



MARSHALL STAR

Serving the Marshall Space Flight Center Community

Dec. 21, 2006

Mayan research by Marshall scientist to be featured on NOVA program Jan. 9

By Rick Smith and Sherrie Super

Viewers tuning in to the NOVA television program on PBS Tuesday, Jan. 9, will see a familiar face — NASA archaeologist Tom Sever from the National Space Science and Technology Center.

As part of a program highlighting anthropology, archaeology and space science, NOVA will showcase research by Sever and fellow NASA scientist Dan Irwin, along with William Saturno, an archaeologist at the University of New Hampshire in Durham.

The scientists are using space- and aircraft-based remote-sensing technology to help university researchers uncover Mayan ruins, using the chemical signature of the civilization's ancient building materials.

"From the air, everything but the tops of very few surviving pyramids is hidden by the tree canopy," said Sever, widely recognized for two decades as a pioneer in the use of aerospace remote sensing for archaeology. "On the ground, the 60- to 100-foot trees and dense undergrowth can obscure objects as close as 10



Deep in the Guatemalan jungle, NASA archaeologist Tom Sever, right, and Rob Griffin, a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University in College Park, study a crumbled "stele," a stone pyramid used by Mayans to record information or display ornately carved art.

feet away. Explorers can stumble right through an ancient city that once housed thousands — and never even realize it."

See NOVA on page 7

Discovery given a 'great ride' into space by Marshall engineers

By Sanda Martel

"Marshall propulsion elements gave Discovery a great ride into space," said Robert Lightfoot, manager of the Marshall Center's Shuttle Propulsion Office, assessing the performance of the shuttle's main engines, external tank and solid rocket boosters with their solid rocket motors, during Discovery's launch Dec. 9 from the Kennedy Space Center, Fla.

"Our assessments to date show the propulsion elements performed as we expected," Lightfoot added. "We will continue to review the data and hardware over the next few weeks as part of our standard process."

Discovery rocketed into a dark Florida sky Saturday, Dec. 9, at 7:47 p.m. CST, the third shuttle launch in five months and the first night launch in more than four years.

At Marshall Star press time, Discovery's landing at the Kennedy Space Center is targeted for Friday, Dec. 22.

The seven-member crew linked up with the International Space Station on Monday, Dec. 11, and began the complex task of rewiring the outpost and increasing its power supply. During four spacewalks, and intricate choreography with ground controllers, the astronauts brought electrical power on line, generated by a giant solar array wing delivered to the station in September.

Discovery astronauts include Commander Mark Polansky, pilot Bill Oefelein, and mission specialists Nicholas Patrick, Joan Higginbotham, Bob Curbeam, Sunita Williams and Christer Fuglesang, a European Space Agency astronaut. On board the space station at Discovery's arrival were Expedition 14 Commander Mike

See Discovery on page 2

John Horack appointed to Senior Executive Service, named manager of Marshall's Science & Mission Systems Office



John Horack

John Horack has been appointed to the Senior Executive Service and named the manager of the Marshall Center's Science & Mission Systems Office.

Horack has served as the assistant manager of the office since December 2005, leading the day-to-day operation of an organization responsible for advanced, complex scientific research in support of science and human spaceflight systems.

The Senior Executive Service is the personnel system covering top managerial positions in approximately 75 federal agencies.

Horack began his NASA career in 1987 as an assembly, test and calibration scientist for the Burst and Transient Source Experiment, one of four science payloads launched in space on board NASA's Compton Observatory. From 1991 to 1995, he served as a research scientist for the Gamma Ray Astrophysics team and as an assistant mission scientist for the Astro-2/STS-67 space shuttle mission. As assistant director for science communication from 1996 to 2000, Horack conceived, developed and implemented a NASA Internet site, Science@NASA, to convey scientific research data to nonscientific

audiences. The site earned a Webby Award for "Best Science Site" from the International Academy of the Digital Arts and Sciences.

