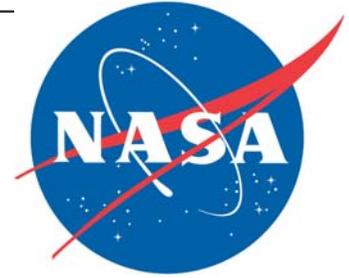


Spaceport News



John F. Kennedy Space Center - America's gateway to the universe

http://www.nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/snews/spnews_toc.html

New launch window for STS-121 in July

NASA announced July 1 to 19 is the new launch planning window for Space Shuttle Discovery's next mission, STS-121. The window gives the agency time to do additional engineering work and analysis to ensure a safe flight for Discovery and its crew.

The decision to target July followed a two-day meeting on the external tank's engine cutoff (ECO) sensors. The sensors indicate whether the tank still has fuel during liftoff. During testing, one of the four ECO sensors had a slightly different reading than is expected.

Shuttle officials have decided they will remove and replace all four liquid hydrogen sensors.

"We've been saying for months that our engineering work would determine when we fly our next mission. Targeting July is the right choice in order to make smart decisions," said Bill Gerstenmaier, NASA



TECHNICIANS FROM NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility in Louisiana begin removing foam from the external tank designated for mission STS-121 inside the Vehicle Assembly Building. The work is the first step in removing and replacing the external tank's four liquid hydrogen main engine cutoff sensors.

associate administrator for Space Operations.

Other issues factored into the decision to adjust the STS-121 planning window: Testing and analysis are required on the shuttle's modified external tank. The testing will help verify the

tank is safe to fly without the protuberance air load (PAL) foam ramp.

The PAL ramp was removed after a large piece of foam fell from that area during Discovery's July 2005 launch. More analysis is needed to

decide whether changes are needed on the tank's ice frost foam ramps. Repair work on the shuttle's robotic arm must be completed. Technicians on a work platform accidentally bumped the arm, causing a tiny crack. The arm was removed for repair.

KSC All American Picnic committee: 'We need volunteers'

By Jennifer Wolfinger
Staff Writer

Few work places offer events with a children's skate park, wild animals and entertainment, then pamper you with massage therapy like the Kennedy Space Center All American Picnic.

But every role, from the ticket takers and parking patrollers, to the ring-toss referees, is performed by employees and their families. That's why the picnic committee is encouraging workers to help make this year's picnic on April 22 a hit by

volunteering.

"I take great pride in our work force's willingness to join together to create history," said Center Director Jim Kennedy. "Now it's time to do the same in order to produce everlasting memories. If each of you dedicates a small portion of your day to supporting this year's picnic, it's bound to be successful."

By spending as little as two hours helping during the event, which runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at KARS Park 1, employees receive a volunteer shirt in their size, a prize entry and their picnic ticket for \$4. Family

members who are ages 16 and older can volunteer and receive shirts, as well. Helpers must sign up this week to reserve these perks.

"Each year, the KSC Picnic is coordinated by a team of enthusiastic volunteers,"

(See PICNIC, Page 8)



PICNIC PUBLICITY Chairwoman Lisa Arnold (left), Center Director Jim Kennedy, Picnic Chairman Jeff Wheeler, Co-chairwoman Ruth Harrison, KSC Associate Director Jim Hattaway and Ticket Sales Chairwoman Cathy Parker prepare for the picnic.



Jim Kennedy
Center Director

The Kennedy Update

Hello, everyone. With my first column since our safety shutdown, I want to send my condolences to the family of Steve Owens, an employee with Oneida, who tragically fell to his death while working on a roof here March 17. No words can ease the pain of Steve's family and friends, and our hearts and prayers are with them.

I ask you all to ensure Steve's death wasn't in vain. As I stated during the shutdown, we are all responsible for each other's well being and safety is our number-one core value. I hope this sobering reminder and Steve's

memory will stay with us to make Kennedy Space Center the safest place in the world to work. I appreciate your efforts in this area.

