

**NASA Academy Alumni Association (NAAA)
Electronic Newsletter**

Vol. 1 #1 March 1998

David Kalman, editor

Please send all questions or comments to David Kalman,
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1. Note from the editor

Welcome to the first issue of the *new* NAAA electronic newsletter. The current plans are for this newsletter to be produced monthly, and distributed electronically via email. Parts or all of the newsletter will also be copied into HTML format and placed on the NAAA web site.

As the newsletter begins to get going, it will gradually grow in both size and depth-of-content. This newsletter is for everyone; not just a means for the officers to report to the association, but for the member to correspond with each other. The NAAA is for the members, so take advantage of it.

For those who wish to contribute articles, please send them to me directly via email. I cannot promise when or if I will add them to a newsletter, but the goal is to get everyone involved. Please note, I will create the newsletter in Microsoft Word, so artwork is accepted. However, when I send it out, I convert the entire document to text only and email it out. The full word version will be available for those who wish to see it / place it on the NAAA web.

This issue was compiled on short notice, so it may be a bit sparse (only 14 pages :), and people may not have had time to prepare their submissions. I apologize for this, but I felt it would be better to proceed with the issue than to delay another month. I hope everyone enjoys this first issue, and will be looking forward to receiving the monthly issues!!

David Kalman, Editor

2. President's Report

This week, two interesting events occurred on the small side of the space world. A Pegasus rocket successfully launched SNOE, a Student Explorer Demonstration Initiative (STEDI) satellite built by the University of Colorado at an extremely low cost (under \$5M for the satellite bus). Also this week, NASA decided to cancel the \$54M Clark satellite, being built by Orbital, due to cost overruns. In the space world, \$50 million is seen as rather small. An order of magnitude less, the funding level of SNOE, is many times seen as too little to accomplish anything. But the smaller mission, not even directly backed by NASA but rather by the Universities Space Research Association (USRA), brought success. Small size and small budgets are not always handicaps- they are sometimes advantages.

The NAAA is tiny, but we have an amazing array of talent and diversity among us. We're looking at a lot of impressive, challenging projects this year and in the future. First of all, I'd like to thank David Kalman for putting together this newsletter. We'll be putting it out electronically on a monthly basis, along with one or two longer hard copy versions per year. I'm sure David will be on the constant lookout for articles, and we welcome contributions from any and all alums. Here's a chance to see your name in 'print' and spread a little of your unique knowledge and perspective among the rest of us. We all have a lot to learn from each other, and this is a good way to 'spread the wealth' by writing about subjects of interest to each of us.

We also have a number of projects underway this year. Catherine Venturini is leading our effort to influence change at Marshall Space Flight Center. The NASA Academy at MSFC, as most of you know, was 'suspended' this year. The letter writing campaign Catherine is organizing is an important show of support and of the importance of the Academy to young people and the future. We all understand the value of the Academy to each of us. Whether or not you went to MSFC, please adapt the sample letter distributed on email and send it in. Only with a strong show of support from alumni across the country will we be able to follow up with behind-the-scenes lobbying and really make a difference. We're beginning to plan our annual nationwide event- last year's kickoff banquet at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC was a great success, and we'll be organizing a working group to plan this year's event very soon. The NAAA also has the opportunity to fly a payload on the Shuttle using the Space Experiment Module (SEM), a flight opportunity developed by the second NASA Academy at Goddard. We're investigating the possibility of building hardware and flying a payload by coordinating groups of alums around the country! Jeff Nettles is already running the Kids In Space (KIS) program, which consists of an essay contest to fly essays on the Shuttle, and the opportunity for kids to send their names to Mars. This program is high profile and very exciting, and Jeff's updates on email contain lots of opportunities to participate.

Finally, we're organizing our financial working group to raise funds for this year. We would like to provide scholarships to a student from each Academy. Brian Roberts has begun to organize a group to approach this challenge, and any volunteers to help would be greatly appreciated. We'd also like to start having regional events ranging from talks to tours to social events around the country. If you're interested in organizing something, let me know and if you hold an informal gathering of alumni, send out an email telling us all what a great time you had!