In 2000, Horack left NASA to co-found Mobular Technologies Inc., a Huntsville-based business providing electronic document and information distribution for financial services and e-commerce markets. He returned to NASA in 2004 as assistant director for Marshall's Space Transportation Programs and Projects Office, supporting management of space transportation programs and projects involving more than 300 employees and an annual budget of more than \$300 million.

Before coming to NASA in 1987, Horack worked as a member of the front office staff of the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team, as well as in the sports department of KMOX-CBS radio in St. Louis, Mo.

A native of St. Louis, Horack earned a bachelor's degree in physics and astronomy in 1987 from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. He also received a master's degree and doctorate in physics from the University of Alabama in Huntsville in 1992 and 1993, respectively. He has authored or co-authored more than 75 publications in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings, and was a finalist for the NASA Astronaut Candidate Program in 1998.

Discovery

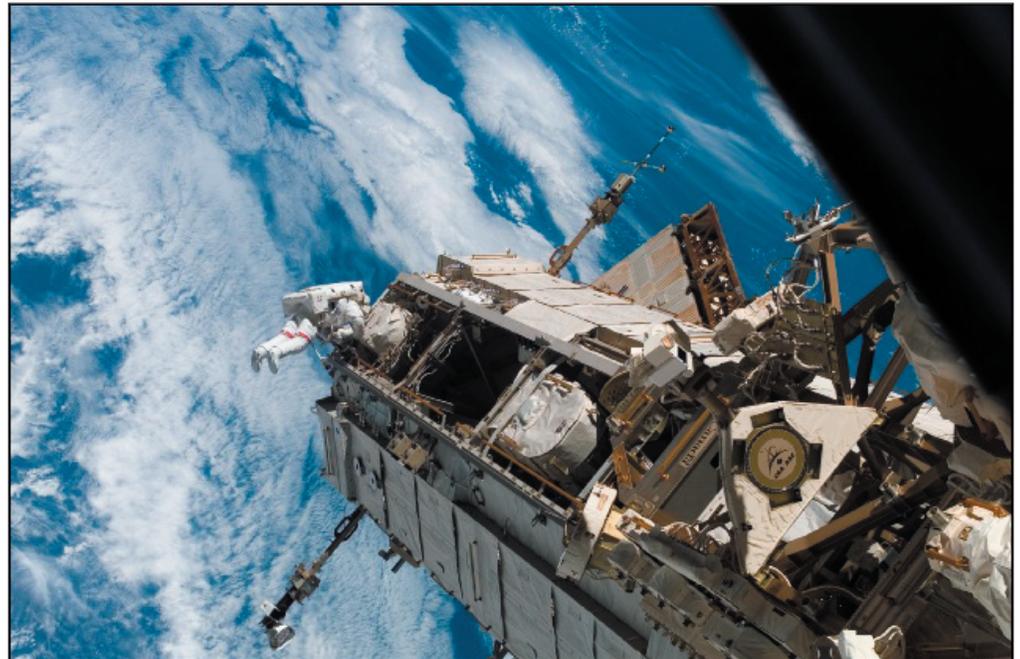
Continued from page 1

Lopez-Alegria and flight engineers Mikhail Tyurin and Thomas Reiter, also an ESA astronaut.

Williams and Reiter switched places when Discovery arrived at the station. Williams will begin a six-month stay as a station crew member and Reiter will journey home on Discovery. Reiter has been on the station since July.

The STS-116 mission builds on the activities of the other two shuttle flights this year, STS-121 in July and STS-115 in September. Mission managers said the lessons learned and results achieved in the 2006 missions will apply to next year's flights, when more solar arrays and laboratories will be added to the space station.

The writer, an ASRI employee, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications.



Mission specialist Bob Curbeam works with a solar array during the fourth and final spacewalk of the STS-116 mission. The STS-116 crew folded the port solar array on the International Space Station's P6 truss during the 6-hour, 38 minute excursion by Curbeam and mission specialist Christer Fuglesang. The spacewalk ended at 7:38 p.m. CST Monday, Dec. 19.

