

CHAPTER 6 - GETTING AROUND OTHER NASA CENTERS

Your Host Center is a Field Center, rather than NASA Headquarters. It is also likely that during your program year you will have the opportunity to visit one or more of NASA's Field Centers other than either your Host or Home Centers. The information is geared towards people temporarily relocating to or visiting the center. For each center you will find: a brief description of the center, a description of the area, information on temporary housing, popular restaurants, and things to do. When available, input from this year's class has been included to give you a more personal feel.

The NASA Centers covered in this Chapter are listed below. Use this information to help you get more out of your visits around NASA.

NASA CENTERS

[Ames Research Center](#)
[Dryden Flight Research Center](#)
[Glenn Research Center](#)
[Goddard Space Flight Center](#)
[Jet Propulsion Laboratory](#)
[Johnson Space Center](#)
[Kennedy Space Center](#)
[Langley Research Center](#)
[Marshall Space Flight Center](#)

AMES RESEARCH CENTER (ARC)

Sources

Megan McCluer, PDP '01-02, Home Center: ARC. Host Center: Naval Air Station, Pax River, MD

Tim Castellano, PDP '97-98, Home Center: ARC, Host Center, ARC

Betsy Carter, PDP '97-98, Home Center: HQ, Host Center, ARC

Don Shick, PDP '96-97, Home Center: ARC, Host Center: LaRC

Valerie A. Mahaffey, PDP '96-97, Home Center: ARC, Host Center: KSC

Forrest E. Lumpkin, PDP '93-94, Home Center: ARC, Host Center: JSC

Gregory K. Schmidt, PDP '93-94, Home Center: ARC, Host Center: HQ

Shari-Beth Nadell, PDP '93-94, Home Center: GRC, Host Center: ARC

Ames Research Center (www.arc.nasa.gov) is one of NASA's four Aeronautical Research Centers, and the Agency's Center of Excellence for Information Technology. Ames has a wide variety of experimental, computational, and theoretical capabilities, which are dedicated to the advancement of aeronautical and space sciences. These include a large collection of wind tunnels, shock tunnels, arc jets and ballistic ranges for experimental studies; and the Agency's most advanced supercomputing capability. The

aeronautics capabilities at Ames range from computational fluid dynamics to flight, and include lead Center responsibilities for several key program elements.

In addition to aeronautical research, Ames is managing the NASA Astrobiology Institute, which is a national consortium of scientists focused on interdisciplinary research in astrobiology. Ames researchers also work on Space, Earth, and Life Sciences programs. This includes work projects such as high performance computing and communications and the study of various species' adaptation to the zero-G environment. Also, Ames researchers have developed excellence in fields that are complementary to the aeronautical sciences such as computational chemistry and thermal protection materials design. Space sciences, solar system exploration, and infrared astronomy are also included in the Center's major program responsibilities.

Ames Research Center is located in the Santa Clara Valley (also known as Silicon Valley) at the base of the San Francisco Peninsula. It's close proximity to Stanford University, UC Berkeley, and the multitude of local high technology companies allows for many unique opportunities for collaborative research. In the heart of Silicon Valley, NASA is developing a world-class Research and Development campus: the NASA Research Park. This 500-acre area will be located at Moffett Field, but open to the public, as a research and development campus for partners from academia, industry and non-profit corporations with shared goals in support of NASA's mission. Here the space agency and its new partners will pursue research leadership for the next century. For more information visit <http://www.researchpark.arc.nasa.gov/>

About The Area

Santa Clara Valley is known for its moderate climate and ample opportunities for recreation. Cold winter freezes occur very rarely, and low humidity makes the hottest days of summer bearable. The San Francisco Bay is nearby allowing for sailing and wind surfing. The nearby Santa Cruz Mountains are good for mountain biking and hiking. On the other side of the mountains is the Pacific Ocean for beach lovers. The nearby towns of Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Sunnyvale have many good restaurants as well as lively night spots. If the local towns are too tame, one can always spend the evening in San Francisco or San Jose, which are both within an hour's driving time. Weekend vacation spots include Monterey/Carmel, Napa Valley, and Lake Tahoe.

Web Sites:

- Area Info Sites: <http://www.sf-area.com/>
- San Jose Mercury News: <http://www.bayarea.com/>
- Bay Insider: <http://www.bayinsider.com>
- Silicon Valley Gateway: <http://www.siliconvalley-usa.com/>

- Bay Area Back Roads: <http://www.bayareabackroads.com>
- Outdoor Adventure Club: <http://www.sfoac.com/>

Places To Live

General info: Be prepared for sticker shock, but that's what the per diem is for! Check the San Jose Mercury News, for news and classifieds. Also, the San Francisco Chronicle for Northern peninsula information. In addition, the Ames biweekly "Astrogram" will list homes and apartments for rent, and you can submit a rental request as well. (e-mail astrogram@mail.arc.nasa.gov). Suggestion : before you decide, take a drive through the downtown areas of Sunnyvale, Mountain View, Los Altos, and Palo Alto. Sunnyvale and Mountain View, closest to Ames, have restored downtown areas with restaurants, etc. and lots of apartment complexes. Palo Alto and Los Altos: Very nice, but somewhat pricey. Many Ames folks live in San Jose -- 20-miles south of Ames and less costly. Still many others live north in San Mateo County as well as in the City of SF itself. The "CalTrain" is a very convenient (and cheap) rail system, and NASA Ames has a shuttle bus that picks up commuters several times daily during rush hours.

Restaurants

California, and the Bay Area, are famous for the variety of ethnic restaurants, and the high quality of foods available everywhere around town. Here is just a small sample:

- La Fiesta: Villa St., Mtn.View. GREAT Mexican food. Try Mole, enchiladas verdes.
- Black Forest Inn: downtown Los Altos. Excellent German, restaurant 40 yrs. old.
- Fish Market: Palo Alto or Santa Clara, El Camino Real: Great seafood, reasonable prices. Best New England chowder this side of Boston.
- Flea Street Cafe, Menlo Park, country French, great atmosphere
- Kirin: Castro St., Mtn.View. Excellent Chinese lunches.
- Tony & Alba's: Escuela Dr., M.V. Best pizza in the area, good evening hangout.
- Tied House: Villa St., M.V. Local microbrewery, great Amber beer. Excellent onion rings.
- Stoddard's: Murphy St., Sunnyvale. MircoBrew. A lot like Tied House.
- Printer's Inc. Castro St., M.V. Books, coffee & pastries upstairs
- University Avenue, Palo Alto: Excellent restaurants all along the street.
- Hang Ah Tea Room: Sacramento St., San Francisco. Best dim sum around!
- Burrito place at corner of 17th St.. & Mission, S.F.: Best burritos north of the border. You'll think you're in Mexico.
- Chart House, Hwy. 1 north of Half Moon Bay. Great seafood, even better sunsets.
- The Rice Table, 4th St., San Rafael. If you're in Marin County, well worth a stop for some excellent Indonesian food.
- Frankie, Johnny, and Luigi's: El Camino Real, Mtn. View. Great Italian Food and Pizzas.

- Sweet Tomatoes: Lawrence Expressway, Sunnyvale. Huge salad bar, fresh pasta, soups, and breads; get there early for a great lunch.
- Togo's: Located all over the place; closest one to Ames is on El Camino just east of Highway 85. Good subs.
- Chef Wang's - best Chinese in Mt. View. Down Castro Street from the Center on the right. Everything is excellent.
- Spaghetti Factory - a very fun place to eat in Downtown San Jose that I used to go to before an event at the Center for the Performing Arts. Leave a LOT of time to eat, as there's usually a huge crowd.
- China Station - the best Chinese south of San Francisco. It's a drive in South San Jose; turn onto Senter (only one way to turn) from Monterey Highway and it's just down on the right. Absolutely spectacular food.
- Stuff Pizza on Castro Street in Mountain View. Very good pizza, and quick lunch time service.
- Fresh Choice, in several locations. All the salad, muffins, pasta, soups, desserts, etc., you can eat for one price.