I'm really looking forward to what we can do and to the potential for the group we've got here. The NAAA is not merely a short-term investment- we have many adventures ahead of us, and having a group of people like this behind us throughout our careers will be a great advantage to each of us. Look to the web site at www.nasa-academy.org for all kinds of news and helpful information. I look forward to getting to know and working with many of you in the year ahead. Talia lacta Est!

Regards,
David Goldstein
NAAA President
David@aeroastro.com

3. Vice President - Finance - report

NAAA Financial Update
Brian Roberts, Vice President, Finance

After raising over \$9,000 in fiscal year 1997, including over \$1,600 in donations for alumni and friends of the Academy and over \$3,000 in corporate and Space Grant support, the NAAA has big financial plans for the current fiscal year. I'll cover the plans in greater detail in future editions of this newsletter and on the NAAA homepage, but I wanted to give a quick overview:

* NASA Academy Research Associate scholarships

[3 (possibly 4) scholarships @ \$3,000/scholarship = \$12,000]

In the past, on average, there have been two or three students each year that apply to the Academy without support from their Space Grant (I remember one student in particular from Ohio in the summer of 1994 quite well :-). To avoid the frustration the selection panel often feels of having to turn the applicant down, the NAAA will be offering three or four scholarships to the Academy program each year. The support for these scholarships would come from corporate donations in the short term and an endowment in the future.

* NASA Academy summer group project support

[3 (possibly 4) Centers @ \$500/Center = \$2,000]

We're looking to extend the support the NAAA gave the group project at GSFC last summer to Dryden and Ames (and possibly Kennedy) this summer. Once the RAs have selected their summer project, the NAAA will provide the organization for them to get in touch with Space Grants for financial donations. This provides a wonderful opportunity for the Space Grants to stay involved with the Academy program during the summer and get something in return.

* Establishing an endowment

There is a small group investigating the best way to establish an endowment that will be used to support Research Associate scholarships, NASA Academy summer group projects, and NAAA projects. If you have experience with establishing endowments or would like to help, please contact Andrew Gray at agray@vlsi9.gsfc.nasa.gov. Those present at last February's founders meeting discussed yearly dues and decided that instead of requiring alumni to make contributions to remain an active member, we would instead rely on donations from alumni and friends of the Academy. Although most of the goals discussed above will be paid for from corporate or Space Grant donations, there are a few small projects and always general operating expenses that require donations. We are asking that alumni that have a steady source of income donate \$50 and students or those without a steady income source donate \$25. All contributions can be sent to:

NASA Academy Alumni Association, Inc.
7216 Morrison Drive
Greenbelt, MD 20770-2444

Additional details and up-to-date information on the financial accomplishments and plans for the NAAA, can be found on the NAAA web page in the financial section-

<http://www.nasa-academy.org/finances/>

If you have any suggestions, please feel free to contact me at broberts@ssl.umd.edu

4. Vice President - Operations - report

As the Vice President of Operations and the person responsible for "NAAA communications," I am really excited to see the start of the *new* NAAA Newsletter. This newsletter will be a monthly forum for the NAAA officers to keep all of the alumni informed and involved with the activities of the NAAA. Through the "where are they now" section it will make it possible for everyone to eventually introduce themselves to the growing membership. There will also be special articles and features of interest to all.

March promises to be a busy month, as Chris Lewicki, Brian Roberts, and I have been working on several initiatives involving the online database, email lists, and web pages that should be coming on line over the next few

weeks. In the meantime, I am looking for a couple volunteers who would like to be more involved with the NAAA over the next several months.

Newsletter: We are looking for two people to help out with the newsletter in the future; someone with HTML experience who would be willing to do the minor formatting necessary to post the monthly newsletter on the NAAA web page, and someone who would like to be involved in putting together the bi-annual "special edition" that will come out in the spring and fall.

Membership Chair: We are looking for someone who would like to serve as the NAAA membership chair through the remainder of 1998. This person would be responsible for making sure updates to alumni contact information get recorded in the membership database and would assist me with the drive to register new members at the end of the summer.