It is never easy to transition to another subject when writing about something like a tragedy, but I will do my best.

We are very fortunate to host an absolutely outstanding event this coming Thursday, from 3 to 4 p.m. at the training auditorium. The valiant crew of STS-1, John Young and Bob Crippen, will be at KSC to celebrate the first successful orbital test flight of the Space Shuttle Program.

Of course, it was the flight of

Columbia on April 14, 1981. This is arguably the most challenging test flight ever imagined in the history of mankind.

Young and Crippen are making a rare appearance together, as their busy lives just don't cross paths that often. We are lucky they have time to give us a personal employee presentation that I'm sure you will remember forever.

For those who can't get a seat in the auditorium, you can see it live on NASA TV or via the Web. They have built in time for

"Next up is CloudSat/CALIPSO set for April 20, back at Vandy. We wish the team the best of luck with the next launch."

questions, so please come and relive one of NASA's, and America's, greatest moments in aviation history.

Congratulations to our Launch Services Program for writing another successful chapter in NASA history with the launch of ST5 at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., March 22. It was a flawless launch with

everything going exactly as planned, with all three micro-satellites performing as expected.

But no rest for the weary; next up is CloudSat/CALIPSO set for April 20, back at Vandy. We wish the team the best of luck with the next launch.

I'm getting excited as we turn the calendar to April because that means it's time to have a family fun day at the annual KSC picnic. Tickets will be on sale soon for the April 22 festivities at KARS Park. It is always a hit and I expect this year to be no different.

There is always great food and music

and the kids will have a blast with the carnival games set up for them. Astronauts attend to meet everyone and sign autographs, and it is an all-around grand time. I hope you will mark the date on your calendar.

That's it for now. Take care, everyone, and see you around the center!

Griffin, Kennedy represent NASA at Tallahassee Space Day



A GROUP of NASA and contractor representatives converged on Tallahassee March 16 for Florida Space Day. Pictured from left are Center Director Jim Kennedy, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings and NASA Administrator Mike Griffin. The group met with legislators to talk about the challenges they face to ensure the state remains at the forefront of the nation's space program. The space industry represents nearly \$4.5 billion in economic impact on the state annually and employs more than 23,000 residents in businesses in all 67 Florida counties.

April NASA Employees of the Month



The April NASA employees of the month, standing from left, are: Andrew Peffer, Safety and Mission Assurance; David Adcock, International Space Station and Payload Processing; Richard Smith, Engineering Development; Charles Jenkins, Shuttle Processing; and Charles Tatro, Launch Services Program. Seated from left are: Rebecca Mazzone, Information Technology and Communications Services; Muzette Fiander, Center Operations; and Patty Hepburn, Chief Financial Office.

Ombuds offer confidential solutions to issues

Thompson and Burt eager to resolve workforce problems

By Jennifer Wolfinger
Staff Writer

With more than 14,000 employees, there are bound to be a few professional concerns every now and then. Thankfully, there are people — an ombuds and an alternate ombuds — assigned to handle these issues impartially, whether dealing with matters as serious as unfair treatment or as simple as an opinion on paint color.

Recently, Kennedy Space Center Director Jim Kennedy appointed James Thompson as ombuds and Hortense Burt as alternate ombuds. They'll serve as ombuds while maintaining their existing roles.

"In his many dealings over the years with employees, managers and federal unions, (Thompson) has acquired a reputation for trustworthiness and maintaining confidentiality," Kennedy recently said. "(Burt) has gained my trust and confidence in demonstrating discretion and a caring and concerned approach to the needs of KSC and all of its employees."

Thompson explained that ombuds informally gather problem-solving information, open avenues of communication, and identify and evaluate options to resolve issues. They're not part of any formal administrative, legal or judicial process and don't advocate or represent either management or employees. They can't make or change policies, or make binding decisions or employee requirements.

Unless there are safety or security threats or a serious crime is involved, anything said to an ombuds is confidential.