The face of mission success is:

Diedra Williams, Marshall's executive resources program manager for the Employee Services & Operations Office in the Office of Human Capital

Going through the process for appointment to the Senior Executive Service may seem challenging, but Diedra Williams is here to help make the experience a smooth one. The Senior Executive Service is the personnel system covering top managerial positions in approximately 75 federal agencies. As Marshall's executive resources program manager for the Employee Services & Operations Office, Williams oversees the SES programs and works to ensure qualified people reach their goal of achieving executive service by guiding them through the process. Away from work, Williams is an avid reader and enjoys mystery and spy novels.

What is your education background?

I received a Bachelor of Arts in business administration from Mount Vernon College and a Master of Science in public relations from American University. Both schools are located in Washington.

How many years have you been at the Marshall Center?

I came to Marshall in July 2000 after two years at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. I served there as an operations analyst.

Prior to that, I worked for 10 years as director of marketing and public affairs for two U.S. Navy headquarters commands in the D.C. area.

What are the key responsibilities of your job?

As executive resources program manager, I am responsible for managing SES programs at Marshall, Senior Level, and Senior Scientific and Technical human resources programs and services. This includes vacancy announcements, applicant screening to ensure they meet job qualifications, processing all SES personnel actions, writing position descriptions and conducting SES new employee orientations. I coordinate the SES performance appraisal, bonus

processes and awards, including Presidential Rank Awards, which are presented annually to a select group of senior executives who have provided exceptional service and leadership. In addition, I am responsible for the SES Candidate Development Program.

What services does your job provide in support of the center's mission?

In support of the center director and the director of the Office of Human Capital, I help ensure our SES is staffed fully and appropriately to meet mission objectives by identifying and hiring senior executives with the appropriate skills, who also are in the right position, at the right time. In this role, I work across organizational lines with all the offices and directorates at Marshall.

What do you hope to accomplish in your role this year?

I want to look at the processes we use to perform our primary executive resources functions and identify areas where we can streamline, eliminating areas that don't add value. Also, I hope to make our office more visible to those who aspire to become members of the SES. Our office has a wealth of information and resources that can serve to demystify the SES and its Candidate Development

Program application and certification process. Recently, I was invited to speak at Marshall's Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate's weekly managers' meeting, and it went well. I shared information on the SES executive core qualifications. I talked for about 30 minutes and would love to get more invitations like that.

What is the biggest challenge you face?

The vast approval process associated with SES involves many people, not only here at the center but also at NASA Headquarters and the Office of Personnel Management. By flow charting our process and cutting out unnecessary steps, we

See Williams on page 7



David Higginbotham/MSC
Diedra Williams

Marshall program has safety and health of employees at heart

By Bill Hubscher

While personal and professional safety is a concern for everyone, a select group of Marshall Center team members go above and beyond their job descriptions to help keep fellow employees safe. They are members of the center's Safety, Health and Environmental Committee.

More commonly known by its acronym, the current SHE Committee was formed in 2002 to improve programs dealing with safety, health and the environment at Marshall. It gives a voice to Marshall employees when it comes to building center policy for safety programs and resolving safety issues. Its civil service and contractor members represent many different elements within the Marshall community.

Marshall Associate Director Robin Henderson, the committee's senior management sponsor, appointed Pete Allen, assistant to Marshall's director of the Engineering Directorate, as the committee chairperson. Herb Shivers, deputy director of Marshall's Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate, serves as a co-deputy chairperson, and Rhonda Mann of Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne's Huntsville office, also serves as co-deputy chairperson, representing the contractor workforce.

The mission of the committee extends beyond the occasional trips and falls. The committee provides advice to senior center management on managing the center's safety, health and environmental programs and is heavily involved in establishing center policies when it comes to those programs. For example, the committee develops metrics to measure the effectiveness of the safety, health and environmental programs and reports quarterly to the Integrated Management Systems Board on each organization's performance. As a result, many problems, such as delinquent mandatory physicals and hazard communication training, have been corrected.

