



West Yellowstone—a “Winter Wonderland”

March 2025

By Ray Rhew



My wife and I, along with a brother and sister-in-law, traveled to West Yellowstone, Montana for the last week of January to experience what we ended up calling a “Winter Wonderland.” The first morning after we arrived it was -22°F , but it eventually warmed up to the low 30s one day with plenty of sunshine.



We enjoyed some short hikes on nice trails to frozen waterfalls, a guided trip into Yellowstone on a Snow Coach, snowmobiling for a day on

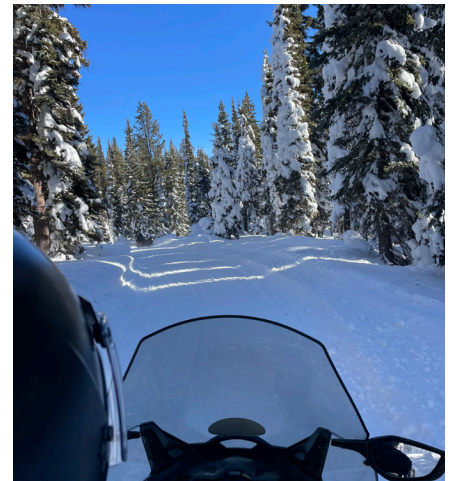


miles of groomed trails, and a western dinner after a horse drawn sleigh ride.

We even took a ride on an eight-passenger, heated seat ski lift to see some lights at the top of Big Sky resort. A couple of reasons for choosing to go at this time of year were the reduced crowds (one guide quoted that Yellowstone sees about 5 million visitors in the summer months as opposed to 120 thousand in the winter), and the ability to easily see wildlife under different conditions.



As you can probably tell by my summary, I highly recommend a winter visit; just bring plenty of warm gear and enjoy the sights! ♦



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President's Report

By Kathy Ferrare, President

You've got to love Virginia weather! The beautiful snowfall has come and gone and now we could be reaching much higher temperatures...spring might be in the air! Being married to a meteorologist, his head was spinning as our daughters living in Charleston and Raleigh, along with me, were continually asking...what's the weather going to be like tomorrow and will work and school be canceled 😊!

Last month we lost a dedicated LAA member, our past President, Olaf Storaasli. Even though my friendship with Olaf was just over a year, I experienced his enormous love for Barbara and his family, especially his grandchildren, who filled his world with life and laughter. His face always lit up when he talked about his family.

Another joy of his was the LAA. He was very excited to come to the July picnic to interact with our members. He loved to talk about NASA and tried to recruit members to the LAA whenever he met someone. From member responses I've gotten since his passing, Olaf touched many lives. Barbara has said a memorial service for Olaf will be in Tennessee sometime in March.

One topic that Olaf and I talked about was increasing our membership. We felt expanding our membership was important so there could be even more connections made within the LAA community and an increase in active, hands-on members could help expand

our outreach and member outings programs. Last year we increased our membership by 9%...Thank You!

Not sure where to start when talking about the LAA, we have several documents on our LAA website (<https://larc alumni.org/>) that you can provide to potential members. These include our LAA 2024 Annual Report and LAA Brochure, along with our newsletters for the past few years which provide specific activities we've been involved in.

If you have any membership questions or suggestions on opportunities where we can showcase the LAA, please contact our Membership Chair, Dave Hinton (davidhinton@larc alumni.org). ♦



Remember!

March 11: Linda Bangert (The Ninety-Nines International Org of Women Pilots)

April 8: Mike Fremaux (Flight Dynamics Research Facility Capabilities)

May 13: Tim Ryan & Steve Sandford (Entrepreneurial Information & Life Experiences)

June 10: Scientifically Calibrated In-flight Imagery (SCIFLI)

July 9: Picnic



LANGLEY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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This newsletter is published quarterly. Please submit articles to the Newsletter Editor, rick.ross@verizon.net, no later than the 10th of February, May, August, or November for publication the following month. Please contact mhueschen@gmail.com to subscribe or unsubscribe.

Treasurer's Report

By Ray Rhew, Treasurer

The financial status of the organization is strong and well positioned to execute a 2025 spending plan. We will be developing more details related to our Education and Outreach activities to take advantage of our financial status to bring more impact to the community. I recently had a conversa-

tion with the Treasurer for the NASA Alumni League—JSC chapter who provided insight into their community contributions that I think we can leverage as our plan comes together. One example is contributing funding for supplies to local school systems for special STEM related activities. If

you have any input to share related to Education and Outreach opportunities, please let us know.

Finally, a thank you to those who have paid their dues, we appreciate your contribution and look forward to your engagement as well. ♦

Update on LAA Membership and Badging Requirements

By Dave Hinton, Membership Chair

The LAA continues to grow. Currently there are 246 members, with 133 life members and 113 paying annual dues. A few yearly members have recently converted to life members.

