



LANGLEY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Winds of Change

June 2025

By Charlie Dunton, Vice President

Weather in Hampton Roads can be very unpredictable. It can change without so much as a moments notice. Such was the case with our March program. Linda Bangert was scheduled to present in March, which is National Women's Month, talking about the Ninety-Nines, a women's international pilots' organization to which she belongs, and giving a history of women in aviation as well. Unfortunately, Linda became ill at the very last minute and had to cancel her talk. The good news is that she is back on the schedule for our June 10th meeting. Please join us as it will prove to be a very interesting talk.

Our speaker void for March was quickly refilled when Mike Fremaux and David Storch agreed to move up their talk on the new Flight Dynamics Research Facility from April to March with only a couple of days' notice. We thank you so much, Mike and David. Their talk was very well received. On top of that, the facility was finally approved for visitors in May and on May 15th, 50 or so LAA members were able to tour the new facility.

With the FDRF talk moving from April to March, that meant we needed a new speaker for April. That spot was quickly and admirably filled by Bradley Weid-

enhammer, the Project Manager for the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel Expansion Project. Bradley received a fine introduction from Linda Miller, the Communications Director for the project, and gave a most interesting presentation.

When Langley's Office of the Director found out that Bradley was coming to speak, they asked if they could join the LAA and advertise his talk to the Center. They had also hoped to have Bradley speak, and partnering with the LAA meant that his talk was one of the best

attended LAA talks, with approximately 250 people attending, either in person in Reid 1 and 2, or through the Microsoft Teams broadcast. If you missed the talk, you can [view it](#) on our YouTube channel.

But the winds of change were not finished with us yet. Our May speakers were to be Tim Ryan, the Director of the

REaKTOR Innovation Center, an organization that partners with tech startups to help them succeed, and Steve Sandford, founder of Psionic, a very successful partner with REaKTOR. In late April, Tim found out that he had to bring his son home from Virginia Tech on the day of the LAA meeting. But once again help arrived, this time in James Doe, the Associate Director of REaKTOR. James was

ready to step in for Tim and present the REaKTOR story along with Steve. But at the last minute, tragedy struck with the unexpected passing of Sandford's father. Our sincere and heartfelt condolences go out to Steve and his family.

While Steve was unable to present the Psionic story, he did attend James' talk as a show of support and said a few words at the end. We look forward to hearing the full Psionic story from Steve in the future.

The second quarter was interesting to say the least. Please join us on June 10th for Linda Bangert's talk on the Ninety-Nines and the history of women in aviation. It should prove to be a very high-flying talk. ♦



Linda Bangert and family ride in a hot air balloon

IN THIS ISSUE

Winds of Change.....	1
President's Report.....	2
Treasurer's Report	2
Remember!.....	2
Membership and Badging	3
FDRF Tour	4
Annual LAA Picnic	5
Golf, Anyone?.....	6
Samuel P. Langley Stamp.....	6

2025 LAA OFFICERS

President

Kathy Ferrare

Vice President & Programs Chair

Charlie Dunton

Treasurer

Ray Rhew

Secretary

Mary DiJoseph

Communications Officer

Richard Hueschen

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & OFFICIALS

Membership Committee

David Hinton

Nominating Committee

Susan McClain

Hall of Honor Committee

Website & Publications Committee

Rick Ross

Amy Radford

IT Committee

Roman Paryz

Dan Palumbo

Rick Ross

Geoff Tennille

Langley Representative

Jessica Friz

Immediate Past President

LAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Class of 2026

George Allison

George Finelli

Charles Cockrell

Wayne Richie

Kathy Ferrare

Class of 2027

Geoffrey Tennille

Susan McClain

Craig Ohlhorst

Mary DiJoseph

Tony Pototzky

Ray Rhew

Rich Antcliff

Class of 2028

Mark Ballin

Roman Paryz

Charlie Dunton

Eric Rissling

Odilyn Luck

Liliana Richwine

President's Report

By Kathy Ferrare, President

FDRF tour complete ... check. LAA picnic mode in full swing ... check.

Summer must be right around the corner!

As we gear up for summer festivities with our family and friends, I'd like to recognize some of our LAA colleagues. A HUGE Thank You to Charlie Dunton, our LAA Vice President, and all LAA Board members for their involvement in the twist and turns of these past several months. The coordination that goes on behind the scenes can get a little harried at times, but our LAA team is always up for the challenge through their caring nature for our members, well thought-out solutions, and their willingness to pitch in. Thank you to our LAA Board members for actively enhancing our members' experiences.

As we continue to increase our membership, we would love to see everyone actively participate in the programs we discuss at our monthly General Membership meetings. There are many opportunities that your career experiences could help greatly enhance a student's imagination. We have several opportunities this summer, from being a subject matter expert with the Virginia Space Grant Consortium summer program or relating your experiences with the Viking Mars Missions Education and Preservation Project. For details, please visit our website (<https://larcalumni.org/meetings>).

