

January 2003

Aerospace Section

Eileen Dorschner

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Recommended Citation

Dorschner, Eileen (2003) "Aerospace Section," *Sci-Tech News*: Vol. 57 : Iss. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/scitechnews/vol57/iss1/8>

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Aerospace Section

Eileen Dorschner, Chair



The Aerospace Section of the Engineering Division encourages communication and cooperation among information professionals concerned with aerospace, aeronautical and related technologies. In addition, it fosters dialog with entities such as NASA, the AIAA and other important sources of technical data and bibliographical services.

As I sit here in January writing this, I can watch snowflakes swirl outside my window. The Boston area has had an unusual amount of snow this year and I feel like I have shoveled most of it! With the weather in mind, I have to say that I am looking forward to the winter meeting in New Orleans at the end of January. We will be finalizing our programs for the Annual Meeting in New York City June 7–19 and it looks to be a great meeting.

Interestingly, the Aerospace Section's activities will all take place on Tuesday, June 10. That is because SLA assigns a specific focus to each day of the meeting. Monday's focus is State of the Art, Tuesday's is Future Projections, and Wednesday's is International Focus. Our astronaut program seemed more at home in the Tuesday focus. Our business meeting, with the awarding of the George Mandel Memorial Award, will take place on Tuesday morning from 7:30 to 9:00. Several members who are also members of the Sci-Tech Division had asked me not to have our meeting on Monday morning, as it conflicted with the Sci-Tech business meeting. So we will try this new time and see how it works out. According to SLA rules, we need to have our meeting before the Engineering Division's, which is always on Tuesday at noon. Our astronaut speaker will talk on "Information from Space" on Tuesday afternoon from 3:30 until 5:00. The talk will be followed immediately by a reception generously sponsored by the Engineering Division. If you plan to attend for only one day, let Tuesday be your day! Be sure to check the SLA site, www.sla.org, to see all the great programs being offered.

Unfortunately the Big Apple is a very expensive place to meet, leading us to have to look harder than usual for support from our vendors and to increase the charge to our members for our programs. Our breakfast will cost \$15, only a fraction of the actual cost, with generous support from AIAA to make up the difference. The reception following the astronaut program will cost \$5 with Engineering covering most of the cost. There will be a cash bar. I hope many of you will be able to join us in New York. The programs look great, there are interesting tours planned, the three keynote speakers (Madeline Albright, David McCullough, and Stuart Brand) promise to be exciting, and this meeting is always a great time to meet with colleagues new and old.

This winter, the Aerospace Industries Association released publicly and sent to President Bush its report of the Commission on the Future of the U.S. Aerospace Industry. If you haven't had a chance to see it, you can copy and/or read it at www.aerospacecommission.gov. The commission makes nine recommendations to the president. In part, it recommends that the United States create a space imperative, make transformation of the U.S. transportation system a national priority, establish a national aerospace policy, and immediately reverse the decline in and promote the growth of a scientifically and technologically trained U.S. aerospace workforce. Now it is up to Congress and the president to act. We'll see what the future brings.

Here's another Web site to check out: www.science.gov. This site is a gateway to sci/tech information from across federal government organizations. Its goal is to make it easy for people to find scientific information created by the government by organizing it in one place. This site enables one to search the content within databases as well as across Web sites. Fourteen organizations from ten major science agencies are represented on this site, including DOT, DOE, EPA, NASA, and NSF. The site is organized into a dozen broad categories such as Applied Science and Technology, Computers and Communication, Health and Medicine, and our favorite, Astronomy and Space. There is even a Science Education link for homework help. Check it out—you may find it makes your work easier.

And finally, I welcome your ideas for the Section. What would you like us to do and be? Do you have ideas for programs and/or speakers? Are there ways you think we can better use our mail list (sla-aero@sti.nasa.gov) or links you'd like to see on our Web site? The site is under construction under the able hands of our own Susan Winstanley, who is revamping the Engineering Division at the same time. Now is a good time to think about what we'd like to see at that site. Maybe it is a good topic to discuss on our mail list. If you are not on the e-mail list and want to be, send me an e-mail and I will tell you how to join. If you have ideas to share, please feel free to contact me at edorsch@mit.edu.