The Integrated Management Systems Board is one of Marshall's three governing councils and is chaired by Associate Director Henderson. It is a management-level board established in 2005 with membership including those employees who report directly to the center director. Its primary focus is on institutional performance such as efficiency, effectiveness, safety and productivity.

Allen said a good example of how the committee develops policies and guidelines was the recent creation of a center policy on the shelf life and disposal of chemicals. "We received excellent input from many areas and developed a very balanced policy that

See SHE on page 5

Marshall Center exceeds safety goals for 2006

By Bill Hubscher

Marshall Center employees have another reason to celebrate the holiday season. It marks the end of a year in which they helped set new Marshall safety records.

According to reports by the Safety, Health and Environmental Committee announced at the weekly Marshall team meeting Dec. 4, the center recorded new lows for time lost due to accidents, recorded mishaps and the severity of those mishaps.

There were only seven lost-time accidents recorded for the entire year. Marshall's fiscal year 2006 goal for lost time based on every 200,000 hours worked was 0.17. The rate came in at 0.12, the lowest ever recorded in the history of the Marshall Center.

"Our goal was to lose no more than a total of three work days and we finished with about one," said Dennis Davis, industrial safety engineering lead of the Industrial Safety Department in the Office of Safety & Mission Assurance. "The contributing factor has been everyone's awareness of the importance of safety. Management and employee involvement in the safety program has paid off."

The report also indicated the second lowest amount of property damage in six years.

"These accomplishments are very important for Marshall," said Roy Malone, director of the Office of Safety & Mission Assurance. "An excellent safety program goes hand-in-hand with excellent operations. It proves that Marshall can be a leader in NASA's most critical programs and projects."

The safety goals were recommended by the Safety, Health and Environmental Committee and approved by the Integrated Management Systems Board. The committee was created to improve programs dealing with safety, health and the environment at Marshall. It answers to the board, which is responsible for the management of the center's mission support and ensures the safety and health of Marshall team members.

The center met or exceeded many of the recommended goals, including reducing the time-lost rate compared to the last three years and beating the average mishap levels recorded by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

An indication of increased safety awareness can be found in the number of employees who attended safety meetings. One of the Marshall safety goals was for employee attendance to planned safety meetings to be at least 80 percent. This year's attendance at safety meetings was 91 percent.

For more on the report, visit the SHE Committee Web site at <http://she.msfc.nasa.gov>.

SHE

Continued from page 4

ensures adequate controls are in place while still providing flexibility so chemical users can best manage their inventory.”

The committee often acts as a venue for Marshall employees to address safety, health or environmental issues.

“The committee listens to concerns and tries to help work a solution that will be acceptable to all the parties involved,” Allen said. “If the committee is not able to solve the problem, it will advance the issue to the center’s Integrated Management Systems Board for a resolution. However, we encourage everyone to try to work issues at the lowest level possible. We only elevate issues to the systems board as a last resort.”

The committee has numerous subcommittees that provide guidance in technical areas. These range from training and communication to chemical operations and pressure or cryogenic systems. In all, there are 16 subcommittees providing technical advice when assessing center policies and recommending ways to improve the center’s programs.

A major safety resource for employees is the Safety, Health and Environmental Web site at <http://she.msfc.nasa.gov>. It offers

See SHE on page 6

Report shows Marshall employees are lighter, smoke less

By Bill Hubscher

The number of overweight Marshall Center employees dropped to its lowest level in five years, according to an occupational health report released earlier this month by Marshall’s Safety, Health and Environmental Committee.

The number of overweight employees dropped from 1,050 in 2005 to 600 this year. The number of cigarette smokers remained below 200 for the third straight year and was nearly a record low over the past five years. The number of cases of people with elevated blood sugar also dropped in 2006.