If you would like to volunteer you can contact me directly or send a message to naaa@nasa-academy.org. Thanks to David Kalman for stepping up to make the newsletter a reality!

Mike Moreau (moreau@colorado.edu)
GSFC '94
NAAA VP Operations

5. Special report - NAAA web site update

Have you pointed your browsers to <http://www.nasa-academy.org/> lately? If not, you're in for a pleasant surprise -- the NAAA homepage has been given a facelift! This section of the monthly newsletter will highlight additions to the web pages.

The new look for the NAAA's home on the web was done to make it easier for you to find what you're looking for. The major sections are:

- * History of the NAAA -- A brief overview of how and why the NASA Academy Alumni Association was born.
- * Frequently Asked Questions -- A quick reference to the important things you need to know about how the NAAA operates, what your obligation is, how to get involved, and how to stay in touch with the NAAA.
- * Executive Council -- Pictures and contact information for present and past members of the NAAA Executive Council.
- * Board of Advisors -- Once the NAAA Board of Advisors is established, this section will contain their picture and a biographical sketch.

- * Annual Report -- At the end of each year the President of the NAAA will compile an annual report which will appear in this section.
- * Constitution and Bylaws -- Copies of the NAAA Constitution and associated bylaws.
- * Finances -- Links to the final balance sheet for fiscal year 1997 and a list of financial ideas. The new financial strategic plan for the NAAA as well as the fiscal year 1998 budget will be added soon.
- * Electronic Phonebook -- This will be completed in the coming months and will contain information from the membership forms that nearly everyone filled out last year. It will allow you to search for information on your fellow alumni.
- * Meeting Minutes -- Minutes to every Executive Council, working group, or general telecon that the NAAA holds are posted here (sometimes within hours). This is probably the best place to check to stay up-to-date on the weekly progress of the NAAA.
- * Newsletters -- Copies of both the monthly electronic newsletters as well as the biannual "bigger" newsletter.
- * Membership Form -- HTML version of the form that you need to fill out every year to stay an active member of the NAAA. If you haven't filled this out since the election in November, please do so now.
- * Projects -- A list of projects that the NAAA is currently working on.
- * Working Groups -- At certain times during the year, small groups of alumni come together and form groups to work on particular issues. This area is used to let you what issues those working groups are investigating and how you can get involved.
- * Alumni Resources -- A place to go to help you pick graduate schools, find summer and year long internships, or find a job. An alumni message forum was recently added to allow you to hold discussions with other alumni.
- * Comment Form -- A way for surfers to provide feedback to the webmasters and NAAA.

To make it easier for you (or visitors to the pages) to stay informed of any changes or additions to the pages, there is now an announcement window on the main page. Simply highlight the line in the announcement window you're interested in and then press the "Go to selected announcement!" button.

Since April 8th of last year, we have had over 5,000 visits to the NAAA homepage, an average of 16 hits per day! If you have any comments, find any errors, or have an idea for something you would like to contribute or would like to see on the pages, please feel free to use the online comment form or e-mail us at naaa@nasa-academy.org.

Happy surfing!

6. Special Report - Grad Schools Survey

(Editor's note: This is a reprint of a posting from December. Sorry if it seems to be a repeat. Jacob asked me to resubmit it in hopes of spurning better responses. This is exactly the type of activity that I talk about below in my editorial, and since Jacob is willing to coordinate all of the work, the least we can do is support him by dropping a quick blurb to him. I know it took me the two messages to respond; hopefully others of you will also respond.)

