



National Aeronautics and Space Administration

## Voyages in Education and Public Outreach An Office of Space Science Newsletter

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### Voyage: A Journey Through Our Solar System

*Jeff Goldstein, Challenger Center for Space Science Education*

On October 17, 2001, a new long term space science exhibit *Voyage: A Journey Through Our Solar System* opened on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Created by Challenger Center for Space Science Education, the Smithsonian Institution, and NASA, *Voyage* is a one to 10-billion scale model of the solar system that provides visitors a dramatic understanding of Earth's place in space, and celebrates our ability to reach beyond our tiny world and uncover the breadth and majesty of the universe.

Comprised of 13 stations, *Voyage* is sited along a 600-meter path from the National Air and Space Museum to the Smithsonian's Castle building, in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument. Designed to fit the urban landscape of the National Mall, *Voyage's* 8.5 foot high stainless steel stations convey a sense of flight in both air and space. They are tall enough so that a visitor at any station can see adjacent station, even with intervening crowds. The stations appear as stakes driven into the cosmic firmament to mark the location of the planets. Thus at each station the visitor has simultaneous access to the size of a world and a distance between worlds.

Each of the planets, their largest moons, and ring systems are seen as three-dimensional objects laser-sculpted inside solid glass. Precise orientations of the planetary systems are relative to a model celestial sphere, where the horizontal plane is the ecliptic and the model Sun is at the vernal equinox.

The porcelain enamel graphic panels place the visitor in a familiar context, such as standing on

a planetary surface looking up into the sky. But these are not common views: Earth in a starry field from the surface of Mercury, Jupiter from low Ionian orbit, and a Venusian landscape under a



*Jeff Goldstein, Voyage project director, visits Uranus with a class of Washington, DC middle school students.*

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cloudy sky with Maxwell Montes in the distance - these are meant to be voyages worth remembering.

In addition to the exhibit on the Mall, supplemental materials will be available at the *Voyage* website ([www.voyageonline.org](http://www.voyageonline.org)). *Voyage* K-12 educational materials are currently under development and will be free to download as pdf files. Visit the site for updates on all aspects of the *Voyage* project.

The *Voyage* exhibition was designed to be replicated and permanently placed at dozens of sites worldwide. Granted this is an idealistic view, perhaps naive, but our hope is that *Voyage* can change the way a significant percentage of the human race view a place called home.

Visitors can walk through the model solar system as if they were 'cosmic giants' walking through the real thing. Visitor reactions to date clearly show that regardless of age or schooling, they seem overwhelmed as Earth is reduced to just one of many tiny objects in a vast and seemingly endless space.

## *Updates*

### **NASA Office of Space Science Conference Rescheduled**

The NASA OSS Education and Public Outreach Conference, hosted by DePaul University and originally scheduled for September 2001, has been rescheduled to June 12-14, 2002 in Chicago. Participants at the conference will include members of the NASA space science education and outreach community, scientists, educators in formal and informal science, and others interested in space science education and outreach.

The conference is limited to 270 participants. First priority is being given to those who were registered for the original conference dates. New registrants will be taken on a first come basis. Register on-line at

<http://analyzer.depaul.edu/ossconference>

Outcomes for the conference will include a set of proceedings and opportunities to guide the structure and focus of future OSS E/PO activities, as well as conferences intended to help set the overall direction of the OSS E/PO program.

Contact Victoria Simek at (773) 325-4790 [vsimek@depaul.edu](mailto:vsimek@depaul.edu), or see the conference web site for information on program, accommodations and speakers.

### **NASA OSS E/PO Brokers Selected**

NASA OSS recently selected seven recipients for grants to help space scientists become involved in educational activities, build partnerships between the space science and education communities, and serve as the regional points-of-contact for space scientists and educators seeking information on and involvement in NASA's Space Science education and outreach program. These institutions will continue and extend the work of the first set of Brokers selected in 1997.

"This new selection will deepen connections between NASA's Office of Space Science and educators across the country and improve our ability to search out productive opportunities for the space science community to participate in education and public outreach," said Dr. Jeffrey Rosendhal, Director of Education and Public Outreach for NASA's Office of Space Science. "We also expect this to provide an injection of fresh ideas and new capabilities to our educational and public outreach team."

The individuals and institutions receiving the awards are:

- Dr. Kathleen Johnson,  
Lunar and Planetary Institute, Houston
- Dr. Julie H. Lutz,  
University of Washington, Seattle
- Dr. Cherilynn A. Morrow,  
Space Science Institute, Boulder, Colorado
- Dr. Nitin Naik,  
Wheeling Jesuit University, Wheeling, W. Va.
- Dr. Carolyn C. Narasimhan,  
DePaul University, Chicago
- Dr. Cassandra Runyon,  
College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C.
- Dr. Cary I. Sneider,  
Museum of Science, Boston

### **OSS E/PO Evaluation Report Released**

The NASA Office of Space Science (OSS) has been working with the Program Evaluation and Research Group (PERG) at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts to conduct an evaluation of how effectively OSS is carrying out its E/PO program.

A report focusing on execution of the Education and Public Outreach (E/PO) Strategic and Implementation Plans has been completed and is available through the NASA OSS website