"We don't fix employees' problems," Burt said. "We're a sounding board, and help them identify what their next steps could be, and provide informa-



JAMES THOMPSON (right) and Hortense Burt were recently appointed the ombuds and alternate ombuds, respectively, in addition to their normal duties. An ombuds' role is to informally gather information and resolve issues without a formal process.

tion so they can make the decision they need to make. We can't make decisions for them."

Thompson summarized the role, as well. "Often, an employee just wants to talk out a problem without it becoming public," he said. "At other times, a person doesn't know where to go to get the issue resolved, and the ombuds can find out what the problem is without revealing confidentiality," he said.

"I look forward the most to being able to find honest and workable answers to concerns and questions," said Thompson, who previously served as alternate ombuds.

Thompson has been in KSC's Human Resources Office for more than 30 years and enjoys the win-win situations it offers. He primarily focuses on program policy and development, and labor relations with federal unions. He also edits a human resources newsletter.

Thompson challenges himself by taking college courses, and enjoys reading and being involved with his church. Jeanne, his wife of nearly four years, has an adult daughter, Faith, and son, John. He has five adult children, Ray, Brad, Kathryn, Kendra and Andrew.

Burt has spent most of her 22-

year government career in Safety and Mission Assurance, and recently served as the center director's executive management intern. She is the Teacher and Student Programs lead within the External Relations directorate's Education Programs and University Research Division.

She takes pride in NASA's ability to inspire students to seek careers in science and technology. Burt is actively involved in the St. James African Methodist

Episcopal Church and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She enjoys working with children, reading, exercising, shopping, and traveling with her children: James, 15, Bobby, 12, and Afton, 8.

Any employee may contact Thompson at 867-7484 or Burt at 867-8768 for assistance. The NASA Ombuds Program was established in January 2004 in response to a recommendation of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

Workers review practices during safety standdown

Kennedy Space Center Director Jim Kennedy called for a two-hour, centerwide safety standdown on March 16 to reflect on ways employees can ensure the safety of each other and the billions of dollars' worth of assets at the center.

"We have an awesome mission here at KSC — launching astronauts and payloads into space," Kennedy said. "To accomplish this hazardous mission, safety must be our number-one value. Thank you for all you have done to make KSC's safety record world class, but remember, past performance does not guarantee future success. Only our commitment to safety can do this."

The Safety and Health Day format followed in previous years was revised in an effort to be more effective across the broad spectrum of activities that occur at KSC. This also offers the opportunity to better embrace the Voluntary Protection Program goal of employee involvement. The Employee Safety and Health Guide 2006 has been updated to reflect current policies and requirements, points-of-contact, mail codes and additional resources. The guide provides employees a quick reference to NASA/KSC safety and health directives and best practices. Visit <http://nasa.ksc.nasa.gov/safetyhealth06/index.html> for details.

Suiting up for safety: A public affairs writer gets

By *Charlie Plain*
Staff Writer

It's often said that to be the best you have to be ready for the worst. On March 15, NASA put this adage into practice when the Space Shuttle Program conducted a landing mishap exercise to train emergency crews to respond quickly and safely. For myself and six other employees, the simulation was a rare chance to play astronaut by portraying the space shuttle crew involved in the landing.

I was super excited at my chance to impersonate an astronaut, but had to wonder just what sort of fictitious trouble I'd gotten myself into.

The simulated crisis was a fire aboard shuttle Discovery after landing at Kennedy Space Center. It's a situation no shuttle mission has ever had the misfortune of facing, but NASA made the event as realistic as possible by using nearly all of the usual runway equipment, staffing control rooms and even adhering to the weather rules used for an actual landing.

To authentically look the part, we were fitted with the recognizable orange flight and

entry suits that astronauts wear.

Each suit weighs more than 50 pounds and made us waddle under their weight as we moved around. Tom Hoffman, one of my crewmates, said, "This explains why the astronauts walk like they do."