Greetings and Happy Holidays to One and All,

I know a few of you will be filling out graduate applications over the holiday break and might still have some questions concerning programs, schools, and just what in the heck you are getting into. Well, the NAAA has decided to lend a hand on the issue. There is now a preliminary "graduate information" site on the NAAA home page. It's URL is:

<http://www.nasa-academy.org/resources/gradschool/>

(or you can go to the main NAAA page at <http://www.nasa-academy.org/> and select graduate school resource guide from the announcement window)

This question about "what grad schools should I apply for" was brought up in at least the 1996 and 1997 GSFC Academies. And probably others right? Hopefully, this will help facilitate the process more readily to the perspective student. Due note, that only 3 disciplines have been listed so far:

- 1) Planetary Sciences
- 2) Remote Sensing/Earth System Science
- 3) Space Studies

We expect that number to grow. And thus with more input and suggestions coming in, we can add to the list. The criteria selected for posting the listed schools were as follows:

- *) Academic Quality
- *) Researcher input from the respective disciplines
- *) Significant contribution to the space industry

The disciplines listed so far are a reflection of the fields that I and a few others are familiar with. To add to this list, we not only need suggestions, but people within the NAAA who are familiar with the top schools in their respective disciplines for guidance and consultation. Here are the following fields we would like to see added to the graduate information page:

Astronomy

Electrical Engineering

Mechanical Engineering (the SSL at Maryland has already been suggested)

Physics

As you can see, those four fields alone constitute a bulk of the degrees reflected within the alumni. Other fields are sure to follow, like biology and computer engineering. If you are interested in consulting for (dare I say?) this "committee" please send an e-mail to me (jyates@denali.gsfc.nasa.gov) so we can start the process expeditiously. I know the timing of this could have been better with the holidays and such, however most of the school's graduate application deadlines are due in January. And I wanted to get the ball rolling on this for some of our colleagues in the alumni who could benefit from this. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully yours,
Jacob Yates
GSFC '96

7. Editorial

A brief, passing comment that I received while setting up the newsletter on email was the following comment: "Why should I pay / get involved with NAAA?" I have heard this comment a lot in the past few years, and here are my thoughts (editor's prerogative, I get a page to use as my soapbox ☺.) This is not directed at any one individual, but what I feel is a pervasive feeling not only within this organization, but many other organization that I belong to, and in society in general. Therefore, the wording is of the first part is general, as I will submit this editorial to some of the professional societies that I belong to.

There are two reasons why people join groups or communities: to get something from the community, or to give something back. Hopefully, one joins for a combination of these two reasons. So the first question one must ask is: "What am I getting out of this organization? What am I giving back?" These questions involve items such as news, contact with friends, maintaining a set of professional contacts, donating time or money, etc. Everyone must answer these questions for themselves.

The follow-up questions: "Why not? Why am I not getting benefits from this organization? After all, it is an organization that is supposed to support me." Conversely, "Why am I not contributing? Why shouldn't I give back to this organization? Is there something in particular that I don't like about this organization?"

Once these questions are answered, the big questions should be asked: "1. What will it take to make enough meaningful changes that I want to become an active part of this organization, and make it into an organization that I will proudly tell people that I belong to? 2. Is it worth the effort involved to make these changes, or is it better to devote my limited time, energy, and money to other causes, rather than this one?" These are the key questions that most people are forced to ask themselves every day.

A general motto that one should have when belonging to any group is the following: "I personally am proud to be a member of this organization. I realize that it is important to have many people volunteering and doing different jobs. I realize that it does take a lot of effort, and other people's time and effort are also valuable. I may not have a lot to contribute; I may only be able to give a little money, or only attend meetings every once in a while. But I believe that the goals of this organization are good, and that this organization does support me, and that it is my duty to try to give back to this organization, if only in a limited way. Because if this organization goes away, a piece of the overall society that I have built, and consequently a piece of my identity and myself, is missing. And not only do I lose in this, but all of my friends, and **society** as a whole, lose out as well."

So what does all this preaching mean to those of you in NAAA? It means that NAAA is still in its formative period, and it is up to all of us to shape and mold this organization. Everyone's input is appreciated, and everyone has a chance to make NAAA serve their desires. Simply announce what you would like to see, and see if others have the same ideas, and boom, people can start to talk and discuss and accomplish almost anything. Hopefully, this newsletter will be an excellent conduit to spur on this discussion.

