NASA Langley Alumni Association

LANGLEY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Looking Forward to an Exciting 2026

March 2026

By Susan McClain, Vice President and Programs Chair

As the new Vice-President and Programs Chair, I am excited to announce our upcoming presenters—but also anxious to hear from you on topics you would be interested in hearing about at the LAA. The Programs Committee, including Neil O'Connor and Sharon Monica Jones, will be meeting soon—please reach out to one of us if you have recommendations.

The LAA kicked off 2026 with a presentation by Amy Radford on her recent family trip to Ireland. The trip fulfilled a long-held wish by her mother, including eight family members, focused on food and history. Amy and her family traveled through 20 of Ireland's 32 counties and across 1575 miles in 10 days.

In February, the LAA welcomed Jeff Herath, Deputy Director, Space Technology and Exploration Directorate, NASA Langley, who presented "Langley and Artemis II: Humanity's Return to the Moon." The presentation, timed to coincide with NASA's planned launch of Artemis II in March 2026, focused on Langley's extensive contributions to the Artemis II project. If you missed the presentation, please check it out on our YouTube channel, or on the Events page of the LAA website.

We have a great slate of presenters planned for the next several months:

- Dr. Trina Dyal, Acting Center Director of NASA Langley Research Center, will provide an update on the state of NASA Langley. As March is Women's History Month, we are especially grateful to have Dr. Dyal with us to share her insights and leadership.
- Our own Rick Ross, Committee Chair for Website and Publications, will present on "Charlatans, Swindlers, and Bilks."
- Lori Ozoroski, Program Manager for Commercial Supersonic Technology Program Manager, will provide an update on X-59 Quesst test flights.
- Neil O'Connor will present on the Langley Air Traffic Operations Lab (ATOL), an air traffic simulation environment that investigates the interactions of manned and unmanned aircraft in a densely populated airspace. We are working on separate dates for a tour of the ATOL for LAA members.
- LAA's annual picnic will be on July 14th. More details to come. ◆

Susan McClain honors Jeff Herath with an LAA mug

Charlie Dunton presents an LAA mug to Amy Radford

In This Issue

2026 LAA Officers

President
Kathy Ferrare

Vice President & Programs Chair
Susan McClain

Treasurer
Ray Rhew

Secretary
Jill Marlowe

Communications Officer
Richard Hueschen

Committee Chairs & Officials

Membership Committee
Amy Radford

Nominating Committee
Susan McClain

Hall of Honor Committee
Mary Wusk

Website & Publications Committee
Rick Ross Amy Radford

IT Committee
Roman Paryz Dan Palumbo
Rick Ross Geoff Tennille

Langley Representatives
Eileen Nelson and Mariya Georgieva

Past President
Dan Palumbo

LAA Board of Directors

Class of 2027
Rich Antcliff Tony Pototzky
Mary DiJoseph Ray Rhew
Susan McClain Geoff Tennille
Craig Ohlhorst

Class of 2028
Mark Ballin Roman Paryz
Charlie Dunton Liliana Richwine
Odilyn Luck Eric Rissling

Class of 2029
Mike Fremaux Amy Radford
Wes Goodman Ray Whipple
Jill Marlowe Dave Young
Neil O'Connor

President's Report

By Kathy Ferrare, President

It was tough to say goodbye to 2025, given the excellent participation of the LAA in December activities. The winter luncheon (see pp. 4–5) provided fun and laughter for the 75 attendees. Conversations were flowing and Charlie and I enjoyed seeing so many people reconnecting! Our "inaugural" Foodbank was a success as we donated $750 and 190 pounds of food totaling 2,400 meals to those in our community—thank you for your generosity! Our membership table at the Director's Social provided the Langley community with the opportunity to talk with our LAA members and learn about our organization.

With four different chilis entered in the Combined Federal Campaign Chili Cook-Off, the LAA scored 4th, 5th (two LAA chilis tied), and 6th place showings! It was particularly rewarding to see the comment from the CFC Representative—"The cook-off was filled with laughter, friendly rivalries, and plenty of taste-testing. Retirees enjoyed reconnecting with colleagues, sharing stories, and proving that their contributions to Langley extend far beyond their years of service."