Things To Do/Visit

There are TONS of things to do in Silicon Valley all year round. Use the Web sites listed above to find current events. Here are a few samples of general activities:

- Space Camp: Adjacent to the main gate, resident programs for children, gift shop.
- Wine Country: Drive up and down Napa Valley - stop at the smaller wineries too. Sonoma valley is also well worth the look. Calistoga has famous mud baths, glider rides.
- Mt. Tamalpais (Marin Co.): Lots of great hiking trails. Start from Muir Woods and hike all the way up (for the energetic only!)
- Lick Observatory: Mount Hamilton (south of San Jose). Drive up to see observatory. Summer visitor's program (call first) has observing on Friday nights. Visit the Ames planet search telescope, as used by a previous PDP participant.
- Monterey: Aquarium, Cannery Row, 17-mile drive.
- Pt. Reyes: Beautiful scenery, whale watching Jan.-March
- Sausalito: shopping, sailboat watching.
- Stanford University: beautiful campus, nice bicycling
- Bicycling: Los Altos hills, Palo Alto hills are great! Stop at the Bicycle Outfitter or Palo Alto Bicycles for route suggestions. Also Walt's Schwinn in Sunnyvale.
- San Francisco Symphony, Ballet, Opera. Legendary. Check for Beethoven, Mozart series.
- San Juan Bautista Mission: A little CA history. Mission founded by father Junipero Serra.
- Lake Tahoe: Skiing in winter, water sports/ hiking in summer. Gambling.
- San Simeon: Hearst Castle, 4-hour drive from Ames.
- Sacramento: visit State Capitol, Old Town (check out the train museum).

- Bay Area: All summer long, there is an Arts and Wine Festival somewhere every weekend.
- Beaches: On the Peninsula -- Ft. Funston (near Daly City) to go with your dog or with your hang glider -- spectacular sand dunes and cliffs overlooking the beach; Half Moon Bay, secluded; Santa Cruz /Capitola has great beaches, and go south or north of there for more.
- Running: NASA Ames hosts 5K runs every month. Get a copy of "The Schedule," free at any running store (and sometimes available at the Ames fitness center). Has all the 5K, 10K, marathon runs etc. in the area. Best runs: Bay to Breakers (May, SF), "Run to The Far Side" (November, SF), "Zoo Run" (January, SF), Valentine's Day Run (Feb., Oakland), San Jose Mercury 10K (March, SJ), Wharf to Wharf (July, Santa Cruz - register EARLY for this one, they limit the runners), Houlihan's to Houlihan's (March, SF, run across the Golden Gate Bridge!).
- Sailing: Check with Spinnaker Sailing in Redwood City. They offer lessons, and their SF branch offers rides on a square-rigger brigantine!
- Shoreline Park: Next to Ames (take Shoreline Dr. all the way down to the Bay). At the lake you can take windsurfing lessons, and there's great paths for rollerblading, running, and biking.
- Shoreline Amphitheater has outdoor concerts all summer from big name acts.
- San Jose: Great local symphony (excellent 'Nutcracker' production at Christmas time). Lots of good nightclubs in downtown area (San Jose Live).
- Big Basin: Nice hiking, lots of enormous redwood trees.
- Ano Nuevo State Park: North of Santa Cruz off Highway 1. Breeding grounds for elephant seals from November to March.
- Natural Bridges State Park: Just north of Santa Cruz off Highway 1. Stopping place for migrating Monarch Butterflies from about October to March. Nice beach also.

Remarks of a Former Program Participant

If you are considering a development tour at ARC, you will really have to hate the outdoors not enjoy life in the Silicon Valley. My limited use of the English language is now apparent as adjectives compiled in a seemingly endless list, fail to convey how beautiful the weather is in central California!

If you have a dog, s/he will think s/he's died and gone to Heaven with the wonderful dog-friendly places you can find in the Bay Area! And most of the dog-friendly places are worth visiting with or without a canine companion! Find the book "The California Dog Lovers Companion," by Maria Goodavage and plan your California adventures straight from the award-winning book -- from spectacular beaches, Redwood Forest hikes, Lake Tahoe x-country skiing to dog-friendly sidewalk cafes.

Sources

Masashi Mizukami '02-03, Home Center: DFRC, Host Center: JPL

Bob Curry '97-98, Home Center: DFRC, Host Center: LaRC

Walter Feitshans, PDP '96-97, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: DFRC

Greg Shell, PDP '96-97, Home Center: DFRC, Host Center: MSFC

Dryden Flight Research Center is the "Center of Excellence" for atmospheric flight operations. The center celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1996 and continues today to pioneer programs that develop technology for new aircraft and spacecraft, aid the US general aviation community in global economic competition, increase safety for the flying public, support national security and support environmental improvements. The Center's charter is to research, develop, verify and transfer advanced aeronautics, space and related technologies. The primary research tools are research aircraft. Good flying weather occurs 345 days a year on average. Being much smaller than all but one other center, there is a nice 'everyone knows everyone' atmosphere. Dryden is located inside Edwards Air Force Base, on the western edge of the Mojave Desert, 80 miles north of Los Angeles.

About The Area

You really can go surfing and skiing on the same weekend! This is a convenient base to go do just about anything, whether it's outdoors, cultural or social activities. However, if you prefer to stay around the house or in town, you may be disappointed. In the high desert, summer days can reach 110F and winter nights can dip to 10F, but mild temperatures can be enjoyed some part of the day year round, and the sun shines almost all year. If bringing school age children, talk with other parents at the center, and maybe consider private school. That aside, the area offers a totally unique living experience unmatched at any other NASA center.

Places To Live

Cost of living is quite moderate compared to the rest of California and other urban areas. Apartments and rental property are easy to find. The most popular places to live are the twin suburban cities of Lancaster and Palmdale (45 min to work). Other options are: Rosamond (small town, 30 min), Tehachapi (rural mountain town with four seasons, 60 min), California City (very small town, 20 min), Wrightwood (mountain village, 50 min), Santa Clarita (convenient to LA, good schools, 70 min). Carpools and vanpools are available. Traffic is not a problem, except during periods of heightened security at Edwards AFB.

Restaurants

Aside from the usual collection of chain restaurants, some good local spots are:

- Schooner's (bar) (661) 940-7028 43807 15th St W, Lancaster, CA 93534
- Thai Cafe 1052 W Ave K, Lancaster 942 6599\

- Black Angus (steak) 44690 Valley Central Way, Lancaster 942-5225
- Marie Calendars (restaurant & bakery) 1649 W Ave K, Lancaster 945-6958
- Crazy Otto's (breakfast)
 - (661) 940-9177 1228 W Avenue I, Lancaster, CA 93534
 - (661) 948-6502 43528 20th St W, Lancaster, CA 93534
 - (661) 266-2202 3620 E Avenue P, Palmdale, CA 93550
- The Granada Room 44219 Sierra Highway, Lancaster 942-8401
- Golden Cantina (Mexican) (661) 256-6737 4001 Knox Ave, Rosamond, CA 93560
- Rice Garden 2535 E. Ave S 266-9030
- Brussels Deli 2220 E. Palmdale Blvd. 266-4758
- Siam Orchid of Thailand 957 E. Palmdale Blvd. 266-1509
- Louisiana's Hots 2728 E. Palmdale Blvd. 274-8000
- Wing and a Prayer 44423 90th Street E. 946-2656

Things To Do/Visit (a few of the best)

Daytrips:

- Mountain High Ski Area (1 hr)
- beaches (1.5 hr)
- flying / gliding
- Six Flags Magic Mountain / Hurricane Harbor (1 hr)
- Disneyland (2 hr)
- Universal Studios (1.5 hr)
- Devil's Punchbowl bouldering (.5 hr)
- Vasquez Rocks hiking (.5 hr)
- Kern River / Lake Isabella fishing and guided whitewater rafting (2 hr)
- Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve (March-April)
- Los Angeles (1 hr) A commuter rail line connects to LA 6 days a week (<http://www.metrolinktrains.com/>)
- restaurants
- night clubs
- museums
- shopping
- pro sports
- shows and concerts

Weekenders:

- Las Vegas (4 hr)
- Yosemite Valley National Park (5 hr)
- Death Valley National Park (4 hr)
- Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort (4 hr)
- Mexico / Tijuana (4 hr)
- Sierra Nevada mountains hiking / camping / fishing (3+ hr)

- San Francisco (5 hr)

Other resources:

- Los Angeles Times CalendarLive section (<http://www.calendarlive.com/>)
 - LA Weekly (<http://www.laweekly.com/>)
 - California Tourism official site (<http://gocalif.ca.gov/>)
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GLENN RESEARCH CENTER (GRC)

Sources

Masashi Mizukami - LeRC '90 - 95

Chan Kim, PDP '01-02, Home Center: GRC, Host Center: HQ

Alexander D. Pline, PDP '96-'97, Home Center: GRC, Host Center: HQ

Juan C. Rivera, PDP '93-94, Home Center: GRC, Host Center: HQ

Jeffrey G. Schreiber, PDP '93-94, Home Center: GRC, Host Center: HQ

Shari-Beth Nadell, PDP '93-94, Home Center: GRC, Host Center: ARC

The Glenn Research Center has been chartered to be NASA's lead Center in aeronautic propulsion, and power system technology. It is also NASA's Center of Excellence in Turbomachinery. Research on advanced technology has been closely coordinated with the aerospace industry since the early 1940's. The Center had, until recently, been responsible for the design and fabrication of the power system for use on the Space Station Freedom.

