CF World Record 2005. Plotting this year's world-record dives required working out everything from choreographing the placement of people within the formation, to the number and type of airplanes they needed.

Jumpers also had to qualify for the world-record team by showing their skills at training camps held around the United States and Europe.

Once the planning was complete, 88 skydivers -- along with event organizers and judges

-- descended on Lake Wales in late November for a week of practicing and attempting to break the record. The skydivers even had to take part in practice simulations called "dirt dives," in which they walked through the phases of the dive while on the ground.

Strong winds and rain from nearby Hurricane Wilma hampered activities during the early portion of the week. Eventually, the battering winds subsided on Nov. 25, clearing the way for a sunset attempt at placing 81 people in a high-flying, diamond-shaped formation.

With the sun sinking low on the horizon, the first plane dropped a load of 16 jumpers from an altitude of 18,000 feet. The group of divers quickly organized into a core that the rest of the formation flyers would "dock" to.

They secured themselves to each other by wrapping their feet around the lines of the parachutes below them.

Once under way, the formation had to develop quickly as the divers descended toward the Earth. "The whole formation descends at 1,000 feet per minute," said Keenan.

"We knew we had got it, so we were yelling and hollering and high-fiving and jumping around in the field."

Two more waves of planes arrived, streaming in divers and



THIS 85-PERSON "canopy formation" over Lake Wales, Fla set a world record. Kennedy employees Dave Hillebrandt, Kevin Keenan and Jim Bolton were part of the formation.

swelling the size of the formation. When the 81st person docked, he keyed his radio and shouted into it for each of the jumpers to hear: "Complete!"

The "81-way" dive took 9 minutes and 12 seconds to come together, and was held in formation for 26 seconds. The next words heard over the radio were "starburst, starburst" -- the command to break up the diamond formation and come in for a landing.

"We had heard the complete call -- we knew we had got it -- so we were yelling and hollering and high-fiving and jumping

around in the field," said Hillebrandt.

Once back at the event's headquarters, Bolton, Hillebrandt and Keenan waited along with the other 78 skydivers to see if the judges agreed the group had accomplished its goal.

"They came up on the stage and announced it was a new world record. Then one of the judges popped open a bottle of champagne and started spraying the crowd," said Keenan. "It was like winning the Indy 500."

* On Nov. 26, Bolton, Hillebrandt, Keenan and their team raised the world record with a successful 85-way jump.



KENNEDY ENGINEERS who were part of the world-record skydiving formation include, from left, Kevin Keenan, Dave Hillebrandt and Jim Bolton.

MY STORY . . . (Continued from Page 3)

for NASA, but have the opportunity to work for three centers: Goddard Space Flight Center, Glenn Research Center, and now Kennedy Space Center. Although we often face hurdles or even tragedies, I believe in never giving up and always trying to be an inspiration to others. I trust the crew members of Challenger and Columbia would all agree.

Remembering Our Heritage

37 Years Ago: NASA sends Apollo 8 astronauts on a holiday trip

Mission was the first of nine manned trips to the moon

By Kay Grinter
Reference Librarian

In 1968, NASA's holiday festivities began at 7:51 a.m. on Dec. 21 with the launch of Apollo 8 -- the first voyage of astronauts to the vicinity of the moon.

With only a year left to meet President John Kennedy's directive to land a man on the moon before the decade's end, qualifying the Apollo flight hardware was imperative.

Commander Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and Bill Anders made up the crew and were first to personally experience the 7.5 million pounds of thrust of a Saturn V launch vehicle. Anders likened it to "an old freight train going down a bad track."

Along the way, the crew used

a television camera to transmit a never-before-seen image of home: a beautiful, vibrant planet with oceans of royal blue, land masses of brown, and cloud cover a brilliant shade of white.

Ironically, the astronauts had to trust in the work of the mission planners to keep them on course. They viewed "a crescent moon, and most of it was dark," Lovell recalled. "By and large, the body that we were rendezvousing with -- that was coming from one direction as we were going to another -- we never saw."

