Ultra-Long Duration Balloon Status Report

NASA is examining flight data following the termination Sunday morning of an Ultra-Long Duration Balloon launched Saturday from the Northern Territory of Central Australia. The balloon reached its desired float altitude of 112,000 feet before a NASA Operations Team decided to bring it down.

The Ultra-Long Duration Balloon (ULD) was successfully launched from Alice Springs, Australia, at 9 a.m., March 10 (local time) (6:26 p.m. EST, March 9). The flight ended 24 hours 42 minutes later when the balloon and payload landed within one mile of the West Coast of Australia. Recovery operations are underway.

“Although, the ULD launch and ascent were very close to normal, the balloon’s pressure was less, but within acceptable margins, than we expected on Saturday afternoon and evening,” said Steve Smith, Chief of the Balloon Program Office at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility. “At sunrise on Sunday morning the balloon failed to regain its daytime pressure and a decision was made to bring it down on the coast of Australia.”

The flight was terminated and the balloon’s science payload was recovered in excellent condition. The launch window closed for the science mission, so the sequel flight did not carry a science experiment.

“A review team examined the recovered balloon and data from the flight and identified a possible weakness in the experimental balloon material that may have contributed to the first flight failure,” said Smith.

“We determined that it was best to proceed with the second test flight using a duplicate balloon,” Smith added. “This flight allowed us to further study the material in the flight environment and obtain extended flight performance data.”

The ULD is designed to float above 99 percent of the Earth’s atmosphere and can carry a 4,500 pound payload. It is the largest-single cell, fully sealed balloon ever flown and is designed to support missions for up to 100 days. Balloons provide cost-effective platforms for near-space observations.

Further information on the ULD can be found at: http://www.wff.nasa.gov/~uld/index.html

Wallops shorts………

On the road

Mike Savoy, Teacher on Loan, visited Prince Street Elementary School, and Keith Koehler, Public Affairs, visited Fruitland Intermediate School as part of National School Breakfast Week.

Catherine Donnelly and Tom Wilson, Facilities Management Branch, along with Jan Jackson and Randy Carrier, Litton/PRC, Inc. participated in a Career Fair on March 7 at Arcadia High School for students from Tangier, Nandua, Chincoteague and Arcadia High Schools.

75th Anniversary of the Liquid-Fuel Rocket Launch by Robert H. Goddard

Robert Hutchins Goddard had an “impossible” vision of spaceflight and dreamed of going to the moon. As a young boy, living on a farm in Worcester, Ma., he daydreamed of his vision as he began to trim the branches of a cherry tree.

Goddard spent many years studying physics and being an instructor at Clark University and Princeton University. In 1914 he was awarded his first two patents for rocket apparatus and over several years received more. Goddard then developed the basis for what is known as the bazooka.

That vision of spaceflight became reality on March 16, 1926 when Goddard tested his first liquid fuel rocket. The rocket rose to a height of 41 feet, and averaging about 60 mph. He later developed a gyroscope for stabilization of the rocket and three years later on March 26, 1937, he launched another rocket, which reached the height of over a mile.

For more information on Goddard go to: http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/75th/75th.htm
Women’s History Month
“STOP in the Name of Love”: Calling a Halt to Abuse

Spkr: Kathryn Adkins Reading
March 15
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Building F-3

Verbal and physical violence against women is at least as old as recorded history. Although we tell ourselves that it will never happen to us, most women will experience either physical or psychological abuse at some point in their lives.

Kathryn Adkins Reading will describe the history of violence against women, provide some statistical and anecdotal information about what is happening close to home, describe the differences between loving relationships and controlling relationships, and offer suggestions on how to help oneself, a family member, or friend come to terms with abuse or controlling relationships.

Additional information about the speaker and luncheon is available at the Women of Wallops website: www.wff.nasa.gov/~FWP/

Luncheon tickets are $5 and are on sale at the Exchange. For information, contact Pat Pruitt, x1245.

NASA Scholarship Fund Applications

Applications are available for college scholarships for qualified dependents of NASA and former NASA employees. The scholarships are provided and awarded by the NASA College Scholarship Fund, Inc., which was established as the result of a substantial unsolicited gift by the noted Pulitzer Prize winning author James Michener.

Seven scholarships will be awarded in the amount of $2,000 each, renewable for a maximum of $8,000 over six calendar years.

For additional information and a copy of the application, please use the following URL: http://jkscpeople.jsc.nasa.gov/jsc-hro-2/special_programs/scholarship.htm

Applications and additional information may also be obtained in the Wallops PAO Office, Bldg. F-6. All applications are due by March 30.