

universe

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Cassini provides its first snapshot of Jupiter

By Guy Webster

Above image of Jupiter was taken by the Cassini imaging science narrow angle camera through the blue filter on Oct. 1 at a distance of 84 million kilometers (52 million miles) from Jupiter. The smallest features that can be seen are about 500 kilometers (about 300 miles) across.



NASA / JPL / University of Arizona

Scientists are extremely pleased with the first image of Jupiter, received Oct. 4, from the Cassini spacecraft, which is closing in on a fly-by of the huge planet.

The image, first in a series of images and other measurements of Jupiter which Cassini will be making over the next several months as it flies by Jupiter, clearly shows the exceptional resolving power of the imaging system even at the distance of more than 52 million miles (84 million kilometers). Clouds, storms and latitudinal bands are clearly seen in the image. A steady stream of ever-closer color and black-and-white images will be released in the weeks ahead.

The new image of Jupiter is available online at <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/pictures/cassinijupiter>. It is also available from the University of Arizona's Lunar and Planetary Laboratory at <http://ciclops.lpl.arizona.edu>.

"This has been our first opportunity to exercise the Cassini flight and ground systems in a mode very similar to how we expect to operate at Saturn, and I'm extremely pleased with how it is working," said Cassini Program Manager Bob Mitchell at JPL.

"The spacecraft is steadier than any spacecraft I've ever seen," said Dr. Carolyn Porco of the University of Arizona, team leader for the camera on Cassini. "It's so steady, the images are unexpectedly sharp and clear, even in the longest exposures taken and most challenging spectral regions."

At the same time, JPL mission engineers are working with their counterparts at the European Space Agency (ESA) on a concern with the communication system on ESA's Huygens probe, which is attached to the Cassini spacecraft. Huygens is to drop from the Cassini spacecraft in late 2004 onto the large moon of Saturn called Titan as the Cassini orbiter begins its own exploration of the ringed planet and its system of moons.

The concern, which was identified in early September with tests at ESA's operations center at Darmstadt, Germany, involves the radio receiver supplied by ESA to receive signals from the Huygens probe as it descends through Titan's atmosphere.

According to the tests, the signal sent to Cassini from Huygens will change in frequency as both spacecraft rapidly change position in relation to each other, much as a train whistle appears to change in pitch as it passes by a person standing alongside the tracks (called the Doppler effect). The engineering test found that the ESA-supplied receiver carried on the U.S. Cassini main spacecraft could not receive all the data from the Huygens probe.

"Cassini has given us the first tantalizing taste of its enormous scientific potential," said Dr. Jay Bergstralh, Cassini program scientist at NASA Headquarters. "The spacecraft has operated perfectly since its launch three years ago, so we can look forward to even greater things in the coming months. We are, of course, concerned about communications with the Huygens probe, but the best minds in the business are working on solutions."

ESA and NASA mission scientists and engineers are developing options to address the situation, including changing the trajectory of Cassini during the Huygens probe's entry into Titan's atmosphere. A plan of action is expected to be ready by next summer for review and approval by NASA and ESA officials.

2001: a space 'Odyssey' for Mars orbiter

By Mary Hardin

As NASA's next spacecraft to Mars begins a crucial round of testing in preparations for launch next year, the mission has a new name: 2001 Mars Odyssey.

"The year 2001 has a special significance to many of us who recall the thrill of reading the book and watching the movie '2001: A Space Odyssey,'" said Scott Hubbard, Mars Program Director at NASA Headquarters. "It seemed fitting to name the mission not only in honor of the story and the movie, but also to herald the start of our new long-term journey to explore Mars."

Hubbard added that Arthur C. Clarke, author of "2001: A Space Odyssey," enthusiastically endorsed the new mission name.

The orbiter is designed to find out what Mars is made of, detect water and shallow buried ice and study the radiation environment. Odyssey began thermal vacuum testing in last September at Lockheed Martin Astronautics in Denver, where it was designed and built.

"It's exciting to have the new name, and going into the thermal vacuum testing chamber is the next big step for the spacecraft," said Project Manager George Pace, adding that testing will simulate the full range of temperatures the spacecraft will be subjected to during its mission.