Numbers also were down in nearly every category of occupational illnesses and injuries, including bruises, cuts and respiratory problems. The only category that went up was the number of insect bites, which rose from 14 in 2005 to 16 this year.

The news wasn’t so good, however, for documented cases of hypertension and hyperlipidemia – high blood pressure and cholesterol. The number of cases of high blood pressure has risen steadily over the last four years, and now stands at its highest level in six years. The number of people suffering from high cholesterol has gone up every year since 2000. Nearly 45 percent of employees given physicals at the Marshall Medical Center were shown to have high cholesterol, the most common ailment among those tested.

The report used health data, gathered during mandatory physicals for Marshall employees, to measure common physical ailments and compare them to previous years’ results. Participation in the physicals also was up from 2005, with 99 percent of scheduled examinations completed. According to David Thaxton, Marshall’s occupational health officer in the Environmental Engineering & Occupational Health Office in Marshall’s Office of Center Operations, that rate of participation is unprecedented across NASA.

“The numbers are generally good,” Thaxton said. “There are a couple of areas we can still improve upon. Incorporating a healthier diet and routine exercise regimen into our lifestyle can help us in those areas. Overall, our employee’s health indicators are still very positive.”



Eric Stewart, an engineer with the thermal and combustion physics analysis branch in Marshall’s Propulsion Systems Department, gets his blood pressure checked by Diana Douglas, an occupational health nurse at the Marshall Health Center.

David Higginbotham/MSFC

Continued from page 5

information about safety issues related to the center, along with safety tips and suggestions, assorted safety videos and an archive of Marshall's safety records.

The Safety, Health and Environmental Committee has been responsible for many safety improvements across the center, some more conspicuous than others. The group helps supervisors identify employee safety training needs and also helped re-establish the Contractor Safety Forum for contractors supporting Marshall to help improve safety within their own organizations.

The committee also supports performance awards, recognizing individual safety-related contributions and organizations with significant cumulative hours without a significant accident or mishap.

The committee's actions that directly affect all Marshall employees include providing automated external defibrillators located throughout the center in case of a heart attack. It also converted more than 30 safety, health and environmental training courses to multimedia format for easy access via computer, improved the employee medical appointment scheduling process, increased lighting in many of the center's parking lots and made improvements in the marking of street crosswalks. The group even installed floor mats at building entrances and wet areas in the cafeteria.

The committee also is responsible for many events during Marshall's annual "Take our Children to Work Day" and the planning and implementation of activities for "Safety Day," an annual event in which Marshall employees gather to discuss ways to make Marshall a safer place to work. The results of all these actions and many more provided the most important effect on employees: fewer injuries.

"We take our jobs very seriously," Allen said. "Providing a safer

and healthier workplace is critical to protecting our Marshall team members and the environment."

Recent concerns addressed by the committee include the continued development and improvement of environmental management of the center to comply with ISO 14001, the International Standards Organization that addresses environmental management. Besides improving safety assessments of potentially hazardous operations and preparing for next year's independent evaluation of Marshall's safety and health programs as required by NASA, the committee has started creating a comprehensive action plan to deal with a pandemic, should one happen.

"Part of what we do is plan for the worst possible disasters," Allen said. "These are plans that we don't want to ever use, but we need to be ready, just in case."

The committee holds meetings open to all Marshall team members in Room P-110 of Bldg. 4200 on the third Thursday of each month from 1 to 3 p.m. During the meeting, it reviews and evaluates current safety, health and environmental issues, monitors actions, reviews organizational performance through metrics evaluations, discusses employee's safety and health concerns, receives subcommittee reports, and develops the agenda items for the monthly Marshall team meeting.

The Safety, Health and Environmental Committee welcomes input from all Marshall employees, who are welcome to join a SHE subcommittee, attend the meetings, or review meeting minutes at <http://she.msfc.nasa.gov>. Marshall team members also can share suggestions or concerns by contacting Allen at pete.allen@nasa.gov, Shivers at herb.shivers@nasa.gov, or Mann at rhonda.mann@pwr.utc.com.