Clipped to a cable on our suits were cue cards identifying the astronaut we were playing and our imaginary injuries. I was labeled Mission Specialist No. 5, a returning International Space Station astronaut who had "gotten sick" inside his helmet and passed out.

Our setting for the simulation was a mock-up of the crew cabin section of a space shuttle. I sat downstairs in the cabin's middeck along with Mission Specialists No. 4 and 1, K.C. Chhipwadia and Debbie Awtonomow.

The rest of the crew was upstairs in the model cockpit. In the commander and pilot seats were Jeremy Garcia and Hoffman. Seated behind them were Frank Wolking and Brian Bateman, Mission Specialists No. 2 and 3.

I asked Awtonomow how she was roped into being an astronaut stunt double for the simulation. She laughed. "I have no



RESCUE VEHICLES and personnel are lined up to take part in the simulated emergency landing simulation is to exercise emergency preparedness personnel, equipment and facilities in rescuing and providing immediate medical attention.

idea!" It seemed our deck mate had been volunteered for duty when an unknown individual offered her name in an e-mail.

As the exercise began, we heard heavy trucks and helicopters humming outside. "I see a fire truck coming," called out Hoffman. The exterior of our "shuttle" suddenly was blasted with water. Rescuers wearing heavy black helmets, silver suits and special breathing systems quickly appeared and swung open the model's circular hatch. "Fire's out! Fire's out!" Their "all clear" was the signal to storm the cabin and begin extracting us.

I was supposed to be unconscious, but found it hard to keep from looking around and shivering as adrenalin charged through my body.

While waiting to

evacuate me, one of the silver saviors attached an oxygen bottle to my suit to send air rushing into my helmet. Soon I was out of the cabin, strapped into a cage backboard called a "litter" and rushed by truck to an open-air medical clinic.

At the clinic, doctors and nurses barked orders and the whooshing of powerful helicopter rotors chattered through the air. A medical team suddenly swarmed around me to assess my condition and treat any possible



AT THE Mode VI exercise, rescue personnel carry an "injured astronaut" to a waiting helicopter.



ter gets a middeck seat to a shuttle simulation



EMERGENCY RESCUE personnel tend to an "injured astronaut" on a stretcher at the bottom of the steps to the orbiter mockup.

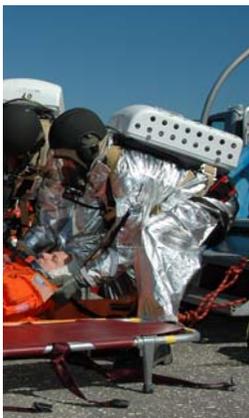
l emergency landing of a shuttle crew. The purpose of the d facilities in rescuing astronauts from a downed orbiter

injuries, then deftly set to work with cooperative precision. Notes on the care I was given were recorded on a piece of tape strapped across my forehead.

Minutes later, Garcia and I were loaded onto a gray U.S. Air Force helicopter for transport to a hospital in Melbourne. While in the air, three military medics wearing green flight suits shifted about the cabin as they monitored our health. About 20 minutes later, our helicopter arrived at Melbourne International Airport.

"The simulation's over," hollered one of the medics above the roar of the engines.

Within seconds, our helicopter lifted off to return to Kennedy. On the way back, I noticed my anxious shivering had stopped. At first, I thought it was because the commotion of the simulation was over. But the reality is I felt at ease after seeing how the NASA's emergency teams could be at their best during the worst.



IN A simulated emergency landing of a shuttle crew at the Shuttle Landing Facility, emergency rescue personnel place an "injured astronaut" onto a stretcher (left). Known as a Mode VI exercise, the operation uses volunteer workers from the Center to pose as astronauts



AN "INJURED astronaut" is loaded into a helicopter for transport to a designated hospital.

KSC gains interpreters for deaf, hard of hearing

By Linda Herridge
Staff Writer

To provide deaf and hard-of-hearing employees at Kennedy Space Center more complete access to events, presentations, staff meetings and all hands meetings, the center's Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity has increased its staff of interpreters and upgraded the service to full time.