"We have done several things in response to the NASA review board recommendations to ensure mission success, like adding additional staff and transitioning development personnel to operations. I'm confident we have a solid mission," Pace added.

The orbiter will study minerals on the surface and measure the amount of hydrogen in the shallow subsurfaces of the planet, which will give scientists clues about the presence of water, either past or present. It will also provide information on the structure of the Martian surface and on the geological processes that may have caused it. Finally, the orbiter will take all-important measurements of the planet's radiation environment so potential health risks to future human explorers can be evaluated. To do this, the spacecraft carries three science instruments: The Thermal Emission Imaging System, the Gamma Ray Spectrometer, and the Mars Radiation Environment Experiment.

2001 Mars Odyssey is scheduled for launch on April 7, 2001, with a scheduled arrival at Mars next October.

In-situ laboratory dedicated

By Mark Whalen



Bob Brown / JPL Photos

The new Building 317, above, will initially support the 2003 Mars Exploration Rover Project. Left: Facilities Division Manager Bruce Fischer, left, and Mars 2003 Project Manager Pete Theisinger dedicate the facility.

JPL has dedicated the new In-Situ Laboratory, a facility that will be initially dedicated to the 2003 Mars Exploration Rover Project.

The new Building 317, located just east of Building 303, will serve as a testbed for the development of identical twin rovers the Laboratory is building to send to Mars in spring 2003. The first rover is scheduled to land Jan. 4, 2004, with the second rover to touch down 51 days later.

The facility will include clean rooms for flight instrument and avionics assembly, a software development lab and a 5-meter (17-foot) high bay that will serve as a rover surface testbed to supplement the outdoor Mars Yard. The high bay "sandbox" includes a 2-ton crane and a public viewing gallery.

During operations, the facility will provide for operations development and surface sequence validation for the rovers.

Project staff have already begun to occupy the new building. The project offices will be located in modular offices adjacent to the building to house up to 120 people, said Chuck Manning of the Device Research and Applications Section 346, who redesigned the facility to meet requirements for surface mobility systems test bed. Ernest Breig of Section 661 was the project manager during design and construction.

Pete Theisinger, Mars 2003 project manager, noted that the facility will serve as "Mars on Earth" for the project both during its development and all through Mars surface operations in 2004.

News Briefs



Bolinda Kahr

Kahr wins Women at Work medal

BOLINDA KAHR, deputy manager of the Mission Execution and Automation Section 368, has been named the winner of the 2000 Medal of Excellence Award by Women At Work, a non-profit career and job resource center based in Pasadena.

Kahr, who has worked at JPL for 29 years, was nominated for the award by JPL's Advisory Council for Women based on her ability to lead and motivate people. She was also cited for assuring recognition and rewards when objectives are met and for effectively promoting JPL relationships with high-technology small businesses.

A native of Pasadena, Kahr holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Cal State Los Angeles and has also completed numerous JPL and NASA management certification programs. She is scheduled to receive her award at an Oct. 19 luncheon honoring her and other Woman at Work Medal of Excellence Award winners.

Galileo Europa team honored

JPL's Galileo Europa Mission team last month was awarded an Honorary Group Diploma for Astronautics by the International Aeronautic Federation.

The award was presented at the federation's general conference in Sweden on Sept. 27. The team was nominated for the award by the National Aeronautic Association.

Honor Awards nominations due Oct. 31

Laboratory employees are invited to nominate individuals or groups for NASA Honor Awards to be presented in 2001.

See the procedure titled "NASA Honor Awards, Rev. 1" online at <http://dmie.jpl.nasa.gov/cgi/doc-gw.pl?DocID=14802>.

Nominations should be submitted to the immediate administrative supervisor of the nominated person for processing up through their respective administrative organization. Those nominations selected after being reviewed will be forwarded to NASA. Each "Director for" will schedule the internal process so that the directorate's final recommendations can be submitted to Associate Director KIRK DAWSON no later than Oct. 31.

JPLers can join Caltech runners

JPL staff are invited to join Caltech Trotters, a running and fitness club designed to improve members' overall health for the purpose of competing in walk runs, 5Ks, 10Ks and longer running events.