The writer, an ASRI employee, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications.



Shelia Koza, a chemical inventory clerk in Marshall's Environmental Engineering & Occupational Health Office, uses a chemical barcode system to help track chemicals used across the center.

David Higginbotham/MSC

Classified Ads

To submit a classified ad to the *Marshall Star*, go to *Inside Marshall*, to "Employee Resources," and click on "Employee Ads — Submit Ad." Ads are limited to 15 words, including contact numbers. No sales pitches. Deadline for the next issue is 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

Miscellaneous

Boy's American field hunting outfit; tuxedo w/blue shirt; cast iron fireplace grate; firewood rack. 881-6040
Bushnell Yardage Pro 450, new, paid \$150, sell for \$125. 503-0964
PlayStation 3 console, 60GB with built-in WiFi wireless, one controller, new in box, \$1,200. 931-625-1144
Boxer puppy, AKC, fawn/white female, 4 months old, all shots, vet checked, \$500. 420-8101
Dunlop mud rovers, 265/75-16 with Ford factory take-off rims, less than 10K miles, \$300. 574-5289
Fireplace insert, Appalachian 9036 w/blower, wood burning, you pick up, \$100. 883-2757
Ten coupons for round of golf at Point Mallard, \$10. 351-1754
Audiovox portable car DVD player w/remote and two 5.6" LCD headrest monitors. 479-4751
New Nintendo DS Lite, Coral Pink color, \$140; Dodge Ram alloy rims, 16", \$160. 837-6148
Kenmore heavy-duty, super capacity washer and dryer, five years old, \$275. 464-9908
Corn burning heater, used one season, \$1,400. 256-777-6951

NEC Multisync 90 CRT monitor, SVGA, 15 pin, \$50. 890-0981
4-wheeler tires, new ITP Mud Lites, wheels, lug nuts, center pieces, fits Honda 450/up, price negotiable. 256-259-1523
Woodworkers dovetail mortising jig, to be used with router, never used, \$20. 683-9364
Sofa and loveseat, green/burgundy tapestry, \$650; leather recliner, green, \$40. Sleeper sofa, beige, \$100. 881-3527
Cherry entertainment center with shutter doors, holds up to 50" LCD/plasma screen TV, \$450. 426-0082
Refrigerator w/ice maker, 21 cu. ft., \$130; Hulk power-wheel with battery pack, \$40. 682-7165
Brass ceiling fan/light, 52", \$15; kitchen chandelier, \$10. 837-1774
Entertainment center, cherry, lots of storage for DVD player and DVDs, stereo, etc. 464-9034
Austin A-style mandolin and carrying case, 1 year old, \$200. 498-3847
Blue Fox fur stole, \$25. 837-6776
Men's Spaulding golf clubs: four woods, irons 2-9, putter, bag, cart, \$25. 230-8269
Metal children's bunk beds with mattresses, primary colors, matching wardrobe, desk and chair, \$350. 895-5063
Victory scooter, red, new, never used, \$1,600. 755-4000
2003 Epiphone Casino guitar, sunburst w/hardshell case, rarely played, \$500 firm. 684-0910
Leaf vacuum attachment for riding lawn mower, gas engine powered, \$250. 509-7907
Klipsch Synergy Sub-10 subwoofer, \$250; Klipsch Synergy C-1 center channel speaker, \$100. 227-5671

Vehicles

1992 Ford Mark III leisure van, small V8, OD, PS, A/C, 154K miles, \$2,500. 256-753-2583
2003 Ford F150 Super Crew XLT, 4.8L, 4 door, charcoal gray, PW/PL, PSR, bedliner, \$15,990. 882-0431
2004 Toyota Tacoma Prerunner Doublecab, V6, auto, TRD, PW/PDL, cruise, keyless, \$21,300. 256-497-3311
2000 Nissan Frontier crew cab, automatic, silver, new tires,