The office recently contracted with Carmazzi (doing business as Adriana Schaked Translations) in Miami to provide interpreters to NASA civil servants. Providing this service in a job-sharing arrangement are Stephanie Watkins, Laurie Carter and Raquel Duque.

KSC previously had a one-year contract to provide sign-language interpreter services, with a pool of interpreters only available on a daily or "as-needed" basis.

According to Equal Opportunity specialist Wanda Petty, providing this service is in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and NASA's procedural requirements. "The service gives deaf and hard-of-hearing employees the opportunity to have full-time support for meetings and events, and allows employees and interpreters preparation time to support their meetings."

Both Watkins and Carter, whose husbands work at the center, live in the area and have



SIGN-LANGUAGE interpreters Stephanie Watkins (left), Laurie Carter (third from left) and Raquel Duque (right) discuss upcoming events with Tara Gillam, director of the Office of Equal Opportunity. The husbands of Watkins and Carter work at KSC. Duque is a finance student at the University of Central Florida.

small children. In the past, they both provided interpreter services to NASA when needed, supplementing the efforts of several of the center's own workers. Duque, a finance student at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, came to KSC in December.

According to Watkins, an interpreter for NASA since 1995, the translation company only recently added sign language to its roster of foreign languages. "The three of us 'job share,' which allows us to remain involved with our school-age children, and also allows Raquel to continue school," Watkins said.

"It's wonderful for KSC to

have on-site interpreters," she said. "The deaf employees here are tremendous assets to the center and deserve to have the same advantages as other hearing employees."

Carter has a Bachelor of Science degree in deaf education and taught kindergarten through 12th-grade students for nine years. "It just seemed like a natural transition to come to KSC as an interpreter," Carter said, adding NASA "should be on the leading edge in offering equal-access services."

Duque took sign language as a foreign language in high school. She liked it so much that she went through an interpretive training program in Miami

before transferring to UCF.

"This service provides an access for the deaf community," Duque said. "There is the potential for untouched or unheard creativity to be unlocked from the deaf community here at KSC and elsewhere."

The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity has developed a process to assist NASA supervisors, managers and employees with requests for sign language interpretation.

For further information, visit <http://nasa.ksc.nasa.gov/daawg/info/interpreter.htm> or <http://www.ksc.nasa.gov/nasa-only/eo/index.html>. Contractor personnel can call 861-8930 for information about interpreter services.

Space Technology 5 testing new measurement technology

NASA's Space Technology 5 successfully launched March 22 from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., on a Pegasus XL rocket.

ST5 is testing new micro-spacecraft technologies and operation techniques. Each of the three spacecraft will conduct science validation using measurements of the Earth's magnetic field collected by their miniature boom-mounted magnetometers.

Initial contact with ST5 was

made at 9:27 a.m. EST, as the spacecraft passed over the ground station in Antarctica. Miniaturized components and technologies are integrated into each of the ST5 micro-satellites. Each micro-satellite weighs approximately 55 pounds when fully fueled and is about the size of a 13-inch television.

Although small compared to their counterparts, the spacecraft are considered full service. They contain power, propulsion, communications, guidance,

navigation and control functions found in larger spacecraft.

They will be placed into a formation about 25 to 125 miles apart to perform coordinated measurements of the Earth's magnetic field.



SPACE TECHNOLOGY 5 is mated to the carrier aircraft at Vandenberg Air Force Base before its March 22 launch.