For the fall/winter schedule, members meet Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 a.m. at Caltech's Braun Gym and track) as well as Saturdays at 8 a.m. at the Rose Bowl, lot K.

Due to UCLA games at the Rose Bowl, the club will meet at Braun Gym Oct. 21, Nov. 4 and Nov. 18.

For more information, contact LOUISA TOOT at (626) 395-3408 or louisa@library.caltech.edu.

Resource system a success story for budget planners

By Gia Scafidi

What many said couldn't be done at JPL, due to its poor track record implementing business systems, a small team of JPLers achieved in less than two years.

Building on the foundation established by two years of process development groundwork, JPL's Resource Management System development team successfully tackled the challenge of "solving the Lab's budgeting problem."

The team, comprised of approximately seven full-time equivalents, created an institutional, integrated system capable of workforce forecast inputs, cost estimation, budgeting, reporting and performance analyses. Moreover, the system fully supports Earned Value Management, a rigorous method enabling objective performance measurement.

"I'm very proud of the breakthrough work this team has accomplished," said team leader Randall Taylor. "We are beginning to see the fruits of their work on JPL projects, with full benefits yet to come."

The challenge was presented to the development team in January 1999 by the Develop New Products review board. At the time, the institutional budgeting tool did not accommodate cost estimation in pre-project phases, nor was it integrated with actual cost data to allow for performance analyses.

"We walked into the project knowing we were in for a big challenge," said Joanne Kennedy, the team's schedule module lead. "But I think our approach, and the fact that the team members were very experienced in various fields, contributed to our success."

Operating "like a flight project," Taylor said, the team first set a deadline for the new resource planning system. The team then had users brainstorm the system requirements and determined if the deadline was realistic. Funding was provided and executive

management proved supportive.

After many grueling months of effort, the team integrated targeted off-the-shelf and custom software with JPL's existing business system, based on Oracle financials. The final result was a two-tiered system, providing a simple interface for general users and a more sophisticated tool set for skilled resource administrators.

Kennedy noted that past unsuccessful attempts had involved more problematic and difficult tools. The current team opted for process-based, user-friendly tools such as custom-formatted Excel spreadsheets for general users' interface.

According to Kennedy, the new system also "puts more control in the hands of cost managers," eliminating their need to have resource planning data re-entered into other planning tools.

"This system has led to a tremendous reduction in cycle time spent on the cost-planning process of a couple of Mars and Space Interferometry Mission projects already," said Dr. Bruce Gibby, the team's process engineer. "What normally took six to eight weeks to accomplish, they completed in two weeks."

The new system will help JPL project and task managers integrate system discipline and business rules into their work. "The system's designed to help them meet prime contract requirements," Gibby said. "It will enable managers to better define and align the scope, schedule and budget of their tasks."

Taylor noted that a phased rollout approach will be utilized to ensure that all project teams have an opportunity to obtain process-based training, detailed instructions and support to successfully transition to the new process and tools. The official Development-to-Operations review is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Special Events Calendar

Ongoing Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous—Meeting at 11:30 a.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays (women only) and Fridays. Call Occupational Health Services at ext. 4-3319.

Codependents Anonymous—Meets at noon every Wednesday. Call Occupational Health Services at ext. 4-3319.

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Support Group—Meets the first and third Fridays of the month at noon in Building 111-117. Call the Employee Assistance Program at ext. 4-3680 or Randy Herrera at ext. 3-0664.

Parent Support Group—Meets the third Thursday of the month at noon in Building 167-111. Call Greg Hickey at ext. 4-0776.

Senior Caregivers Support Group—Meets the first Tuesday of each month in Building 167-111. For information, call the Employee Assistance Program at ext. 4-3680.

Friday, October 13

Caltech Lecture—Psychologist Kay Redfield Jamison, the author of numerous books and scientific articles about mood disorders, suicide and psychotherapy, will speak and sign books at 8 p.m. in Beckman Auditorium.

Saturday, October 14

Swingdance America—Three generations of swing are spanned by this 10-member company, which will perform at 8 p.m. in Caltech's Beckman Auditorium. Tickets are \$25, \$21 and \$17. Call (626) 395-4652.

