Staff Conference Features Mohole

Max C. McLean, assistant to the Mohole Project Director, National Science Foundation, Washington, will present a talk, movies and slides for the Lewis Staff Conference on Monday, April 4, at 8 p.m. in the DEB Auditorium.

Although born and raised in the heart of the Rockies at Ogden, Utah, McLean had extensive sea service in the Merchant Marine and U. S. Navy. After earning bachelor's and a master's degrees, he worked with the Navy's oceanography, hydrographic and geophysics efforts. He also had more than four years of duty at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution before joining the NSF in 1964.

The history and scientific objectives of the Mohole Project will be reviewed. Conducted under the aegis of the National Science Foundation, this work is a major effort to explore the Earth's crust and mantle by drilling three miles or more into the ocean bottom. The project name is derived from the Mohorovicic seismic discontinuity separating the mantle from the crust.

The project timetable will be discussed. A 12-minute movie will show test drillings conducted last year near Uvalde, Texas, where newly developed equipment was evaluated.

Chess Tourney Set

The annual NASA Open Chess Tournament will get underway on Monday, April 11. All Lewis employees and members of their immediate families are eligible to enter.

Douglas Anderson, tournament chairman, said the tourney consists of six rounds. One round is played each week.

Each player is matched against an opponent with a similar won-lost record so that the later games will be between opponents of approximately equal ability. The time and place of play are arranged by opponents for their mutual convenience.

Entry blanks and further information are available from Anderson, PAX 2174.

Technical Papers

Now available at the Center Library are the following recently-published technical papers written by Lewis staff members:

TECHNICAL NOTES


Dependence of Surface Conductivity of Sodium Chloride on the Chemical Nature of the Surface, C. E. May and J. P. Jayne, TN D-3255.


March Retirements

A total of almost 50 years of service was compiled by the three Lewis employees who retired in March. They are:

JOHN R. CRANE

John R. Crane, an experimental electronic equipment mechanic, worked in the Electronic Shop & Computer Service Section. The "newest" of the trio of retirees, Crane joined Lewis more than 9 years ago.

BEN JANAS

Ben Janas, who came to Lewis early in World War II, has been an experimental metal model maker in the General Machine Section. With his service spanning 23 years, Janas has had a personal part in the historic growth of Lewis.

EDWARD T. CAHOON

Edward T. Cahoon, an aerospace mechanic assigned to the Materials & Processes Service Section, is the most recent retiree after compiling almost two decades of service at the Center.
James Useller dies

James Useller, aeronautical research scientist in the Spacecraft Technology Division, died June 29 following a brief illness.

Joining Lewis upon his graduation from Carnegie Tech in 1945, Useller assisted in experimental development of jet engine thrust augmentation devices including high-temperature afterburners. He was involved in the Center’s research of unconventional fuels for turbojets including metallic slurries, boron compounds and the use of hydrogen to increase operating altitudes and extend aircraft ranges. Useller trained the original astronauts in the use of the manual attitude controller for the Mercury space vehicle and contributed to the knowledge of ocular nystagmus, an involuntary eye oscillation that occurs during aircraft maneuvering. While associated with the Flight Operations Branch, Useller supervised the design, development and testing of recovery systems for retrieval of data nose cones fired from Aerobee rockets at Wallops Island. Since 1966 he had been associated with the Zero Gravity Research Facility.

The author of several technical papers, Useller was a full fellow in the Royal Aeronautical Society. He was secretary of the Lewis Sportmen’s Club. Survivors include his father, Walter J., a brother, Walter F., and a sister, Mrs. Teresa Tritsch all of Pennsylvania. Useller was buried at Gettysburg National Cemetery.

Two appointed to FEB

New appointments to the Cleveland Federal Executive Board for 1969-70 include the appointment of Richard Tilton of the Per- sonnel Division as FEB Program Chairman and Dr. Betty Del Duca of the Direct Energy Conversion Division as Chairman of the Federal Women’s Program.

Dr. Charles D. Ferraro of the Personnel Division has completed a year as Chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee. The current co- chairperson, Dr. Abe Silverstein, was the FEB’s first Chairman in 1967-68 and remains a member of the FEB Policy Committee.

Michael Halloran of the Veterans Administration has succeeded Internal Revenue’s Frank Turbett as FEB Chairman for 1969-70.

Morthland is retiring

John E. Morthland, a painter in the Building and Maintenance Section of the Plant Services Division, retired July 17. Morthland joined Lewis in 1961 and had worked for the Center as a steam- plant operator before becoming a painter. A native of Nebraska, Morthland and his wife, Ellen, a happy and active retiree.