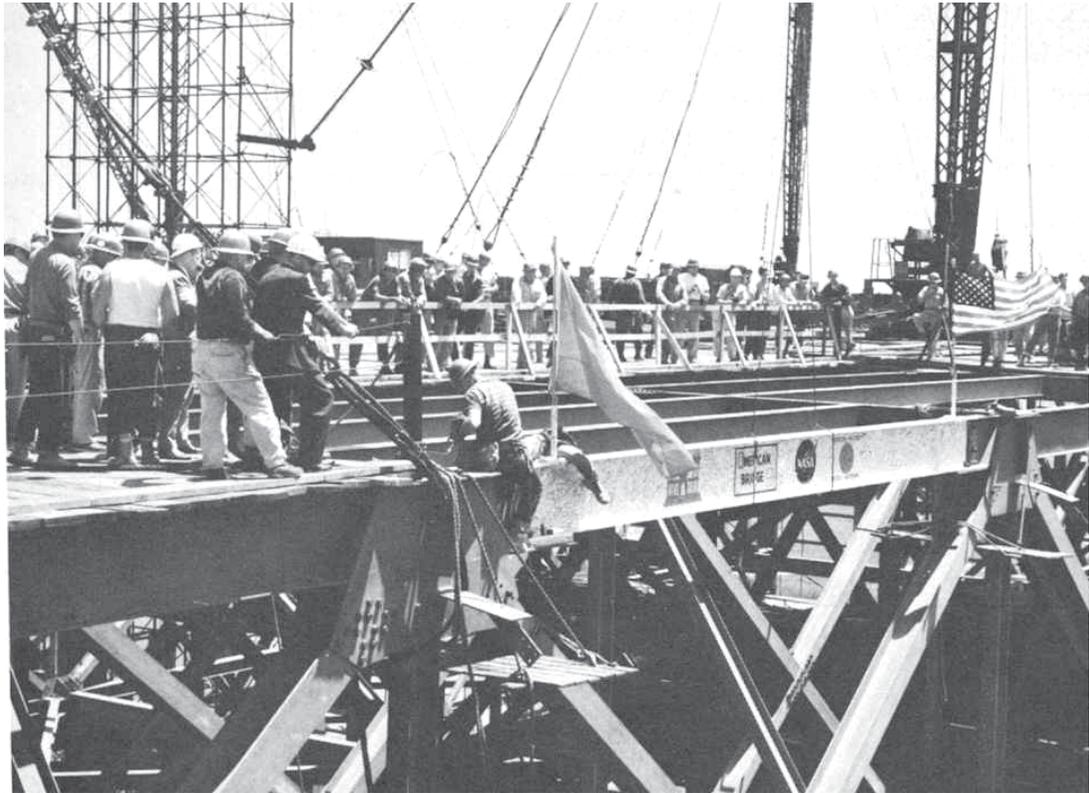
Remembering Our Heritage

40 years ago: Topping off a national treasure

The final steel beam was hoisted 500 feet and bolted into place over the transfer aisle of the Vehicle Assembly Building on April 14, 1965, during an official topping-out ceremony (pictured at right).

Kennedy Space Center Director Kurt Debus was joined by government and industry executives for the event, marking the completion of the structural steel work in the largest building by volume ever constructed, at 129,428,000 cubic feet.

KSC employees were also given the opportunity to participate in the historic moment. In the previous weeks, the 38-foot-long, four-ton I-beam, painted white and bearing the NASA logo and the insignia of the American Bridge Division of the U.S. Steel Corp., was transported around the center to be inscribed with their signatures. Erection of the building's steel framework began in January 1963.



New Operations Support Building II modernizes office space for employees



WITH THIS recent ribbon-cutting ceremony, the new Operations Support Building II is officially in business. Participating in the event are (left to right) Aris Garcia, vice president of the architecture firm Wolfgang Alvarez; Mark Nappi, associate program manager of Ground Operations for United Space Alliance; Donald Minderman, NASA project manager; Scott Kerr, director of Engineering Development at Kennedy Space Center; Bill Parsons, deputy director of KSC; Miguel Morales, with NASA Engineering Development; Mike Wetmore, director of Shuttle Processing; and Tim Clancy, president of the construction firm Clancy & Theys. The Operations Support Building II is an agency safety and health initiative project to replace 198,466 square feet of substandard modular housing and trailers in the Launch Complex 39 area at KSC.