To compliment the Center's expertise in state-of-the-art aerospace technologies, organizations (http://www.grc.nasa.gov/Doc/GRC_org.htm) exist within to develop advanced technologies. These areas include advanced power, aeronautical and space propulsion, and advanced communications. The advanced power systems include static conversion, dynamic conversion, energy storage, and power management and distribution techniques. The Ultra-Efficient Engine Technology (UEET) Program develops technologies for the most critical propulsion issues that impact local airport air quality and global climate change: reducing nitrogen oxides and improving performance. The advanced communications group was responsible for the recently launched Advanced Communications Technology Satellite (ACTS). The Space Communications Program develops and demonstrates the technology for high-performance space communications systems need for critical NASA missions. Additional expertise in materials and structural analysis augments these research areas.

Refer to <http://www.grc.nasa.gov/Doc/projects.htm> for more details on Glenn's technology programs and projects.

As an element NASA's Microgravity Program (MSFC is the Lead Center) the Glenn Research Center is also the Center of Excellence in Microgravity Fluids and

Combustion. GRC is responsible for implementing the both the Fluid Physics and Combustion science and flight projects.

The best resource for GRC information such as Maps of the Lab etc. is the World Wide Web (<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/>).

About The Area

The Glenn Research Center is located adjacent to the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. It is on the southwest edge of the City of Cleveland proper, yet inside of the ring of suburbs that surround the city. This provides easy access to the downtown activities and also to the quiet suburbs. While the airport is on one side, the lab is bordered by the Cleveland Metropolitan Park on its other side. This must be the most convenient airport access of any center. This is a public park that forms a large ring around the city. Much of the park is in a valley that was formed by the glaciers long ago, and is tranquil compared to the city above. The park system has golf courses, hiking trails, horse riding facilities and trails, and a bike path that covers most of it's length.

The Cleveland area really is much better than its reputation would lead you to believe. Good weather three seasons of the year (winter IS long and miserable). Very good sailing, fantastic golf, and a much improved night life. A comfortable economical place to live, with access to big city amenities.

The industrial base of the city has changed over the years and the city is now without much of the pollution causing industry that it was known for in the past. Many of the steel mills have closed, and Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River are now both used for recreational activities. (Yes, they actually use canoes and fish in the Cuyahoga River now!) The downtown area that was once deserted after working hours now has turned into an exciting area of a variety of cultural, social, and sports activities. The industrial area along the River adjacent to the downtown area has been converted to nightclubs and is busy most evenings and packed on weekends. Major professional sports games are played year round in newly-built stadiums for football, baseball, and basketball.

One prime feature of the Cleveland area is the Cleveland Metroparks system. The Metroparks is a series of reservations that connect to form a "circle" through the suburbs of Cleveland of Cleveland (called the Emerald Necklace). Over 100 miles of walking, biking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing trails run through the Metroparks. The parks also contain golf courses, picnic areas, fishing areas, and a boat dock. Nature Centers in the park provide organized events such as night hikes, hay rides, workshops, to name only a few. Most of these activities are aimed at providing insight and education to children as well as adults. The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is an excellent facility and boasts one of few Rainforest exhibits. Museums in Cleveland include the Museum of Art and the Museum of Natural History, both located in University Circle adjacent to Case Western Reserve University. Although the winters in Cleveland are long and cold, there are many activities that are available to those who do not wish to remain in their own homes. Concert events, Broadway musicals, the

famous Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and various indoor shows such as the Home and Garden Show (usually held the end of February) are examples of these. Cleveland also has many major sports teams; the area fans are loyal, no matter what the team records may be.

There is a brand new mall called SouthPark Center that opened in October 1996 on route 82 in Strongsville that is great for shopping and has a lot of new restaurants going up and around it.

Places To Live

Many NASA people have lived in an apartment called The Islander, located at I-71 at Pearl Road in Middleburg Heights. The Islander is convenient to work (~12 miles, 20 minutes), to downtown Cleveland (~20 minutes), and to all major freeways in the area. It is also 1 mile from the Metroparks.

Convenient areas to live: Middleburg Heights, Strongsville (a few apartment complexes on Royalton Road (Rt. 82)), North Olmstead, Berea, Fairview Park, Westlake

If you must live in a hip urban environment, check out: Tremont, Coventry, Shaker Heights, University Heights. Note these involve longer commutes.

There are many nice outlying semi-rural areas, but don't know about the availability of rental properties there.

Restaurants

These are all West Side restaurants -- there are many good restaurants on the East side also!

- Pearl of the Orient - on Detroit Rd. in Lakewood; great Chinese food
- Melbourne's - on Prospect Rd. near Albion in Strongsville
- Around the Corner - Pub in Lakewood, awesome chicken wings Tue/Thurs (crowded)
- Australian micro brewery - good beer and food
- BW3 - several locations - hot buffalo wings and weck (whatever that is)
- Foo Sing - Great Northern Mall plaza - good, fast Chinese lunch
- Macaroni's - on Great Northern Blvd., minutes from GRC; good Italian food
- The Mad Cactus - on Pearl Rd. at Whitney, Middleburg Hts.; good ribs, semi-decent Mexican food (close to the best you'll find in Cleveland!)
- The Great Lakes Brewing Company - downtown Cleveland; good micro-brewery
- * Manhattan Deli - on Lorain Rd. west of Clague; great Sunday brunch
- Pier W - in Lakewood; very nice restaurant on the waterfront
- Shooter's - on the east bank of the Flats; burgers, sandwiches, etc., great place to go in the summer because you can sit outside at the dock and watch the boats
- Fagan's, Dick's, Landry's 's Seafood- on the east bank of the flats

- Village Cheese and Wine Shop - Pearl Rd, just north of the I-71 exit, Middleburg Hts.; great sandwiches

Things To Do/Visit

- Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland InnerHarbor
- Great Lakes Science Center (including BIG IMAX theater), Cleveland InnerHarbor
- Ship William G. Mather - An old Great Lakes ore carrier turned into a museum (very cool), Cleveland InnerHarbor
- Cleveland Air Show (Labor Day Weekend)- Burke Lakefront Airport
- Cleveland Metroparks
- Cleveland Metropark Golf Courses
- Cleveland Metroparks Zoo - be sure to visit the Rainforest exhibit; you might want to call for tickets in advance.
- Cleveland Museums of Art and Natural History
- Cuyahogo Valley National Recreation Center -- great hiking trails; also good for cross-country skiing
- Gateway, Downtown - The Gateway complex includes Jacobs Field (Indians Baseball in the Gund Arena (Cavaliers Basketball), and the Cleveland Browns Stadium (Dawg Pound). Indians Tickets may be very difficult to come by!
- Buzzard Sunday in Hinckley -- don't miss the "official" return of the buzzards (turkey vultures) to Hinkley, Ohio; complete with pancake breakfast and art show; held right around March 15.
- Tower City - in the Terminal Tower
- The Avenue - renovated downtown shopping mall; Cleveland
- The Galleria - new upscale downtown shopping mall
- Lake Erie Islands - road trip to Sandusky (~50 miles west of Cleveland) and take a Ferry ride to the Islands
- Metroparks Hinckley Reservation - areas for rock climbing enthusiasts
- Cleveland Symphony Orchestra - plays on University Circle during the regular season; during the summer, they play at Blossom Music Center, and outdoor arena, take a picnic and make a night of it.
- Riverfest - outdoor festival held down at the Flats in August
- The Flats - a must do in the summer months. Lots of restaurants/clubs on the river; great boat watching and people watching
- The best place to go swimming in the summer is Mentor Headlands State Park in Mentor, Ohio. The best beach is on the north coast.

GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER (GSFC)

Sources

Gail Wade, PDP '96-97, Home Center: GSFC, Host Center: HQ

T. Harold Robertson, PDP '97-98, Home Center: JSC, Host Center: GSFC
Janette C. Gervin, PDP '93-94, Home Center: GSFC, Host Center: HQ

The main campus of Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) is located 10 miles northeast of Washington, DC, in Greenbelt, Maryland. Along with its facilities at Wallops Island, Virginia and the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City, Goddard has the largest scientific staff of all the NASA Centers. The Center was founded in 1959 as the first NASA Field Center devoted exclusively to space flight. It was named in honor of the legendary American rocket pioneer Robert H. Goddard, who built the first successful liquid fueled rocket in 1926. Some of the initial cadre for Goddard came from America's first space project (Vanguard) conducted by the Naval Research Lab in Washington, DC.

The Center is laid out like a college campus, (a good clue to the working environment), with numerous brick buildings surrounded by lawns and forest. Jogging through the woods, picnicking by the lake, fishing, (you have to release the fish), and deer watching, and feeding the geese are favorite lunchtime activities.

Goddard supports four Enterprises of the NASA Strategic Plan: Earth Sciences, Space Science, Human Exploration and Development of Space, and Aeronautics (at Wallops Flight Facility) in several endeavors, including research in the Earth and space sciences and the design, fabrication, testing and operation of scientific satellites that survey the Earth and the universe. Tracking and data network support is supplied to several NASA Centers in support of a variety of missions. The Center is involved in the mission operations of dozens of spacecraft on a daily basis.

Among the space science spacecraft, the highly successful Hubble Space Telescope is probably the best known Goddard project. Spacecraft operations and future Shuttle refurbishment missions are supported from the Greenbelt campus, while science operations are conducted from the Space Telescope Institute adjacent to the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Other space observatories include the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory, the Solar Anomalous Magnetospheric Particle Explorer (SAMPEX), and the Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite (UARS).

Goddard is NASA's lead Center for the Earth Sciences Enterprise, the NASA element of the U.S. Global Change Research Program. UARS was the first spacecraft in this program previously labeled Mission to Planet Earth. Another Goddard built platform for this enterprise, The Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM) satellite, was launched from Japan in November 1997. The Earth Sciences enterprise has led to the development of the east campus of the Goddard Space Flight Center. Five new buildings are either in use or nearing completion. Access to the east campus is off Soil Conservation Road. Goddard also remains the technical monitor for the nations' civilian weather observation satellites now operational by NOAA.

At its Wallops Island facility near Chincoteague, VA, Goddard is involved in the implementation of sub-orbital programs using aircraft, balloons, and sounding rockets.

Range operations at Wallops also occasionally support commercial orbital launches on small expendable vehicles (Pegasus, Taurus, etc.).

Goddard builds and supports several Shuttle payload programs including Hitchhiker, Getaway Specials (sometimes called GAS cans) and the Spartan family of spacecraft. Many of the space science spacecraft are still designed and fabricated in house at the Greenbelt campus. Most earth observation platforms are now contracted out, but the Center's unique test facilities are utilized in testing spacecraft before launch. The Center has one of the largest clean room facilities in the world and also has thermal/vacuum chambers and acoustic chambers to simulate the launch and space environment.

Goddard is involved in educational outreaches at several area universities and schools. For example, flight control operations for a Small Explorer mission (SAMPEX) are controlled from Bowie State University in Bowie Maryland.

Scientific data from numerous space flight experiments are catalogued, stored and for some missions, archived at the National Space Sciences Data Center (NSSDC) at Goddard. The NSSDC provides data in the form of magnetic tapes, microfilm and photographic prints as well as via the World Wide Web to satisfy the thousands of requests each year from the scientific community.

See also <http://pao.gsfc.nasa.gov/gsfcrmissions/misions.htm>

Administrative Trivia

- Electronic Mail Setup

GSFC uses Eudora mail on both PC and Mac platforms. From your Home Center may or may not be easy depending on the type of mail system used there.

- Badging, Keys, Gates, Etc.

Goddard does not utilize car decals for entry control. Your NASA ID must be shown to the guard for Center access. Each vehicle occupant must have a badge. The Badging Office is in Building 9 at the main entrance off Greenbelt Road. On the lower level (in back) of the building is the entrance to the section that makes office keys. A form signed by the facility manager of the building you work in is necessary to have an office key made. The main gate is open 24 hours a day. Other entrances are open from 6 AM to 7 PM Monday through Friday.

- Work Hours

Goddard has a flex time policy found at many other federal agencies. For most employees there are two core times between 9 AM and 11 AM and in the afternoon from 1:30 PM to 3 PM. The balance of the day is divided into three flexible bands

from 6:30 AM to 9 AM, 11 AM to 1:30 PM and 3 PM to 6 PM with a minimum of half an hour for lunch.

Your Home Center still controls the type of tour you are on (irregular, regular, etc.) Comp time and other issues need to be worked out with your Host supervisor and your Home management. Remember that to stay legal, you must log at least six hours for each business day that you draw per diem.

- Office Attire

As with most Field Centers, there is no real dress code at Goddard. Personnel in "the front office" (Building 8) and in some of the Project Management Offices tend to dress up more than other in the labs or other work areas, but in general, dress is casual.

- Commuting

Located just outside the Washington, DC Beltway, Goddard is roughly midway between Washington and Baltimore along the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. There is an employee only exit to Goddard off the Parkway.

The main entrance is off Maryland 193 (Greenbelt Road). Goddard was built on federal land ceded to NASA by the USDA and adjoins the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), which includes acres of farmlands and forest.

- Public Transportation

Goddard is theoretically accessible via the Washington Metro System. See http://www.wmata.com/for_a_system_map on the Metro home page. The Orange Line terminates in New Carrollton, Maryland while the Green Line terminates in Greenbelt, Maryland. A 25 minute bus ride from either station will bring you to the front gate. In addition, Metro now offers an express bus service from both the Greenbelt and Metro stations. <http://www.wmata.com/metrobus/default.htm> or <http://skynet.gsfc.nasa.gov/phonebook/BusSch.html> has the bus schedule from New Carrollton and Greenbelt.

Baltimore Washington International Airport can be reached via the Amtrak station in New Carrollton, and downtown Baltimore via either the Amtrak or MARC trains at New Carrollton, Seabrook (Lanham) or Greenbelt. GSFC also offers up to \$100 per month of subsidy to use public transportation. This program is run out of Code 234, the Transportation Branch of GSFC's Logistics Division.

- Driving

Most folks drive to work, however car pools and van pools abound. The GEWA newsletter is a good way to research this option and of course there's always the

Web. Try <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/metro/traffic/index.html> for starters. The metropolitan Washington, DC area and particularly the Capital Beltway, is just about saturated with cars during rush hour (which is much longer than an hour!). Short distances driven at off peak hours may seem intolerable when commuting.

Keep this in mind when deciding where to live In addition, the following link can be helpful for all transit related questions:

<https://www.commuterpage.com/onlineordering.cfm>

- Vehicle Licensing

Maryland has a fairly humane policy towards vehicle registration for out of state workers on extended TDY to the state. The Maryland Motor Vehicle Authority (MVA) will issue a nonresident sticker for your car that allows you to legally keep your car registered out of state for up to one year. To obtain a sticker you need proof of ownership, proof of current home state registration, driver's license and a letter with your Home Center letterhead indicating that you are on temporary duty in Maryland and the length of tour. Note that travel orders will not be accepted in lieu of a letter. The cost is a fairly nominal \$20.00. The process can theoretically be done through the mail before you leave your Home Center, although it may turn out that a trip to the local MVA is required. The nearest MVA offices to Goddard are in Landover just off of the Washington Beltway.

If you live in the District, they have a similar policy and can also issue a nonresident sticker. On the Virginia side, you apparently have to register the vehicle in Virginia to stay legal.