Personally, I lived in a college fraternity for four years, then went to grad school. I started two SEDS chapters, and was president of SEDS USA. I attended NASA Academy. I have belong to the same computer club for over a dozen years, and served as its newsletter editor. I belong to numerous professional societies in town, and try to attend the meetings on a semi-regular basis. But aside for my immediate family (dad, sister, and mother), the people that I feel that I have the closest personal bonds to are the NAAA members, particularly the people from my academy and the people in the Colorado

region. And I feel that editing this newsletter will be a great way to give back to these people some of the joy and support that they have lent to my life.

What would I like to see from NAAA, and its newsletter? Some of the ideas are listed below. My main wishes on a personal level are to maintain contact with NAAA and my academy, maintain a network of professional contact to help me with technical information when I need it, possible help in finding a new job if I tire of the one I currently have, and get a chance to hear about all the neat space projects that are going on, rather than the few that my work focuses on. I greatly enjoy the Colorado reunions (I am going to one on March 4th), as it is great to see old friends and just talk, whether it be technical, general space related (Star Trek), or just what is going on in our personal lives. What do others want to see? Please send me ideas, and I will maintain a running (unedited) list (although the entire list may not be included in the newsletter).

The simple statement is that yes, this is a call to action. Become a part of the NAAA, and make it a useful group for you. Get involved: write articles, raise money, volunteer to lead projects that are of special interest to you. Let all us work to making the NAAA into a group we are proud to be members of.

8. Where are they now?

This is the first installment of the "Where are they now" column. I hope that people enjoy this column, as it is a great way to keep track of all your friends from the academies and lend a personal touch to the newsletter. Hopefully, this column will also help people who are relocating or are looking for jobs or just information points of contact.

Because I did not specify any particular format, this first issue is not as organized as I would like. For future issues, I would suggest the following format for the submissions:

Name:

email:

Home contact info:

Work company:

Work title:

Work contact info:

Major work project(s):

Discussion (2-3 paragraphs, can be either or both personal and work related)

So here they are, GSFC Academy 1 (1993), in their own words:

Jim Brice

(Editor's note: Yes, I know Jim wasn't a student member of NA 1, but he was a staff member, and he submitted info. I am thinking of doing a NAAA staff issue when we get done with the student updates.)

At the beginning of this January I started a new position as an engineer for my company, Boeing. I am supporting the Earth Science Systems Program Office (code 170) at Goddard. At present I am working on two tasks: developing unpiloted aerial vehicles (UAVs) as a science platform and development of a survey for tracking emerging satellite subsystem technology. At the moment I am not being very productive, spending the majority of my time learning about the various systems of spacecraft for the one task, and learning the ins and outs of the UAV business for the other. However, I have been invited to participate this spring in the selection for the Goddard Academy students, and expect to be involved in the summer activities to whatever level I can.

Warren Brown

I completed my Master's project last fall and am now submerging into my thesis work (astronomy, Harvard University). I've found teaching to be one of the most rewarding things I do, as well as leading outings (bike trips are my favorite) for the graduate students. Because human interaction is (personally) more worthwhile than my research, I've applied to be a Resident Tutor at one of the undergrad Houses. I will also continue my travels with my U of A professor, this year to Zimbabwe and South Africa. I still visit U of A every time I'm observing on a telescope in Arizona, so if you're in either Tucson or Boston, let me know because I'd like to say "Hi!".

Warren Brown

Aprille Joy Ericsson-Jackson

There is an website that has a short blurb about me and the award I will be receiving next week. I am in the special recognition section of awards. Check it out :)

www.ccgmag.com

Aprille

Charles (Trey) McDowell

I'm still working Titan Mission Analysis at Astronautics. I worked a Titan II mission scheduled for launch in May (from Vandenberg) and I'm currently working the range safety stuff for the next Titan IV/IUS mission scheduled for launch late this year (from Cape Canaveral). I'm still hoping that the company will actually send me to Vandenberg or the Cape to see a launch! I've been thinking about a Master's in Computer Science but haven't committed yet.

That's pretty much it for the professional stuff.