105K miles, CD/cassette, liner, cruise, tilt, remote, \$9,600. 880-9025
2003 100th Anniversary HD XL1299C sportster, lots of extras, \$7,500. 233-8505
1999 Lexus RX300, 88K miles, AWD, towing, premium package, \$11,320. 714-4651
2004 Hyundai Sonata, 47K miles, fully loaded, V-6, still under warranty, new tires, \$11,000. 256-614-0048
1996 Ford Explorer, 4 door, blue, leather, towing package, all power, 192K miles, \$4,275. 880-6335
2001 Volvo S60, 2.4, 4-door sedan, black, 67K miles, clean, new tires, \$13,000. 350-6677
1996 Ford Explorer "Eddie Bauer Edition", 4x4, 17K miles, white and beige, leather, loaded, \$5,500. 694-9837
2003 Ford F150 SuperCab Lariat, extended warranty, 5.4L/V8, auto, leather, 22.5K miles, \$15,600. 520-5791
2002 Volvo V40, 58K miles, loaded, \$12,100. 534-5421
1986 Ford E350 15-passenger van, 70K original miles, front/rear a/c, \$2,100. 227-0339/Dave

Wanted

Used baby boy clothing, birth to 1 year; inexpensive awning; car seat. 256-655-1733
Broken N-Scale Locomotives, preferably steam type for spare parts. 880-7118/Mark
Washing machine, good condition, no more than 10 years old. 941-223-4607
Ride from the Bldg. 4200 complex to the airport after work Dec. 26, will pay for ride. 544-0520

Free

To good home, black Lab adult and 3-month-old female dogs, abandoned. 751-4043
Three panes of 28.5x65 insulated patio door glass. 828-1127

Lost

Men's Titanium watch, "Brock's", 4203 area, reward. 256-679-3921

NOVA

Continued from page 1

Remains of the Maya civilization, mysteriously destroyed at its peak in the ninth century, have been hidden in the rainforests of Central America for more than 1,000 years.

The scientists teamed up to locate the ruins of the ancient culture. A NOVA film crew was on hand to capture some of the research in action as the scientists hiked into the Guatemalan jungle, looking for clues that would help explain the demise of the Maya civilization. The crew also visited the NSSTC in June to shoot follow-up interviews with Sever and Saturno.

Williams

Continued from page 3

have trimmed the appointment process from 10 months to three months on the NASA side, which gives me a lot of satisfaction. The Office of Personnel Management piece of the approval process wasn't part of our analysis because we have no control over that aspect. Now, we'll focus on streamlining some of the other SES actions we perform.

On the personal side, how do you like to spend your leisure time?

I'm usually curled up with a good mystery and espionage/spy novel. Since 2000, I have kept a running list of the books I have

Many scientists believe the Maya fell prey to a number of cataclysmic environmental problems, including deforestation and drought, that led to their downfall.

"The world continues to battle the devastating effects of drought today, from the arid plains of Africa to the southern United States," Irwin said. "The more we know about the plight of the Maya, the better our chances of avoiding something similar."

The NOVA program airs locally on Alabama Public Television. Viewing times are available on the Web from <http://www.pbs.org>.

The writers, ASRI employees, support the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications.

read. For three years in a row, I read 29 books each year. In 2005, I read 36. I enjoy both fiction and nonfiction.

I also like to spend time with my husband, Theo Robinson, who retired as a captain of the District of Columbia Fire Department. He fought fires for 26 years and is now a fire inspector for Marriott Corporation. We have two daughters, Shannon, 18, and Melanie, 14. Shannon is a freshman at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Ga. Melanie is in the ninth grade at Madison Academy. Both are straight-A students.

Jessica Wallace, an ASRI employee and Marshall Star editor in the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications, contributed to this article.