Sunday, October 15

Chamber Music—The Guarneri Strong Quartet will perform at 3:30 p.m. in Caltech's Beckman Auditorium. Tickets are \$27, \$23, \$19 and \$15. Call (626) 395-4652.

Monday, October 16

Caltech Ballroom Dance Club—The third session in a five-week class on beginning west coast swing will be held at 7:30 in Winnett Lounge. Taught by a professional instructor; no partner is required. Series cost is \$30. Call Don at (626) 791-3103.

Tuesday, October 17

JPL Hiking+ Club—Meeting at noon in Building 303-209.

Wednesday, October 18

AFS Quick Start Session for Windows 95—Jeff Sachs of Section 366 will provide an overview using the AFS distributed file system to manage computer files, including setting up group space, accessing data, publishing web pages, and more. At noon in the Building 167 conference room.

Caltech Ballroom Dance Club—The third session in a five-week class on Argentine tango will be held from 7:30 to 9 p.m. in Winnett Lounge. Cost for the amateur-taught course is \$1. Call Don at (626) 791-3103.

"The Evolution of Big Brains"—Dr. John Allman, Caltech professor of psychobiology and biology, will give this free lecture at 8 p.m. in Beckman Auditorium. Call (626) 395-4652.

JPL 2000 Lecture—2001 Mars Odyssey Project Manager Dr. George Pace and other key project members will discuss the next Mars orbiter, which is scheduled for launch next April. Held at 11 a.m. in von Kármán Auditorium.

Music on the Mall—Robert Aviles and his band, Insight, play jazz/rock violin for a tasteful blend of

classical and rock music. Held at noon.

Thursday, October 19

JPL Stories—Dr. Henry Garrett of the Safety and Mission Assurance Office will present "Things that Go Bump in the Dark, or How Spacecraft Fail," discussing some of the more creative methods to assure abbreviated spacecraft lifetimes. To be held at 4 p.m. in the customer services area of the Library, Building 111-104. For questions about the story series or to participate, call Teresa Bailey at ext. 4-9233.

Von Kármán Lecture Series—"Navigation: Cruisin' Through Space" will be presented by Dr. Donald Gray of the Navigation and Mission Design Section 312 at 7 p.m. in von Kármán Auditorium. Open to the public.

Friday, October 20

Caltech Ballroom Dance Club—A free "milonga" [Argentine dance party] will be held starting at 8 p.m. in Dabney Lounge. Refreshments provided. Call Don at (626) 791-3103.

Von Kármán Lecture Series—"Navigation: Cruisin' Through Space" will be presented by Dr. Donald Gray of the Navigation and Mission Design Section 312 at 7 p.m. in The Forum at Pasadena City College, 1570 E. Colorado Blvd. Open to the public.

Saturday, October 21

Mathemagic!—Math principles are demonstrated with the use of magic tricks during this 2 p.m. show at Caltech's Beckman Auditorium. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children. Call (626) 395-4652.

SURF Seminar—Registration for the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship begins at 9 a.m. at Caltech's San Pasqual Mall. Student presentations will be held from 10 to 11:40 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m., followed by a poster session and reception. Admission is free; a \$10 lunch will be available noon to 1 p.m. Call 395-2885 or e-mail to sfp@cco.caltech.edu.

Sunday, October 22

Chamber Music—The husband and wife duo of violinist Thomas Bowes and pianist/composer Eleanor Alberga will give a free concert at 3:30 p.m. in Caltech's Dabney Lounge. Call (626) 395-4652.

Wednesday, October 25

JPL Toastmasters Club—Meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the Building 167 conference room. Guests welcome. Call Mary Sue O'Brien at ext. 4-5090.

Windows 2000 Tips and Tricks—Hour-long sessions for general users will be held at 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and noon in the Building 167 conference room, where a session for system administrators will be held from 2 to 4:30 p.m., covering operating system changes, security configuration management and deployment.

Thursday, October 26

Caltech Architectural Tour—The Caltech Women's Club presents this free service, which is open to the public. The tour begins at 11 a.m. and lasts about 1 1/2 hours. Meet at the Athenaeum front hall, 551 S. Hill St. Call Susan Lee at (626) 395-6327.