Moonman started at Lewis

Recruiter reminiscences

by Dr. Robert W. Graham

(Med. note: Dr. Graham, chief of the Experimental Heat Transfer Section, Physics and Chemistry Division, was a personnel recruiter for NACA/NASA until 1959. This article gives his reflections of an interview with one of his former students, Neil Armstrong in 1955).

If I had been asked, ten years ago at the completion of my recruiting assignment for NACA/NASA, which college student had impressed me the most in my interview with him, I would have unhesitatingly answered “Neil Armstrong.”

Armstrong made a direct request as he opened the interview at Purdue University in 1955 by saying that he had always wanted to become a NACA test pilot. This was a handsome, clean-cut young college senior who was articulate and self-assured. His ambition was backed up by the fact that he had flown the airplane at the age of 16. I asked him what experience he had and he modestly stated that he had over 1,000 hours of experience flying high-speed jet aircraft with the U.S. Navy. He entered college at Purdue after his military service because he knew that a prerequisite for test pilot status was a degree in engineering.

In encouraging Armstrong to join the NACA ranks, I talked to him about the prospects in high-speed sub-orbital flight which were currently under study. Also, just a year before, the X-15 program had been approved, and we talked of the possibility that he might find an opening at Edwards Flight Research Center for test pilot training.

Armstrong’s interest in flying was very great, and he said he would be willing to hire on in any capacity that might lead him to test pilot training. NASA salary offers in 1955 were not too competitive, and we were emphasizing the fringe benefits and advanced education assistance for applicants. Yet not once in this interview did Armstrong mention salary. His career flying interest seemed to overshadow all other considerations.

I was so impressed by the qualifications and determination of this young man that at the close of the interview I assured him that he would receive an offer from Lewis or Edwards. Lewis did accept Armstrong as a member of its flight crew in February, 1965 and a few months later he transferred to Edwards Flight Research Center in California.
Recalling the recruitment of Neil Armstrong for Lewis

BY DR. ROBERT W. GRAHAM

In the early 1950’s, I was involved in the Center’s recruitment efforts at Purdue University and the University of Illinois. In 1955, Bill McCann (now retired) and I visited these universities. On this particular trip, the recruitment office requested that we try to interview candidates who would qualify as test pilots for the upcoming X15 experimental rocket powered plane.

At Purdue, a young man came in who said, in addition to his aeronautical degree, he had 1500 hours of jet experience as a pilot with the Navy. Not only were these credentials impressive to me because of the need for a qualified test pilot, but I was impressed by his quiet, assured manner. He said that his life-time ambition was to be a NACA test pilot and all he wanted to know was how he could become involved in such a program. Frankly, I was so taken back by his qualifications and by his approach that I hardly knew what to say at first. Obviously, he was a real ‘find’ and so I told him with considerable enthusiasm that he would have no difficulty beginning in such a test pilot program with NACA.

Even though I could not anticipate what would eventually happen to this person in his career, this particular interview always stood out in my mind as one of the most memorable that I ever conducted in the recruiting program. Frequently, in talks that I had to give to young people in schools, I cited this experience as an example of a young person who was completing his education and knew exactly what he wanted to do. It was also significant to observe that Neil Armstrong was not interested in the kind of salary offer NACA could make. He was primarily interested in the kind of challenge that a test pilot position would offer.

When I returned to Cleveland with the interview form in which I recommended that Neil Armstrong be hired by our agency, his qualifications made a great impression on the management here. Irving Pinkel, who was then the Division Chief in charge of flight operations at Lewis, decided that he should go to Purdue and give Armstrong the official offer in person.

After I found out that NACA had hired him, I was very interested in following his career. He spent a short time here at Lewis and then was given the opportunity to become a part of the X15 program at Edwards Air Force Base in California. I noted that he later flew the X15 in some of its record-making flight missions. Next, I became aware that he had applied for the astronaut program and soon was assigned as one of the Gemini mission pilots. From that particular program, he went on to the Apollo program. Then, as we all know, he was selected to be the Commander of the historic Apollo 11 mission, the first flight to the moon.

I have had the thrilling experience of talking with him twice since the moon landing; once here in Cleveland at the Lewis Center and the second time in New York City at a meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, where he received a medal for his space exploits.

During the live television broadcast of the Apollo 11 moon landing, I felt a strong personal identification with the mission. Fourteen years earlier, I wouldn’t have imagined that a young Purdue graduate being interviewed would become the first man to set foot on the moon.