Administrator's Fellowship Program deadline for applications Jan. 21

By Bill Hubscher

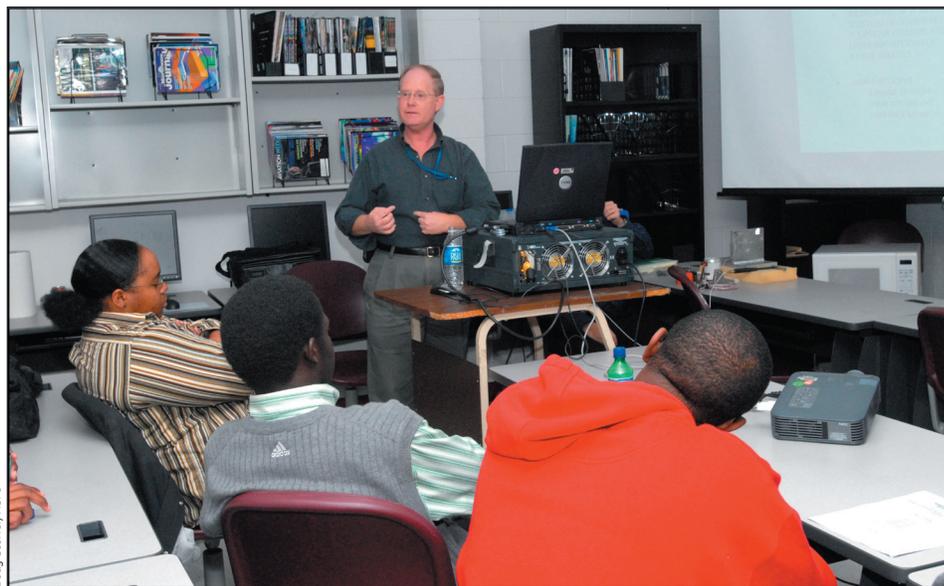
Marshall Center civil service employees who want to help further the education of minority college students while enhancing their own professional development have only one more month to apply for the NASA Administrator's Fellowship Program.

The program is designed to develop valuable leadership, communication and project management skills of NASA employees and faculty members of minority institutions who teach science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

NASA employee participants in the program teach and/or conduct research at minority institutions while also spending time in professional development assignments at various NASA centers, headquarters, research organizations, and other government agencies, or in the private sector.

One of NASA's 2006 fellows is Marshall test engineer John Lassiter. He has spent the fall teaching students at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville about structural dynamics analysis and testing.

"For me, this has been a great opportunity to work in a new environment," Lassiter said. "I show students how structural testing is one of many tasks used to develop a new aerospace system such as the Ares I crew launch vehicle. I also have the opportunity to help Alabama A&M



Doug Staffer/NSFC

John Lassiter, standing, a 2006 NASA Administrator Fellowship Program participant and dynamic test engineer at the Marshall Center, presents a demonstration on structural dynamics to senior mechanical engineering students at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville. Lassiter is working with the university's School of Engineering and Technology to develop a graduate engineering program. He also is working with the engineering faculty on the development of advanced sensors for use in structural health monitoring systems that one day may be used for the Ares I launch vehicle and lunar habitats.

faculty learn about and get involved in NASA research projects. But, the best aspect of the program is being able to encourage minority students to stay in school and graduate with an engineering degree, and to help them learn about job opportunities in NASA."

The fellowship program offers faculty members from minority institutions the opportunity to conduct research at a NASA

center at no cost to the school.

The deadline for applying for the fellowship is Jan. 21, 2007. For more information on the program, including eligibility requirements, and to download an application, visit <http://uncfsp.org/divstNAFP.aspx>.

The writer, an ASRI employee, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications.

Marshall Star, Daily Planet take break for holidays

The Marshall Star, which is printed 50 times per year, will not publish for two weeks during the holiday season. The last issue of the year will be Dec. 21. Publication will resume Jan. 11.

Classified ads may still be submitted during this time.

The Daily Planet will cease publication Dec. 22 and resume Jan. 2.

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