JPL Golf Club—Meeting at noon in Building 306-302.

Friday, October 27

JPL 2000 Talk—Dr. Diane Evans, Dr. Loren Lemmerman and Alfred Zieger will discuss Earth science and future missions and technologies at 11 a.m. in von Kármán Auditorium.

The team integrated targeted

off-the-shelf and custom software with JPL's existing business system.

RETIREEES WHO DIDN'T QUIT

By Gabrielle Birchak-Birkman



JPL Photos

You can take the rocket scientists into retirement, but you can't turn off the inventive skills retired JPL professionals carry with them. Retired engineers and scientists who helped make history at the dawn of the Space Age are now applying their skills to the world of medicine.

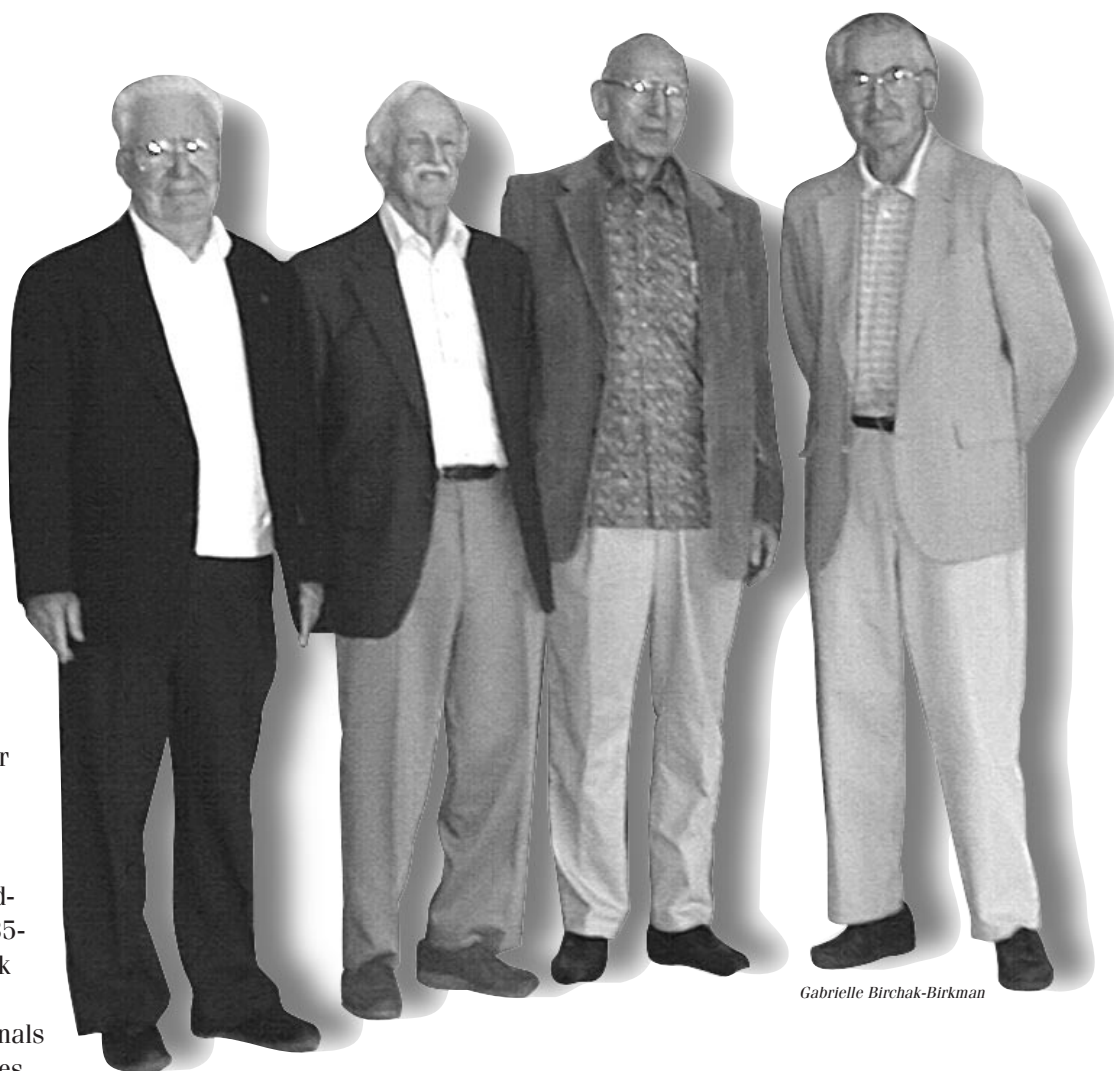
These enterprising space veterans from JPL are now helping doctors and patients with expertise forged in the world of space technology.