- Getting to HQ from GSFC and Vice Versa

Since GSFC is in such close proximity to HQ, there may be times when you may want to participate in AA briefings or other teleconferenced program meetings in person. Additionally, a collateral assignment at HQ might be a possibility. Some program classes are held at HQ or Capital Hill, so you will most probably find yourself venturing into the city during business hours at some point during your tour.

There is a shuttle bus service between Goddard and HQ that runs approximately every two hours. This service could be used if you live in the vicinity of fellow PDP participants who are commuting to Headquarters; just jump on the shuttle for the rest of the trip. Check the Goddard phone book for times and departure point. You can also call the Goddard Transportation office at (301) 286-6977.

There are a limited number of parking spaces in the NASA HQ garage allocated on a first come first serve basis for GSFC personnel on official business to HQ. Your NASA badge must be shown to the parking lot attendant and you must identify yourself as a Goddard employee. The attendant will then issue a parking pass and

advise you where to park. If all the GSFC visitor spaces are taken, then you can pay the \$8.00 parking fee and file for reimbursement (depending on how the travel regulations are being interpreted this year) assuming there are other open spaces in the garage.

There are a variety of options for commuting to the District from the Greenbelt area besides driving. The Metro from New Carrollton is a straight shot (no train changes) on the Orange line to Federal Center Southwest: however, commuter parking at the New Carrollton Station is a whopping \$6.00 without a bus transfer (\$2 at the Greenbelt station). Check the Metro home page for recent changes that may affect your commute. The Metro home page is <http://www.wmata.com/>.

- Airports

GSFC is about midway between National Airport and Baltimore-Washington International (BWI). Depending on where you choose to live, it may be easier to get back and forth to BWI than National, even though National is a little closer to Goddard.

Services

- Federal Credit Union

GSFC Branch NASA Federal Credit Union <http://www.nfcu.org/>
Goddard has a branch of the NASA Federal Credit Union located inside Building 21, adjacent to the cafeteria. There is also a branch on Greenbelt Road, approximately 1 mile east of the Center. In addition, there are NFCU cash machines located in Building 1 and Building 33.

- Travel Office

The Travel Office is located in Building 1. The number is 301-286-4188.

- Post Office

Limited postal service is available from the Postal Window in Building 1. Hours are 11:00 to 2:00, Monday through Friday.

- Cafeterias <http://internal.gsfc.nasa.gov/cafe/>

There are two employee cafeterias at GSFC. The larger one is located in Building 21 and a smaller facility is available in Building 1.

Hours of Operation

Building 1: Building 21

Breakfast: 7:30-9:00 Breakfast: 7:15-9:00

Lunch: 11:00-2:00 Lunch: 11:00-2:00

Cafeterias are open from 9:00-11:00 for incidentals

- Goddard Employee Welfare Association

Goddard Employee Welfare Association: <http://gewa.gsfc.nasa.gov/gewa/index.html>
The Goddard Employee Welfare Association (GEWA) sells everything from office supplies and souvenirs to tickets to local events. The store is located in Building 1 and is open from 8AM to 4PM Monday through Friday. GEWA also runs the gift shop at the Goddard Visitor's Center.

GEWA sponsors a number of clubs from Aerobics to Scuba Diving. See <http://gewa.gsfc.nasa.gov/gewa/clubs.html> for a partial listing. The softball fields and a rifle range are located on Beaver Dam Road.

GEWA Newsletter

The GEWA newsletter contains classifieds and announcements related to GEWA activities. It can be found in the gsfc.gewa.news newsgroup. A subscription through email can be set up by sending an e-mail message with the subject "subscribe" with your e-mail address to gewapost@pop700.gsfc.nasa.gov. In case a member of the newsletter staff needs to contact you due to a problem, please include your name, code, and office telephone number in the text of your message.

- Health Unit

The health unit is located in Building 97, telephone 301 286-6666.

- Fitness Center

The Goddard Fitness Center is also in building 97, next to the Health Unit. Like most NASA Centers, a valid physical must be on file before the facilities can be used. It may be possible for the Health Unit to review a copy of your physical from your Home Center to meet this requirement. The Center has a variety of exercise bikes, treadmills, cross-country ski machines and stair climbers as well as universal and free weights. The Fitness Center is open from 6:00 AM to 7:30 PM, Monday through Friday, with extended hours in the summer.

- Library <http://www-library.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

The library is located in Building 21. Hours are Monday through Friday 8:00am till 6:00pm. The staff there can issue you card for the automated book checkout system.

- Visitor's Center <http://pao.gsfc.nasa.gov/vc/vc.htm>

The Visitor's Center is located off Soil Conservation Road and is open from 9 am to 4 pm. (closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day).

There is no admission charge, and parking is free. The Gift Shop, located next to the Visitor Center, is also open daily from 9 am to 4 pm.

- **Training Opportunities**

- **HQ Training**

- Because of Goddard's proximity to HQ, training opportunities there should not be overlooked. Check <http://ohr.gsfc.nasa.gov/DevGuide/Home.htm> for details.

- **GSFC Training**

- Most onsite training is conducted in Building 1.

- Center training opportunities can be reviewed in the online catalog at:

- http://g-whiz.gsfc.nasa.gov/greenbelt/Employee_Services/Training/g-whiz.html

Web Sites

Note: All Internet links were current as of January 1998. Many of the topics mentioned here are covered much more extensively on their respective Web pages.

- GSFC Internet Web Site <http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/>
- Employee Intranet Site <http://internal.gsfc.nasa.gov/>
- Telephone Directory <http://skynet.gsfc.nasa.gov/phonebook/PHONE.html>
- Organizational Structure, the Center Organization Web page is <http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/gsfc/org/org.htm>. However this was not current as of February 1998.

Places To Live

Greenbelt, Maryland is in the suburbs. Some opportunities for short-term housing exist due to Greenbelt's proximity to the University of Maryland; check with the GEWA and the University. GEWA maintains a "for rent" section in their electronic newsletter classifieds (see GEWA Newsletter section to set up a subscription)

There are several apartment complexes within the Greenbelt area, however, Goddard is a only a short drive (depending on traffic) from most of Prince George's county (Laurel, Greenbelt, College Park, Bowie, etc.), Montgomery county, (Rockville, Silver Spring, etc.), Anne Arundel county (parts of Laurel, Annapolis, etc.), Howard county, (Columbia, Ellicott City, etc.), Baltimore county (Catonsville, Towson, Randallstown, etc.), Baltimore City, and Washington, DC. Northern Virginia (Alexandria, Fairfax, Arlington) is also a possibility, but rush hour traffic on the beltway may make this a less than pleasant daily experience.

Several apartment locator services the specialize in the metropolitan DC area. Apartment Search in Bethesda, is an "in office" appointment service that maintains a

large database on CD ROM. They can show you pictures and features of a wide variety of apartments and check on availability, lease options, etc. while you wait. This may be faster than doing it yourself over the Internet. Apartment Shoppers Guides are available at many grocery stores, newsstands, etc.

If you will be working at Wallops Flight Facility, keep in mind that your housing may actually be in the resort area of Ocean City, MD. If locating in a resort area, make sure you know that in order to get a furnished house, you may have to rent a winter rental for 6 months and then a summer rental for 6 months. The summer rental will be double the price and the per diem may not cover it. If you should own property in the resort area, you cannot stay there and collect the full per diem.

Restaurants

Greenbelt

- Popeye's/McDonald's/Taco Bell/Boston Market/etc.
- Beijing's (good Chinese; crowded on Fridays with GSFC folks)
- Osaka (Japanese)
- Maharaja (Indian)
- Cirpiano Liquor Store (great sandwiches; call in advance)
- Cetrone's (Italian)
- Bennigan's/TGI Fridays
- Chevy's (great Mexican)
- Outback Steakhouse (BBQ; OK so it's in Bowie)
- Red Lobster (I'm told there are better places for seafood)
- La Hacienda (Mexican)
- Three Brothers (pizza, etc.)
- Ruby Tuesday (across from main gate)
- College Park
- China Buffet (great all you can eat Chinese)
- Laurel
- Red, Hot, and Blue (BBQ)
- Olive Garden (Italian)
- Silver Diner (diner specialties)
- La Gringada (Mexican)
- Beijing's (same owner, different site)

Baltimore

- Inner Harbor (food court including Phillips Seafood Raw Bar)
- Annapolis
- Several restaurants in the old town area and across the bridge in Eastport

For dinner and/or special occasions, Baltimore, Washington, Annapolis, northern Virginia, Montgomery county, etc. have restaurants of every cuisine. Lines can be quite long at the more well-known places, however, some of the hole-in-the-walls have the best food. Check the Weekend section of the Washington Post on Fridays and the Sunday Magazine for some ideas.