On the afternoon of Dec. 23, the crew became the first to experience a phenomenon in manned space flight in which the pull of Earth's gravity is less than that of another body. At that historic crossing, the spacecraft



APOLLO 8 launched from Launch Pad 39A at Kennedy Space Center at 7:51 a.m. Dec. 21, 1968. The moon is seen on the right. The crew would become the first to see the far side of the moon.

was 202,816 miles from Earth and 38,898 miles from the moon.

Upon arrival at their destination on Dec. 24, communication with Mission Control was interrupted as the spaceship passed behind the moon and the astronauts became the first to see its far side.

Photography now became the primary task. Borman kept the spacecraft's nose positioned so the lunar surface was visible through the windows for Anders, the principal photographer.

Before emerging from behind the moon, a roll of the spacecraft

was required for Lovell to conduct a navigational sighting. Using the moon's sharp horizon line as a reference point, Borman suddenly became aware of a fuzzy, blue-and-white arch moving into view. This awesome sight caused excitement among the crew and was the first "earthrise" ever witnessed or photographed.

NASA's successful holiday trip concluded on schedule 147 hours after launch Dec. 27, just seven months before the first lunar landing.



THE RISING Earth is above the lunar horizon in this photo taken from the Apollo 8 spacecraft. On Christmas eve, the Apollo 8 crew read from the book of Genesis: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. . ."

Cape beaches open for employees, two guests

Cape Canaveral Air Force Station beaches are now open to all badged Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and Kennedy Space Center personnel and two guests for walking and jogging. Entry and exit to the beaches must be made at the dune crossovers at Camera Road A and Complex 34. Beaches are open from 30 minutes after sunrise until sunset. Please park vehicles clear of the local flora, stay off of the sand dunes and don't disturb wildlife in the area. The KSC beaches are off limits. Fishing placards and rules can be picked up at PIDS 1 or 3.

Holiday gift drives reflect caring work force



STOCKINGS DESTINED for the Brevard Salvation Army are collected by, from left, Robert Smith, Joette Feeney, Kay Craig, Sherry Lozada, Bridgit Higginbotham and Renee Sawyer, all from the International Space Station and Payload Processing directorate.

Federally Employed Women collect gifts for Salvation Army

The Space Coast Chapter of Federally Employed Women collected so many gifts for the Salvation Army this year that it took six sport utility vehicle loads to deliver them. The gifts included 400 stockings and gift bags donated by employees from throughout Kennedy Space Center. The International Space Station and Payload Processing directorate contributed more than 100 gifts.

United Space Alliance hosts Toys for Tots campaign



For the ninth year in a row, employees of United Space Alliance, Florida Operations, exceeded the previous year's collection of toys for the U.S. Marine Corps annual Toys for Tots campaign. This year's collection filled two military trucks, a 1.5-ton truck and a trailer with bicycles and toys. The Marine contingent picked up the toys from the Solid Rocket Booster Assembly and Refurbishment Facility (pictured) at KSC.

Contractor employees brighten holiday for 660 children



Loading bicycles collected for the Adopt-A-Child holiday toy drive are, from left, Pete Colangelo, Space Gateway Support vice president; U.S. Air Force Col. Doug Stropes; Susan Kroskey, Cape Canaveral Spaceport Management Office director; and Bill Sample, SGS president. This year, JBOSC employees "adopted" 660 foster care children in Brevard County and bought 140 bicycles and thousands of gifts for them.

Center employees total more than 14,500

Kennedy Space Center is the most successful launch center in the world. At the end of each fiscal year, the center takes a "snapshot" of its work force. This picture includes all federal and contractor employees chartered to work for KSC. As of Sept. 30 this year, KSC's population totaled 14,595 people.

This included 2,074 full-time and other-than-full-time NASA civil servants and 10,894 on-site and off-site contractor employees. The civil servant skill mix includes scientific and engineering, technical and clerical workers. There were 557 construction employees, with 1,070 tenants on the center.



John F. Kennedy Space Center

Spaceport News

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