"We may look like seniors, but our professional skills are still in high gear and our creativity never dies," said Herman Bank, space engineering veteran and founder and director of Volunteer Professionals for Medical Advancement. He and his brainy 65- to-85-year-old retired NASA colleagues, Bank said, "are just too young to retire."

By working with Volunteer Professionals for Medical Advancement, these retirees from JPL donate some of their time to work closely with doctors and other medical professionals to brainstorm, research and develop new medical technologies. The organization's purpose is to provide hospitals with free services that such facilities could otherwise not afford. The hospitals, in turn, find that with the retired space professionals they get top-notch brainpower and reliable assistance. The accomplishments of this retiree organization have brought its members state and national honors.

Bank said up to 15 retirees are active participants, offering different areas of expertise. The group has been responsible for a number of medical advancements, including:

- Preliminary design of an automated oxygen enrichment system for premature babies. Working with Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center, retired volunteers and doctors are working to remove the inaccuracies of manually controlled oxygen systems, which can affect the infant's eyesight, brain and lung development.
- Solving a blood clot problem found with a stent (a skin graft anchor) that could cause heart attacks. Retired professional volunteers introduced a special electropolishing process to provide a super-smooth stent surface. The electropolishing process, developed in the aerospace industry, is not well known by doctors. The resulting electropolished stent practically eliminated further blood clot formation with the device.
- Creation of an advanced-database private computer network for pediatricians. Working with Children's Hospital Los Angeles, retired professionals are helping pediatricians na-



Gabrielle Birchak-Birkman

Ex-JPLers help advance medical technologies

Four members of Volunteer Professionals for Medical Advancement are shown at left at a recent JPL gathering and above as seen during their JPL careers. From left are Lon Isenberg, Herman Bank, Robert Natban and Al Hibbs.

tionwide to correspond about children's illnesses using JPL's method of data management. This database will provide a depository for historical data of diagnoses, research, treatments and results.

Doctors estimate that extended medical use of the computer database systems could reduce health care costs by 20 to 30 percent.

With each project, these retirees find that the rewards are numerous. "Results of the project clearly show that volunteers have made major contributions to medical advancement," Bank said.

"Doctors and hospital staff are very appreciative of this volunteer professional assistance, which they can seldom find or afford," he added. "Retired professionals find interest and satisfaction in challenges which do not interfere with retirement activities."

Bank said that as a young man, he always wanted to go into the field of medicine. Unable to afford medical school at the time, he decided to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering and found himself at JPL. Bank proves that it's never too late to pursue one's aspirations. "I decided that after doing 20 years of space I wanted to do something here on Earth to advance medicine," he said.

Embarking on their 10th year as an organization, the retirees are looking forward to future challenges in medicine, which includes encouraging other retired engineers and scientists to look for volunteer consulting opportunities. "The expansion of this activity nationally should help medical advancement considerably without cost, while using a skilled manpower resource," Bank said.

"We may look like seniors, but our professional skills are still in high gear and our creativity never dies."

— Herman Bank, member of Volunteer Professionals for Medical Advancement



Current JPL employee George Wells Jr., senior measurement systems integrator in the Laboratory's Measurement Technology Center, worked with Volunteer Professionals for Medical Advancement to develop an oxygen enrichment sensor to topically monitor oxygen levels in premature babies. Shown at left, the sensor clips to the finger and reads oxygen levels through a light sensor. Once the sensor determines that the child has enough oxygen, it automatically shuts off the oxygen supply.