If there are other activities that you would like to lead, please contact the LAA Board (<https://larcalumni.org/about-the-laa>). ♦

*"Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much."*

— Helen Keller

Treasurer's Report

By Ray Rhew, Treasurer

The financial status of the organization is strong and well positioned to execute our 2025 spending plan.

Yvonne Dellapenta recently completed the 2024 audit of our accounts. There were only minor findings; both have already been corrected and implemented. Yvonne was very thorough and provided great feedback to improve our process. I can't thank her enough for her time and effort performing the audit.

And, she was great to work with too!

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



Remember!

June 10: Linda Bangert (The Ninety-Nines International Org of Women Pilots) and Chief Bright (Chief of Protective Services)

July 9: Picnic (LaRC cafeteria)

Aug 12: Sierra Space Dream Chaser (Walt Engelund (NASA) & Mike Jeffries (Sierra Space))

Sept 9: Jennifer Inman (Scientifically Calibrated In-flight Imagery (SCIFLI))

Oct 14: Katrina's 20th Anniversary and Langley's Emergency Preparations

Important Membership and Badging Updates

By Dave Hinton, Membership Chair



Presentation on Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel to Langley retirees, employees, and contractors was well-attended

The LAA has welcomed 16 new members to date (as of the end of April) in 2025. Welcome all to the LAA! The LAA partnered with the Center at our last meeting for a guest presentation of the progress of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. This event was advertised across the Center and filled the Reid. It was an excellent event for generating awareness of the LAA among the active NASA employees.

Please continue outreach and word-of-mouth recruiting—it really helps the LAA. If you attend any events for which LAA brochures or the annual report would be useful, please let me know and we can provide copies.

We have accepted members who participated in the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP). Welcome to the LAA! We have found that Activity Badges cannot be issued yet, while the member is still an employee of NASA. However, we are able to arrange for visitor badges for these members for meetings that they wish to attend. Following their separation from the Agency later this year, we will be able to process the six-month Activity badge.

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. I need the requester's full legal name and email address. Please send requests to davidhinton@larcalumni.org.

Please note two important changes for picking up badges at the Badge and Pass Office (BPO). The REAL ID requirement took effect on May 7. You will need a REAL ID-compliant form of identification at the Badge and Pass Office (BPO) to receive your badge. This can either be a REAL ID driver's license, a passport, or passport card.

For renewals, your current Activity Badge, if not expired, was previously

accepted as one of the two forms of ID. Going forward it will not. So please bring two other forms of government ID (one with your photo on it) when picking up a new or renewed badge. Most members bring their driver's license and a passport.

The Board voted at our April meeting to allow a three month grace period for payment of annual dues, for the purpose of renewing badges. Members must remain in good standing for badge renewals and the yearly dues are due in January each year. This grace period avoids the additional cost to NASA of processing a new badge, relative to the lower cost of renewing a badge, if the member needs a dues reminder after January. ♦



LANGLEY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

A tax-exempt organization

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

Tour of the Flight Dynamics Research Facility (FDRF)

Article by Ray Whipple; group photos contributed by Kathy Ferrare, facility photo by Rick Ross



The first of three groups prepares to tour the facility

On 15 February, the LAA received the highly-anticipated tour of the new Flight Dynamics Research Facility (FDRF) on the Langley campus. Three groups were guided through the tour by Mike Fremaux, Chief Engineer, and David Storch, Construction Lead. We started on the first floor lobby, which, in the future, will contain a display case of historic models and other memorabilia. A photo history of the predecessors to this facility will spread across the walls. This new facility replaces two long-used research facilities in the East Area (Air Force property)—the 20-Foot Vertical Spin Tunnel (VST) and the 12-Foot Low-Speed Tunnel (LST).

The elevator took us to the control room level. Before the elevator was certified, this was a 125 step climb. At the center is the 20-foot diameter test section. The new test section is exactly the same as the existing tunnel but able to operate at much higher speeds. We finally have enough air-speed to conduct indoor skydiving, but I suspect the Safety Office might not approve. Test rigs that are used in the predecessors are now designed to be injected into the test section when needed, but fully removable so that

model buildup can proceed while other testing is in progress.

The open test section, originally designed for aircraft spin testing, has evolved over the years into testing of space return capsules, parachute systems, free-flying munitions, and other

interesting systems. The surrounding areas, for test instrumentation, model buildup, and injectable test systems, is vastly larger than the space available in the older tunnels.

Descriptions of the innovative construction techniques used in this project were fascinating. Pre-formed concrete slab construction enabled growth from foundation to full height in an amazingly short time. Provision for quick replacement of a motor are greatly superior. At the old Vertical Spin Tunnel, such a task required a major deconstruction of the tunnel. We saw the four huge 750 horsepower motors up close. Impressive, indeed.

