



April 26, 2007

Vol. 12, No. 31

NASA spacecraft AIMS for clouds 50 miles high

◆ **ELV Launch:** The AIM spacecraft was successfully launched at 4:24 p.m. Wednesday from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California aboard a Pegasus XL rocket. The AIM spacecraft will fly three instruments designed to study polar mesospheric clouds located at the edge of space, 50 miles above the Earth's surface in the coldest part of the planet's atmosphere. The mission's primary goal is to explain why these clouds form and what has caused them to become brighter and more numerous and appear at lower latitudes in recent years.

◆ **ISS Update:** Now returned to Earth, the 14th crew of the International Space Station, Commander Michael Lopez-Alegria and Flight Engineers Suni Williams and Mikhail Tyurin, set several records during their mission. Lopez-Alegria completed five spacewalks, which gave him a total of 10 for his career. This set a U.S. record for not only number of spacewalks, but also cumulative spacewalk time of 57 hours, 40 minutes. He also set a U.S. record for a single spaceflight's duration with more than 215

Did You Know? Friday is Arbor Day. Sterling Morton, the originator of the Arbor Day idea, was among the many pioneers moving into the Nebraska Territory in 1854. With the decided lack of trees on the Nebraskan plains, Morton made it his cause to plant trees, not just for beautification but also to preserve the soil. He encouraged civic organizations to join in the effort, proclaiming the first Arbor Day in 1872. Today, the most common date for observances is the last Friday in April.

days. This tops the 196-day mark set by station crew members Dan Bursch and Carl Walz in 2001 and 2002.

During the mission, Williams set the record for number of spacewalks and total time spent on spacewalks by a woman. She participated in four spacewalks for a total of 29 hours and 17 minutes. Williams remains on the station for the first part of Expedition 15.

Three of the crew's spacewalks were conducted over the course of nine days, an unprecedented schedule for a station crew. Starting from scratch, it takes about 100 crew-member hours to prepare for a spacewalk. By doing them a few days apart, considerable crew time can be saved by not having to repeat some of those preparatory steps.

■ **HEWP Web Site Live** — The KSC Health Education and Wellness Program announces that its new Web site is now live. The new site is available on the World Wide Web and now can be accessed from anywhere.

You can bookmark the site at <http://hewp.ksc.nasa.gov> on your office, home and travel computers. Visit periodically for the latest monthly health topics, women's health programming, cardiovascular disease screening forms, nutrition information and tools, health updates, KSC health-related events and programs, and much more.

The HEWP office also asks you to please complete the HEWP feedback survey to let it know how it is doing and what it can do to meet your health information needs.



Last space station crew sets new records

■ **NASA Update:** NASA has modified its contract with Lockheed Martin Corp. of Littleton, Colo., to design, test and build the Orion crew exploration vehicle. The updated contract contains three significant changes. Two years have been added to the design phase. Two test flights of Orion's launch abort system have been added. Production of a pressurized cargo carrier for the International Space Station has been deleted from the initial design phase.

NASA continues working to ensure a smooth transition from the Space Shuttle Program to the Constellation Program. This is demonstrated in a fourth element of the contract modification that provides for use of surplus raw materials, such as aluminum-lithium ingots now used in the construction of space shuttle fuel tanks, for Orion. The modification reflects continuing progress on Orion's development, including program formulation and systems assessments addressing the rocket, ground infrastructure and all other elements necessary for a successful first launch. The period of performance now matches the evolving NASA budget landscape.

■ **Reminder** — The Indian River Bridge will be reduced to one lane of traffic from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. **today.**

Countdown is published every Tuesday & Thursday for NASA KSC employees. Deadlines are 10 a.m. Mondays & Wednesdays. E-mail news to anita.barrett@jbsc.ksc.nasa.gov. For questions or information, e-mail or call 321-867-2815. You can also find *Countdown* on the Web at nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/countdown/countdown-toc.html.