LAA at the CFC Chili Cook-Off

Our January meetings were filled with Thank You's to both members who served on our Board (Charlie Dunton, Mary DiJoseph, Dave Hinton, George Allison, and Wayne Richie) and to the new 2026 Board members. The Class of 2029 Members-at-Large include Mike Fremaux, Wes Goodman, Jill Marlowe, Neil O'Connor, Amy Radford, Ray Whipple, and Dave Young. Our new committee chairs are Amy Radford, Membership Chair, and Mary Beth Wusk, Hall of Honor Chair.

January also saw the election of a new slate of officers for the LAA. Susan McClain was elected as Vice President and Jill Marlowe was elected as Secretary. Ray Rhew, Richard Hueschen, and I will remain in our previous roles as Treasurer, Communications Officer, and President, respectively.

In this new year, we look forward to exciting monthly presentations (see Susan's article on page 1 for details), additional opportunities to meet, expanding our membership, and increasing the LAA's involvement through volunteer opportunities!

For those who have asked about information and materials to provide to prospective members, here is a list of documents and websites to use when talking to people; these also have links on the front page of the LAA website. ◆

- 2025 LAA Annual Report
- 2026 LAA Brochure
- YouTube channel (videos of our monthly speaker presentations) https://www.youtube.com/@LangleyAlumniAssociation
- Facebook (follow our FB page) https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61581871535636

To the world, you may be one person,
but to one person, you may be the world.

— Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss)

Membership Report

By Amy Radford, Membership Chair

The LAA ended the calendar year with 302 members strong. An additional 15 members joined this year, bringing our total to 317!

I would like to give Dave Hinton a shout-out for his patience as he transitions the role of Membership Chair over to me. I am grateful he has agreed to continue to support the committee. He has done an excellent job documenting the workflow and processes for this committee and possesses a wealth of history and knowledge.

As I learn how things operate, I see opportunities for us to automate and streamline some steps within the application and badging processes. Now that we have a few folks to help the committee, we will be working on several initiatives this year:

- Update the LAA overview video
- Streamline and automate the application and badging processes
- Update and organize records and processes

As we progress, we will provide updates to the LAA membership. If you have any suggestions for improvements, please contact me, Dave Hinton, or Bill Tomek with your ideas. ◆

Remember!

March 10: Dr. Trina Dyal
NASA Langley Acting Center Dir
State of NASA Langley

April 14: Rick Ross
LAA Member
Charlatans, Swindlers, & Bilks

May 12: Lori Ozoroski
Deputy Project Manager
Civil Supersonics, High-Speed Flight Project
Quesst Project Update
(X-59 Soars: New Era in Supersonic Flight Begins)

Treasury Update

By Ray Rhew, Treasurer

The financial status of the organization is strong and well positioned to execute our 2026 spending plan. A new ad hoc committee is forming to establish a process and guidelines for donation opportunities. This includes reviewing non-discretionary funding level needs and exploring ideas to acquire funds other than through dues collections. We are also exploring and executing investment options to help improve our financial situation to increase donation funds available. Yvonne Delapenta has graciously again agreed to perform the yearly financial audit. Please thank her if you get the chance.

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

A Second Home

By Robert Moses

Mars holds a unique place within our solar system as the only known planet with the resources necessary to create and sustain a second civilization—but there will be many challenges to overcome. Through in-situ resource utilization (ISRU), a team of humans and robotics can extract readily-available water, hydrogen, and oxygen from underneath the regolith, and extract carbon and oxygen from the atmosphere. The regolith also contains numerous minerals. Combined with solar and nuclear power, these essential elements provide an environment which can sustain life and provide necessary energy and construction material, including steel and concrete.

However, construction of infrastructure on Mars is more difficult and hazardous than on Earth due to its extreme cold, vulnerability to meteorite impacts and radiation, and seismic activity. Site selection, preparation, and construction will be critical. ◆

From the upcoming article from the March/April 2026 issue of Civil Engineering, the magazine of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

VASBA Supports Virginia's Aerospace Day

By Jack Schlank

VASBA supported Virginia's Aerospace Day February 4th in Richmond by coordinating and participating in industry meetings on Capitol Hill with the General Assembly and sponsoring the 2026 VABA Aviation, Aerospace and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Legislative Reception. The latest innovations in aviation, aerospace, and AAM were presented during the Legislative Reception. This year, Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger, Lieutenant Governor Ghazala Hashmi, members of the Governor's Cabinet, and members of the Virginia General Assembly were all invited to attend the event.