Visitor badge reminder: We need at least five business days' notice, or the Tuesday before the meeting, if you

need a single-day visitor badge to attend a meeting. This time is needed to get the request into NASA's system and for the Badge and Pass Office (BPO) to process the request. I need to transmit the requester's full legal name and email address to NASA. Please send requests to davidhinton@larcalumni.org. Please bring

two forms of government ID (one with your photo on it) when picking up a new or renewed badge. Your current activity badge, if not expired, was previously accepted as one of the two forms of ID; going forward it will not. Most members bring their driver's license and passport. Please contact me with any questions. ♦

2025 Promises to Be an Exciting Year for LAA Programs

By Charlie Dunton, Vice President and Programs Chair

The LAA kicked off 2025 with a presentation by Chris Carter, director of the Virginia Space Grant Consortium (VSCG), on future LAA volunteer opportunities. The VSCG partners with NASA, industry, and other organizations to promote STEM education, research, and workforce development. They sponsor many programs for K-12 students throughout the state including the Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars (VASTS) and the Virginia Earth System Science Scholars (VESSS).

January also saw the election of a new slate of officers for the LAA. Kathy Ferrare, last year's LAA Vice President, took over the role of President from Olaf Storaasli who assumed the role of Immediate Past President. Charlie Dunton, new to the board, was elected as Vice President. Mary DiJoseph, Ray Rhew, and Richard Hueschen, re-

main in their previous roles as Secretary, Treasurer, and Communications Officer, respectively.

Dawn Schaible, LaRC's Acting Center Director, spoke briefly at the February meeting, then turned the program over to J.D. Reeves, the Implementation Lead for "Langley is the Future" (LIFE), who spoke about the history and implementation of LIFE.

February also brought some unusually heavy snow to the Peninsula which resulted in the cancellation of the High school students United with NASA to Create Hardware (HUNCH) critical design review. Four LAA members had signed up to help with the event. The CDR is being rescheduled as individual virtual CDRs.

And finally, February brought some devastating news to the LAA family.

Olaf Storaasli, last year's LAA President, passed on unexpectedly on February 22. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Barbara and his family. Olaf will be greatly missed.

March is National Women's Month, and to celebrate that, Linda Bangert will be our featured speaker for our March 11 meeting. Linda retired from Langley after 37 years working in research and project management. Linda is a pilot and a member of the Ninety-Nines, an international women's pilot's organization that began in 1929. Her talk is titled "The Ninety-Nines, Inc. International Organization of Women Pilots and a history of women in aviation and space." We encourage everyone to attend this most interesting presentation. If you are unable to attend, you can watch the taped presentation on the LAA members website at a later date. ♦

1962 Project Mercury Commemorative Stamp

By Geoff Tennille

Tuesday, February 20, 1962, was a very exciting day for America. At 9:48 AM, Friendship 7, piloted by Lt. Colonel John Glenn, blasted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida on a three-orbit flight, then returned to Earth and landed at 2:43 PM about 1,200 miles southeast of Cape Canaveral.

What the American public didn't know was that the U.S. Post Office had prepared a commemorative stamp to celebrate the first U.S. mission to orbit the Earth with a crewed vehicle. The Post Office had recently started using a Giori Printing Press, which allowed it to produce stamps in two or three colors in a single run (instead of having to send the stamps through for



each color). The stamps were printed in complete secrecy because they would only be released after Glenn was safely back on Earth. If the mission had been a failure, the stamps would have been destroyed. The new press was locked in a separate room accessible to only a small number of

postal employees and with a guard to keep others out. Rumors in the department speculated that it was being used to make currency. Instead, it was printing the "Project Mercury" stamp.

The stamp was sent in sealed packets to postmasters in 305 locations around the country, with specific instructions: "Classified Material. Do Not Open," and were shipped in time for the original launch date of December 21, 1961. At 3:30 PM, after Glenn was safely on the US Navy recovery ship, Post Offices were informed by telephone, teletype, and telegraph, that they could open the packet and distribute the stamps. ♦

VASBA Activities and Officers for 2025

By Jack Schlank



During the January Board of Directors meeting, we elected a new President, past LaRC Center Director David Bowles. Dave replaces Jonathan Kelly who recently joined NASA Langley to lead the Space Weather Program Office. Laura Blumberg, Melissa Smith and Randy Dye will continue in their roles as Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

VASBA supported Virginia's Aerospace Day on January 29th by coordinating and participating in the industry meetings with members of the General Assembly and sponsoring the 2025 Legislator Reception. A special



VASBA Officers Melissa Smith, Dave Bowles, Laura Blumberg and Randy Dye

thanks goes to VASBA's Steve Dunn for organizing and supporting 86 industry meetings for 11 teams, and to Melissa Smith for coordinating our booth at the reception.

We hosted another VASBA luncheon on February 19 at the Virginia Space

Grant Consortium (VSGC). Two guest speakers were featured, Rich Shook of the Williamsburg Aviation Scholarship Program (WASP) who presented details of their organization; and Ian Cawthray, Education Program Director at VSGC, who shared information on some of their student programs. ♦