Young, Crippen to relive 'boldest test flight in history'

First space shuttle launched April 12, 1981

Mark your calendars for April 6 when space shuttle astronauts John Young and Bob Crippen will return to Kennedy Space Center to give a special presentation to employees celebrating the 25th anniversary of the historic first shuttle mission.

Employees can see the legendary STS-1 crew at 3 p.m. at the Training Auditorium. STS-1 launched from KSC on April 12, 1981, landing at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on April 14.

To commemorate the launch and honor the accomplishments of the shuttle program, the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex is hosting the Space Shuttle 25th Anniversary Celebration through April 12.

Daily activities include highlights from 25 years of space shuttle missions and encore presentations of the IMAX space

film "Hail Columbia," featuring the inaugural voyage of the world's first shuttle.

Young and Crippen will make a special appearance at 2:30 p.m. April 7 at the Visitor Complex to celebrate this achievement. Tickets also are available for a lunch with the astronauts at 1 p.m. that day, during which Young and Crippen will share the experiences of their flight.

Special 25th anniversary packages for April 7 are available for \$70 plus tax for adults and \$50 plus tax for children ages 3 to 11. The package includes a two-day, maximum-access admission to the Visitor Complex, lunch with Young and Crippen and a commemorative souvenir.

The celebration is interspersed with special astronaut presentations by Story Musgrave on April 2 and Jon McBride on April 12.

For information, visit www.kennedyspacecenter.com or call 449-4449.



STS-1 ASTRONAUTS John Young (left) and Bob Crippen will return to KSC April 6 and 7 to talk about the first space shuttle flight.

Spaceport News commemorates shuttle program's 25 years

SPACEPORT NEWS will publish a 12-page color issue April 14 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first space shuttle flight. Read an interview with STS-1 astronauts John Young and Bob Crippen and learn about the spinoffs developed from the shuttle program, the space shuttle technology being used for NASA's next spacecraft, the diverse crews who have flown shuttle missions, and more.

Take the 'Five-A-Day Challenge' to improve health

The Health Education and Wellness Program, in conjunction with Lackmann Food Services, is challenging the spaceport to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

Take the challenge, offered until April 21, by picking up a sheet at any cafeteria, health clinic or fitness center (including the O&C, OSB, and Cape fitness centers), or by e-mailing hewp@jbosc.ksc.nasa.gov.

Complete the challenge sheet according to how many fruits and/or vegetables you ate each day and turn it in for a prize drawing. A prize will be awarded

every two weeks of the challenge from the sheets submitted.

Sheets can be dropped off at any location where they are available, or mailed to "HEWP" at mail code: CHS-005. Prizes include a free massage, free dietary analysis session, and free body composition/physical assessment and personal training session, each from the occupational health services experts at the spaceport. Five or more serving of fruits and vegetables cuts your risk for cancer, results in healthy looking skin, helps lower blood pressure and reduces your risk for blindness and Alzheimer's disease.

PICNIC . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

said Picnic Publicity Chairwoman Lisa Arnold, adding that approximately 500 people support the picnic annually.

Picnic planners recommend reviewing the job descriptions and times, then registering for the activity that sounds most enjoyable. If they all sound fun, family sports and children's games need more volunteers to prevent some activities from being cancelled.

After volunteering, spend the rest of the day enjoying exciting

activities such as rock climbing, and eating tons of great food.

This year's theme is the KSC family, so bring lots of loved ones to meet the work force family. Tickets are on sale April 10 through 19 at the cost of \$6 for adults and \$4 for children ages 3 through 12. Children under 3 years may attend free. After 3 p.m. April 19, ticket prices increase by \$2. Everyone entering the park will need a ticket. Visit <http://kscpicnic.ksc.nasa.gov/index.html> to volunteer or get more details about the picnic and volunteer ticket information.

John F. Kennedy Space Center



Spaceport News

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