There is also a guide to more than 100 restaurants available in local stores as well at the Washington Post Web site, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>. See Chapter 6 for suggestions on restaurants in the Metro DC area.

Things To Do/Visit

Below is a very incomplete list of things to do in the area. The Washington Post publishes a weekend activities section every Friday. The Washington Times has a similar insert on Thursdays. Some Web searches will turn up more links than you know what to do with for leisure time activities.

Maryland has some of the best weather in the country. Every Chamber of Commerce seems to have the same line. You will get to experience every season and its associated weather. Summers are usually described by the 3 H's, hazy, hot and humid. Make that Very Humid. Winters can be wild (51" of snow during the winter of '95-96) or mild (little or no snow in the DC area in '97-'98). Spring and Fall are very pleasant, and often too short.

Maryland's weather and location provide for a host of outdoors activities. There are numerous recreational opportunities in the area. Recreational Equipment Industries (REI) located in College Park (Rhode Island Avenue) is a good resource. They stock brochures and booklets on various outside activities and organizations. The store sometimes has their own programs on area outdoor activities and equipment (after all they are trying to sell you something).

Beaches

- Ocean City, MD (everyone's hot weather hangout, i.e. can be overcrowded), and Chincoteague National Seashore, VA. Almost any point on the Chesapeake Bay for water sports.
- Sailing and Kayaking
- GEWA offers sailing courses in the Spring and Summer for beginners. Chesapeake Bay and Annapolis are home to one of the largest collection of sailing vessels on the East Coast.
- Sea kayaking is also found on the bay and whitewater kayaking is found in the Potomac.
- Whitewater rafting is also a possibility in the mountain rivers and streams.
- Hiking, camping, backpacking
- Shenandoah National Park is only about two hours away.

- The Appalachian trail and numerous other hiking opportunities are found in the mountains of Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Winter Sports

It's not the Rockies, but assuming a year with some snow, cross country skiing and snowshoeing are available options. Several nearby alpine centers make their own snow augmenting the rather unpredictable natural snow of the Mid-Atlantic states. Snow boarding and snow tubing can be found at many of these resorts. The Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission runs an ice rink in College Park. There are several other rinks in the area including one on the Mall in DC.

Flying

College Park Airport claims to be the oldest continuous operating airport in the world and is probably the only general aviation field adjacent to the Metro. Further out towards Bowie on Church Road, Freeway Airport also offers flight instruction and aircraft rental. GEWA also sponsors an aero club. However, this airport has been grounded since the September 11, 2001 terrorist incidents, and its future is up in the air.

Antiquing

Antiques seem to be a big thing in this part of the country. Just remember that whatever you buy has to get back home once your PDP tour is over. Frederick, MD, New Market, MD, Baltimore's Antique Row, Annapolis, Alexandria, VA and everywhere in between seem to have an abundance of antique shops.

Other

- Chesapeake Bay Bridge Walk - Once a year (usually the second weekend in May) a Chesapeake Bay Bridge is closed to traffic and the pedestrians take over.
- City Stuff
- Greenbelt is centrally located in a triangle with Baltimore, Annapolis and the District forming the corners. This makes it a convenient base to explore these three distinctly different cities since each is only about half an hour away (non-rush hour). See Chapter 6, Getting Around Washington, DC for a pretty exhaustive listing of things to do in the District.

Baltimore

- Inner Harbor
- Ft. McHenry
- Annapolis
- U.S. Naval Academy
- Old Town - shopping
- Maryland State Capital Building

- Old Town Greenbelt Museum - Worth a look. One of the original 1937 Duplexes is preserved in its original state. See how your parents or grandparents lived in the Thirties.
- NSA Cryptologic Museum - <http://www.nsa.gov:8080/museum/> The NSA or No Such Agency (actually the National Security Agency) has come in out of the Cold War and now acknowledges its own existence with a museum dedicated to signals intercept, code breaking and computer security. In keeping with the cloak and dagger theme, hours are somewhat limited (M-F 9AM to 3PM and Saturday 10 AM to 2 PM), the location is not well marked and its inside what looks like a 60's motel. It's right off the Baltimore-Washington Parkway at the Columbia - Ft. Meade Exit. Worth a look if you're into this sort of thing. While CIA and FBI shirts and hats can be found all over DC, this is the only place that sells NSA golf balls and shirts!
- Smithsonian Garber Flight Facility - Located in Silver Hill, this is the "annex" of the Nation's Attic and contains aircraft restoration facilities as various aircraft and space artifacts that cannot be shown at the downtown Air and Space Museum due to lack of space. Reservations are required for the guided tour.

Trips outside the local area

- Maryland is a great jumping off place for almost any place on the East Coast. For day trips, New York City, Atlantic City, New Jersey and the Jersey coast are less than 4 hours away. Check the newspapers and bulletin boards for the many casino-sponsored bus trips for an exciting day on the boardwalk. Take in a show, shop, etc. if you don't gamble.
- Philadelphia is approximately 2 hours on Rt. 95 North while Richmond is almost the same distance on Rt. 95 South. Weekend excursions can include Boston, (approx. 8 hours), Atlanta, (approx. 10 hours), Charlotte, (approx. 8 hours), western Tennessee, (approx. 8 hours), you get the picture.
- Ocean City, MD (beaches) and Chincoteague Island National Seashore, VA are about three hours away.

Tip: There's always the train if you don't want to drive. Major cities along the eastern seaboard (Baltimore, Philadelphia, Wilmington and New York City, etc.) are all served by Amtrak. There is an Amtrak station collocated at the nearby New Carrollton Metro Stop, which means for most trains, you don't have to leave from Union Station in the District.

Shopping

Shopping convenience depends on where you decide to live of course, the following suggestions are centered around the Greenbelt area.

Malls

- Annapolis Mall - US 50 East - This is probably the closet "Megamall" to the Greenbelt area: Ward's, Hecht's, Penney's, Nordstrom's

- Beltway Plaza - This is more of a groceries and "basics" shopping center.
- Landover Mall - at the US 201 exit off of the Washington Beltway, Sears, Penney's, etc.
- Box Stores
- If you just can't function without Wal Mart and Target, fear not. Both can be found along with Pets Mart, Peoples Mart, Sports Authority, Kohl's, Sam's and all the other fine Megastores in the rapidly developing strip malls along Maryland 197, adjacent to the Washington-Baltimore Parkway. A similar mix of stores, including Lowe's, can also be found in Bowie at the US 50 and 301 Interchange.

Other Shopping Centers

- Greenway Center - basic strip mall with drug store, grocery store, car parts store, clothing, books, etc. There is a Bally's Fitness Center in the complex.
- Old Town Greenbelt - Convenient to Goddard. This sometimes overlooked shopping area once met the needs on the original Greenbelt planned community. Tucked away in the center of Old Town, the plaza has a supermarket, pharmacy, bank, credit union, one screen movie theater, post office, barber shop, etc. all in one central plaza. Easy pedestrian access from most of the Old town.
- Savage Mill - Just north of Laurel off of U. S. 1, this shopping complex was once a textile mill and now houses three antique malls and several arts, crafts and unique gift shops.

Colleges/Universities

Several colleges and universities are within an easy commute of Goddard making it a great place to leave from if you are planning to take evening classes.

To name a few within a 15-20 mile radius:

- Johns Hopkins University -Baltimore Campus
- Johns Hopkins University - Columbia Campus (offers extensive night courses in engineering and engineering management)
- Loyola University
- University of Maryland at Baltimore
- Morgan State University
- Coppin State University
- Bowie State University - Bowie, Maryland
- Capitol College
- University of Maryland - College Park - College Park Metro Stop (Green Line)
- University of Maryland University College - Rockville
- Catholic University - District - CUA Metro Stop (Red Line)
- American University - District
- George Washington University - District
- Georgetown University - located, you guessed it, in Georgetown!