My personal life has been pretty uneventful. I'm still into trains, and increasingly into commercial aviation (thought about sending a resume to Southwest Airlines for a job opening in schedule planning). I'm designing a model railroad for the train club here at Astronautics. I'm heading to California and Seattle in mid-March, Seattle to tour Boeing (and fly Alaska Airlines) and Stockton, California, for a train meet. Hmm, on the music side, I'm singing in my church choir (they were truly desperate) and I'm trying to find the time to learn the Dvorak song cycles to accompany a friend (and great tenor) who wants to perform these in the Czech Republic.

Troy Savoie

After SAI, I returned to LSU (Geaux Tigers!) for my final year of undergraduate school. I graduated in mechanical engineering in May, 1994, then moved to Austin, Texas to work for Applied Materials (semiconductor equipment manufacturer). In the fall of 1995, I began graduate school at the University of Texas; I finished my MSME in the summer of 1997. After finishing the degree, I started working full time for the department which sponsored my thesis research. I will most likely return to graduate study within the next year or so to finish my formal education.

Currently, I am working on computer modeling, simulation, control and optimization of the power distribution system in concept hybrid electric combat vehicles (tanks). The primary thrust of the organization for which I work is the research and development of electromagnetic weapon technology (railguns), so I occasionally delve into this area as well.

Heather Thomas

After spending a year in Florence, Italy, I returned to work at Goddard. I am now a full-time employee of SSAI and work as an on-site contractor for code 924, Experimental Instrumentation. I am working in the miniature-lidar program. During my first six months, I built laser transmitters which will be used to track aerosols and polar stratospheric clouds. Although these transmitters were originally slated for an Antarctic lidar, the instrument is actually going to be going to Greenland this May.

Currently, I am working on the fiber-coupling of semiconductor flared amps which are used in the mini-lidar program. I have also enrolled at the University of Maryland as an advanced special student and hope to enroll part-time next fall in the Electrical Engineering department and work on my master's degree while working full-time at GSFC.

Srimal Wangu

I graduated from MIT in spring of 1995 with my Masters in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and my Bachelors in EE and Physics. After a relaxing summer home, I started work at Lockheed Martin in Pittsfield, MA as a participant in the Engineering Leadership Development Program. I completed the program in summer, 1996. After a brief visit to India to visit my grandmother, I started work on the X-33 Single Stage to Orbit Launch Vehicle program at Lockheed Martin Sanders in Nashua, NH (#1 city in the US!). I am currently a systems engineer on the X-33 program here, working on the Vehicle Health Monitoring System. Last year I had the chance to visit Lockheed Martin SkunkWorks and NASA/Dryden in CA, which was quite an adventure (I got to see the X-34, a number of SR-71s, and even the SCA up close!). Right now I'm keeping busy by taking a class in Cosmic Evolution (for fun) at Harvard Extension school.

9. Next Issue

Issue deadline: 23 March 5 PM MST

Planned articles:

- President's message (and maybe a president's editorial)
- VP - Finance message
- VP - Operations message
- Editorial (David Kalman) (may skip it to save space)
- Special report - MSFC letter writing campaign (Catherine C. Venturini)
- Special report - Updates on mini-reunions (Denver in March, Barcelona, etc.)
- Special report - Brief blurb on special happenings planned for each academy this summer
- Where are they now - GSFC Academy 2 (1994)

10. Ideas for future issues

For later issues, I would like to have on tap as filler and for later focus articles on the following:

1. How to choose a grad school / using NAAA to help get you into a grad school / using NAA when visiting grad schools
2. How to play up your academy experience to help you get a job
3. How to get graduate research fellowships
4. How to properly thank your space grant / inform them of what you did this summer (a great start of fall article)
5. How to help your space grant recruit quality people for future academies
6. How to get kids / college students interested in space (Chris, can we steal stuff from the SEDS site? :)
7. Stories of how the academies help you get to where your are now (jobs, grad schools, etc.)
8. Misc. humorous reminiscing of academies past.
9. "Where are they now?" sections for all academies, plus one for admin staff (Dr. Soffen, Jim Brice, etc.)