We learned why vertical tunnels are so much more difficult to construct. The present two-return design is lower than only the existing gantry. A single-return design would have been up to 60-feet taller, much to the concern

Continued on page 5



The Flight Dynamics Research Facility (FDRF) replaces two existing tunnels

FDRF Tour (continued)

Continued from page 4

of our Air Force neighbors, and much costlier to construct. When operational in 1941, the 20-foot tunnel was the epitome of vertical tunnel science. Many other research facilities around

the world followed its design. The new FDRF actually owes more to the unexpected surge of recreational tunnels which occurred over the last few decades. ♦



The second group eagerly awaits the tour



The lucky last group gets to see the four 750 HP motors!

Annual LAA Picnic

By Charlie Dunton, Vice President and Programs Chair

Summer is right around the corner and that means it is picnic time!

Come join your fellow LAA families in a night of food, friendship, and fun!

We look forward to seeing you there! See the menu and schedule below for details. A sign-up form with additional information will come out in June. ♦



LAA PICNIC

July 8, 2025
4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Dinner will be served at 5:00 PM

NASA LANGLEY CAFETERIA AND PATIO

Seating inside and out on the deck

\$30 per person

MENU

Pulled pork barbeque with buns
100% all-beef hamburger, buns, and condiments

Vegetarian option:
Shredded jackfruit in barbeque sauce

Coleslaw
Potato Salad
Mac and Cheese

Ice water and iced tea

Fresh baked cookies

Golf, Anyone?

By Wayne Richie

Did you know that Langley has a golf association (the NASA Golf Association, NGA) that is open to all NASA civil servants and retirees, current or retired contractors, and their immediate families? The NGA has been in existence for many years and is open to golfers of all skill levels. For details, visit <https://nga.larc.nasa.gov>, but here is a brief summary about the NGA. The purpose of this organization is "To promote and foster enjoyment and camaraderie through the medium of the game of golf and to provide a vehicle for organized competition to serve this end." The annual membership fee is only \$40 and all funds are used for tournament prizes and includes the end of the year banquet. The league holds tournaments about once a month but around 12 total each year at various great courses near Langley (Kingsmill, Viniterra, Cypress Creek, Williamsburg National, etc.) with excellent costs (green and cart fees are negotiated for participants). All tournaments use handicaps to create the individual and team flights for the competitions so as to make them fun for all. The 2025 season has started but it is not too late to join. If you want to meet and have fun golfing with men and women like yourself, use the link provided above to copy the membership



Rabi Palikonda, Bill Tomek, Donis Anders (LAA member), and Dave Rutan at the NGA Brickshire Tournament

application and mail it to the League Treasurer named on the application. The link is to our home page and also has other information that you may want such as the upcoming tournament dates and club officers. ♦

1988 Airmail Stamp Honored Samuel P. Langley

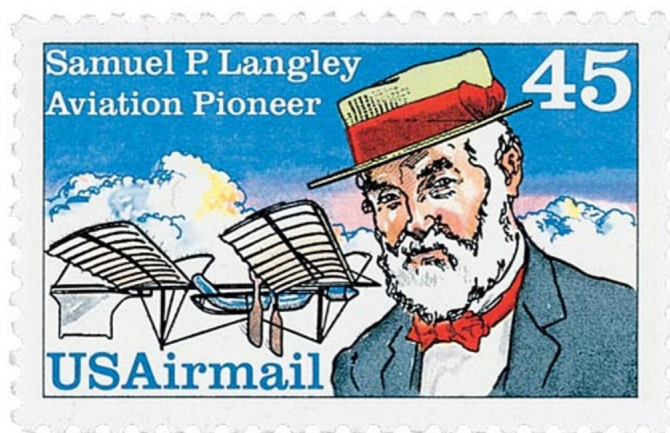
By Geoff Tennille

Aviation pioneer Samuel Pierpont Langley is honored on this 1988 airmail stamp with his Aerodrome No. 5, the first American heavier-than-air machine to make a free flight of any significant length. He was an astronomer, the Director of the Smithsonian Institution, and inventor of the bolometer to measure infrared radiation, which led to the discovery of the greenhouse effect. He also provided standard time to the railroads to fund his observatory at what is now the University of Pittsburgh, which became the basis for our system of time zones.

Langley achieved success on May 6, 1896 by launching his Aerodrome No. 5 from a catapult attached to the top of a houseboat. It was steam powered, unmanned, and had no landing gear. It weighed less than 25 pounds and had a pair of wings at each end with propellers in the middle. After a 3,300-foot-long flight (ten times longer than any previous heavier-than-air machine), the Aerodrome ("air-runner" in Greek) landed safely in the Potomac River as planned.

The War Department took note of Langley's work and gave him a \$50K grant to develop a machine capable of carrying a pilot; however, he was unsuccessful and gave up his

flight research in 1903. He heard about the Wright brothers and approached them about collaboration, but they politely refused. They probably figured that with his notoriety he would claim success for their achievement. Langley died less than three years after the brother's successful flight at Kitty Hawk, NC in 1903. He never solved the problem of getting his aircraft airborne without a catapult and never developed landing gear. ♦



1988, Scott Number C118, US Airmail, Issue Date: May 14, 1988