Weather and traffic can extend your commuting time, so plan your classes accordingly.

JET PROPULSION LABORATORY (JPL)

Sources

Masashi Mizukami, PDP '02-03, Home Center: DFRC, Host Center: JPL

Meg Tuma, PDP '00-01, Home Center: GRC, Host Center: JPL

Daniel R. Glover, PDP '93-94. Home Center: GRC, Host Center: JPL

A developmental work assignment at JPL can be an extremely rewarding experience. The Lab is located at the foot of the San Gabriel mountains near Pasadena, California. Try to get a place close to the Lab to avoid long commutes.. This is your year, you don't want to spend it in traffic jams.

JPL is run by the California Institute of Technology (CalTech) for NASA. This can lead to a few problems for participants since JPL is really a contractor and not a conventional NASA Field Center. There are only a few NASA employees on site and they perform oversight functions and auditing. Secondary travel while on a developmental work assignment at JPL will not be possible unless you bring your own travel money along with you (either from your Home Center or from your sponsor's Headquarters office). Since JPL is a contractor, you are not allowed to accept travel money from them. All JPL funds come from program funds, so they pay for salaries, travel, hardware, etc., with the same color of money.

The program office at Headquarters will provide you with travel money for program related courses, such as the excellent Congressional Operations seminar. Make sure your orders have suitable travel arrangements to Washington, DC for the courses. Most participants are in Washington already and don't have to worry about it. As a participant at another Center, you will miss out on the monthly AA meetings and other get-togethers. You may want to try to video conference in on some of the HQ meetings.

When you arrive at JPL, your NASA badge will get you in the front gate and allow you to park. However, parking is the most important commodity here after salary. You need to arrive by 7:15 to obtain a spot reasonably close to the office. In addition, a JPL badge with a magnetic code is needed to operate the gates to the regular parking lots, to avoid walking all the way around to the staffed entrance. Apparently, the NASA Resident Office can obtain an on-Lab parking permit for NASA personnel. Stop at the Resident Office as soon as possible to get help in obtaining the right badge and to let them know where you can be found.

There are three main types of work at JPL: project office, research, and operations. Work in the project offices, such as Cassini, can be very hectic and high pressure, but is rewarding. The research groups are more laid back. One of the biggest parts of JPL is

the Telecommunications and Data Acquisition (TDA) Office that operates the Deep Space Network (DSN).

When working at JPL, you are identified by your section number. JPL uses a matrix organization, so people like to pigeonhole you by section. A section at JPL is equivalent to a large division at other Centers. Each section is made up of groups that correspond to branches. Your primary section job will define you in some ways, so find a good home. The JPL phone book can give you a feel for the organization and the types of work available. Since manpower is a direct charge to the program funds, most groups are eager to have your help once you explain that it is free. In fact, JPL employees must have valid charge numbers to for their time in order to get paid, similar to some companies. Office space is at a premium, so make sure your section is planning for your arrival ahead of time and has a place for you to sit. There have been layoffs here in the past with cancellations of programs like SETI or the loss of the Mars Observer. The library here is limited and it can be hard to check out books with a visitor badge, so bring your own resources. You may want to ship your computer out for the year, although my Host section was able to provide me with a PC. Negotiate up front while the idea of free help is fresh in their minds.

Being a NASA employee amid CalTech employees need not be a problem. Although there is an air of superiority regarding all things JPL, most people will accept you once you prove your worth. NASA here tends to mean Headquarters, with all the attendant connotations. JPL can be a contractor when it wants to and a NASA Center when it is advantageous. If you don't try to stick out as a NASA employee, you won't have any trouble fitting in. JPL has support contractors and also makes use of local university professors, so outsiders are not uncommon.

There is no checking at the JPL credit union, and I'm not even sure NASA employees can use it. Get a bank account at one of the major banks when you are out here on your pre-trip, but be careful, some savings banks are still in financial trouble. Writing a check in LA is difficult with local checks, and nearly impossible with out-of-state checks. Get a copy of your credit rating before you come; the credit rating companies will give you one free copy per year.

During your assignment at JPL, if you plan to go home, you can get to the airport either via the Super Shuttle (Blue Van) or drive to the airport and park. I found it cheaper to drive and park. JPL has coupons for airport parking that brings it down to about \$7.00/day.

Places To Live

For housing, there are several different options depending on your situation. If you have children, you will want to find a place in La Canada, San Marino, or South Pasadena; otherwise you can send your kids to a private school. If you do not have kids or are planning to send them to a private school anyway, you can look in Pasadena and Glendale for more reasonably priced housing and apartments. The best schools in the

area are in La Canada. It is also by far the best place to live, but you will pay a healthy premium. For example, a three bedroom house in La Canada will run around \$1800/month while in Glendale you might find something similar for \$1200. Per diem in LA is usually less than DC (I guess since the rates are based on hotel costs), but the housing costs are higher. Certain areas in La Canada are within walking distance of JPL.

Temporary housing is difficult to find. For a three month assignment, it is nearly impossible to find. Definitely check out the local apartment guides. For temporary housing, your options include: (1) Residence hotel (e.g. Homestead Village). There are several in Arcadia and Monrovia, but traffic is heavy to and from work, and (2) Corporate housing (furnished apartments). Oakwood is well-known but too expensive (exceeds per diem). Glendale had a few to choose from and that is where I lived for 2 months. I spent the other month at a Residence Hotel.

The JPL paper, the Universe, has some house listings as does the ERC bulletin board and roladex, but the best bet is to get a real estate agent, such as MacGregor Realty at (818) 790-8300, to help. To find your way around town, a Thomas Guide map book is essential and can be purchased for around \$20 at a local bookstore.

Restaurants

So much good food, so little time. The LA area has some of the most diverse and best restaurants in the world, so I won't even try to list them here. Search on www.zagat.com, and have fun.

For lunch, the Glendale Beeline and La Canada - Flintridge Shuttle buses offer free service between JPL and down Foothill Blvd, where there are several good places (remember what was said earlier about parking).

Things To Do/Visit

Pasadena offers many diversions:

- Norton Simon Museum of Art, the Gamble House, the Rose Bowl, the Rose Parade, Huntington Gardens, Descanso Gardens, and the night life of Old Pasadena.
- The nearby mountains include the Angeles National Forest.
- The beaches are about 45 minutes away.
- San Diego is a nice place to go for the weekend and is only a couple hours away by car.
- If you're into roller-blading or biking there are some great trails near the ocean in Santa Monica which are a lot of fun.
- Great museums, including The Getty Museum (<http://www.getty.edu/museum/>). I encourage you to check it out.

By the time the '03 class starts, a light rail line will go from Pasadena to Downtown LA (<http://www.mta.net/>), from where you can easily connect to many areas of Los Angeles and Southern California (<http://www.metroinktrains.com/> <http://www.amtrak.com/trains/pacificsurfliner.html>), and bypass the infamous traffic.

The JPL Employee Recreation Club (ERC) has discount tickets to all the major attractions in the area. The ERC is open to everyone working at JPL at no cost. There are many employee clubs associated with the ERC, from hiking and skiing to astronomy.

LA and California are full of things to do. There is more to do and see than you can get to in a year. Rather than arbitrarily pick a few to list here, check out these resources:

- Los Angeles Times CalendarLive section <http://www.calendarlive.com/>
- LA Weekly (<http://www.laweekly.com/>)
- California Tourism official site (<http://gocalif.ca.gov/>)

JOHNSON SPACE CENTER (JSC)

Sources

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John P. Lynch, PDP '97-98, Home Center: GSFC, Host Center: JSC

Leif L. Grotos, PDP '96 - 97, Home Center: HQ, Host Center JSC

Vincent Johnson, PDP '95-96, Home Center: JSC, Host Center: HQ

Forrest E. Lumpkin, PDP '93-94, Home Center: ARC, Host Center: JSC

Patricia L. Pahlavani, PDP '93-94, Home Center: HQ, Host Center: JSC

Johnson Space Center's primary mission is Human Exploration and Astro Materials. This entails work on the country's two manned space flight programs: Space Shuttle and Space Station. Work on the Shuttle program includes engineering support for the Shuttle Orbiter; flight crew selection, training and operations; mission operations; and medical research related to space flight.