Meetings with the lawmakers were handled by VASBA, NASA, the Virginia Space Grant Consortium, and the Virginia Spaceport Authority. A special thanks goes to VASBA's Steve Dunn for organizing and supporting our 14 teams who conducted 83 of those meetings, and to Kinsey Couch and Ashley Dittberner for crewing the VASBA booth during the reception. ◆

LAA Winter Luncheon

Surf Rider Poquoson

Graf Zeppelin Issues

By Geoff Tennille

The 1930 Graf Zeppelin airmail issues are among the most desirable US stamps for collectors; however, they did not sell well because they could only be used for mail on the restricted zeppelin routes between Europe, South America, and US, and the price of the stamps was equivalent to a workman's wages for a week. After the Hindenburg disaster in 1937, the US Post Office ordered the remaining stock of stamps (about 3 million stamps) to be destroyed. All the Graf Zeppelins were grounded. Today, a mint (unused) set of the three stamps has a market value of about $1,800.

Scott numbers C13, C14, and C15 (from top to bottom)

Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin (1838–1917) was a German general and engineer who invented the modern dirigible. It had a terrible flaw, tragically displayed when the hydrogen in the balloon was ignited by a spark as the dirigible was being moored in Lakehurst, New Jersey, with a large loss of life. The Graf Zeppelin (Count Zeppelin) was given to the US as war reparations for WWI. The Count never saw his dirigibles make intercontinental flights. They did provide a very luxurious way to cross the Atlantic Ocean. All modern dirigibles use non-flammable helium for lift. ◆

Edgar Allan Poe—Scientist, too?

By Chuck Byvik

Raised in Richmond, attended University of Virginia, served at Ft. Monroe, poet, writer, and editor, Poe is generally known as a writer of macabre stories and poetry. Was Poe versed in STEM? He could have known there were seven planets, some rudimentary understanding of electricity and magnetism, Isaac Newton's classical mechanics, and mathematics including Euclid's geometry.

Geometry and cryptology elements are obvious elements of his "Gold Bug" short story. Many of his essays challenged readers to solve cryptological problems. In his short story, "The Pit and the Pendulum," Poe describes the torture room in geometric terms —acute and obtuse angles—and the shape of the room as a "lozenge" (rhombus). He knew mathematics—did he have a working knowledge of science?

The pendulum seen in grandfather clocks is the time keeper—the period of its oscillation depends on the square root of its length. For example, the period of a one-foot long pendulum is a bit longer than one second; for one four times longer, a bit more than two seconds. Is the pendulum in Poe's story consistent with the science or is he employing poetic license for dramatic effect?

Poe's pendulum is a steel-bladed scythe descending bit by bit, threatening to slice the prisoner in half. Poe writes that the victim's future would be determined in "some ten to twelve vibrations" and states that there is "yet one minute, and I felt that the struggle would be over."

> ***"Down—certainly, relentlessly down! It vibrated within three inches of my bosom!"***

Does the victim have one minute? Does the "ten to twelve" vibrations of this pendulum correspond to at least one minute? Earlier in the story, the victim notes that the ceiling of this prison is "some thirty or forty feet overhead." The period of Poe's Pendulum is between six and seven seconds and "some ten to twelve vibrations" would provide the one minute estimated by the prisoner—Poe is presenting a fascinating story consistent with science!

Poe's last major work, *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, was published in 1848—one year before his death. He postulates that the universe began from a single "primordial particle" that expands forming the current universe—the Big Bang theory was proposed 80 years later! He also presents a solution to Olbers' Paradox of why the night sky is dark. Edgar Allan Poe—versed in STEM. ◆

(These works and his many publications can be accessed on the internet.)

LANGLEY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
A tax-exempt organization

The LAA Newsletter is published quarterly. Please submit articles for publication to Rick Ross (info@larcalumni.org) no later than the 10th of February, May, August, or November for publication the following month. Please contact Dick Hueschen (info@larcalumni.org) to subscribe or unsubscribe.