Johnson Space Center has many unique facilities that are in use to help it fulfill its mission. These include the WETF (Weightless Environment Training Facility), the SMS (Shuttle Mission Simulator), the SESL (Space Environment Simulation Laboratory), the ARMSEF (Atmospheric Reentry Materials and Structures Evaluation Facility), and, of course, the well known (MCC) Mission Control Center. The WETF is basically a very large swimming pool where astronauts practice procedures that are planned for upcoming space walks. The SMS is full fidelity flight simulator that can interface with MCC for very realistic mission training. The SESL is a complex of vacuum chambers including the enormous Chamber A, which is 120 feet high and 65 feet in diameter. The ARMSEF is a 10 megawatt arc-jet that is used to test TPS materials such as the Shuttle tiles. The MCC is probably the best known NASA facility. Since 1965, it has served as

the nerve center for America's manned space programs. This includes every manned flight since Gemini 4.

JSC also has unique aircraft nearby at Ellington Field. These include KC-135s, T-38s, B-57s, and Shuttle Training Aircraft (STA). The KC-135 or "vomit comet" is used to conduct experiments during the about 40 short (~20 seconds) periods of weightlessness per flight it produces by continuously flying parabolas. The T-38 is a twin seat training fighter jet flown by the astronaut pilots to maintain their skills. The B-57's wings have been extended so it can be used for high altitude atmospheric studies. Through the use of a control computer the STA can be made to handle like the Shuttle when it is gliding towards landing in order to train the astronaut pilots.

Tens of thousands of tourists visit the MCC every year along with movie crews. For example, the KC-135 was used to film Apollo 13 and the WETF was used to film Armageddon. To handle the many tourists that visit JSC each year, NASA and a non-profit organization in 1993, opened Space Center Houston. Space Center Houston is located on land donated by NASA and contains many interesting exhibits from the space program.

In addition, the Space Center conducts guided tours of some of the more interesting facilities at JSC. The Space Center is operated by the non-profit organization, and a small fee of \$12 is charged for visitors. However, your NASA badge will get you in free, including parking, and get a \$2 discount for your guests. The Space Center offers many wonderful exhibits and allows you to experience the feeling of landing the shuttle, docking with MIR, or retrieving a satellite. Plan on spending a half day at the minimum.

About The Area

Johnson Space Center is located in the Clear Lake City, Texas district of Houston, TX. Although JSC is inside Houston's city limits, it is about 30 miles southeast of downtown. Clear Lake is a small lake connected by a channel to Galveston Bay; thus Clear Lake has many marinas for boats which sail on the Bay and on out to the Gulf of Mexico. For those interesting in taking college courses as part of your PDP training, the University of Houston is located approximately 15 miles north of JSC, and the University of Houston, Clear Lake (a completely different system from U of H) is just around the corner from JSC. Remember, if you start your PDP tour in August, you'll want to make inquiries about what courses they offer and get your transcripts transferred to the Office of Admissions.

Places To Live

It's great to apartment hunt in the Clear Lake area. The best way to find the kind of place you want is to "link up" with one of the apartment locator places. There is no charge and they know all the office staff at the different complexes, so setting up times to view the property goes much smoother. Besides in many cases the complexes have security gates so that hunting on your own without an appointment gets tiresome as you

try to find a way in to see some of these places. Usually the deposit requirements are minimal (like \$50 - \$100). I recommend getting a place with a pool and possibly a hot tub on the premises. I know the hot tub requirement sounds crazy for a place that has summer for about five months out of the year, but it sure is nice to have one in say December! Also, since the Clear Lake area has the most marinas, other than maybe Florida, you might consider living by the water. Two great apartment facilities are Hidden Lake and the Waterfront. Both are clean and offer great amenities in addition to being within 5 miles of JSC. But remember Clear Lake isn't too clear! Hot Tip: If you want to save about 20% to 30% on your car insurance, live in Galveston County. Harris County, which is the Clear Lake area, has one of the highest rates in the country!

Restaurants

While in Clear Lake, you'll be eating seafood, seafood, seafood! Oysters on the half shell are big here and cheap (on the right day at Joe Lee's, they're \$1.00 a dozen!). And don't forget to suck the head and pinch the tail of all those crawfish you'll be eating! Hamburgers are served with mustard and mayo only and you'll get your fill of grits, hush puppies and brisket!

Three "out of the way" places I really like are:

- What's Cooking (off of FM 528 in League City),
- Gilhooley's (a great beer joint overlooking Galveston Bay) and
- Bill & Marie's (off Kirby - great Bar-B-Q!).

There are many good restaurants near JSC including:

- The Flying Dutchman
- Landry's
- Joe Lee's
- Oasis
- Pappadeaux
- The Brass Parrot (Seafood)
- Tortilla's
- Mamacita's
- Tortuga's, and Laredo's (Mexican)
- Caesar's Café (South American)
- Walnut St. Café (Puerto Rican)
- the Jalapeno Tree (Texan).
- Also visits to the Turtle Club and Molly's Pub are a must.
- The outpost, a NASA watering hole is also required. The outpost is a hole in the wall but it has a lot of character and NASA history. STS crews often host free beer and hotdog happy hours to thank the JSC personnel for their support.

Things To Do/Visit

- If you enjoy two stepping, Borrowed Money, down El Camino is close and fun. They offer free lessons every Thursday and Sunday night at 7:00.
- Molleys and the Piggy are right across the street. Darts, pool, and other fun activities are available at both places.
- The beach town of Galveston is about a 45 minute drive from JSC. Sights to see there include the beach, the Strand, and the new Moody tropical gardens.
- The San Jacinto Monument and the Battleship Texas are other nearby tourist attractions.
- The city of Houston has many good shops, dance clubs, bars, museums and parks that are worth a visit.
- Galleria is a beautiful two million square feet mall with three stories surrounding a covered atrium with a skating rink in the center. Crystal plays Latin music in one of its two rooms and popular American music in the other one.
- The Ginger Man near Rice University has 165 different beers from all over the world.
- The Museum of Natural History, the Six Flags' Astroworld amusement park, the Waterworld Waterpark, and the Zoo in Houston are fun day trips.
- The Museum of Natural History, Moody Gardens, and Space Center all offer IMAX films that are spectacular.

If you want to see other Texas attractions and don't mind the drive:

- Dallas/Ft. Worth is approximately 260-300 miles north (5 to 6 hours);
- Austin (great music scene), is approximately 150 miles west (3 hours); and
- San Antonio (River Walk and the Alamo) is approximately 180 miles southwest (4 1/2 hours);
- Padre Island (great beach), and of course,
- Make a run" to the border - Mexico!

Professional sports abound in Houston and make for great evenings out for the sports enthusiast.

- The "Rockets" (men's basketball),
- Comets" (women's basketball),
- "Astros" (baseball), and
- "Aeros" (hockey)

One more thing that is fun to do is an airplane ride. It costs about \$50/hour but you can split that 3 ways and it is a blast. Houston has a great skyline..

Annual Events

- "Dickens on the Strand" at Galveston (usually held in early or mid-December).

- To get a real feel of Texas, go see the comedy called "A Tuna Christmas" (a hilarious account of the people in the third smallest town in Texas).
- Mardi Gras in Galveston (held ten days before Ash Wednesday, same as New Orleans).
- Houston Livestock & Rodeo (held the last half of February).
- "Go Texas Day" is held during this time and people can be spotted everywhere wearing their favorite western attire.
- Drive in the "hill country" near Austin during the end of March beginning of April to see the Bluebonnets (these wildflowers just cover the landscape along the highways).
- Ellington Field usually has an annual air show in September-October
- JSC Open House, usually in August, have hot air balloon festivals. And don't mind the longhorns that graze in the pasture right next to the Rocket Park at JSC.

Remarks of Former Program Participants

Watch your driving while in Texas! Everyone drives fast and likes to tailgate. Oh, and forget about using your turn signals. To make it worse, I think there are more patrols per mile here than anywhere.

Be careful of sudden down pours. The weather can change quickly and it is best to be prepared with an emergency car kit, raincoat, flashlight, etc.

This is a company town. Always let people know you work for NASA. You'll get treated right and you may even get a discount at local stores.

For more information about the Houston area, try the following Internet Web site:
http://city.net/countries/united_states/texas/houston/info.

And remember - Don't Mess With Texas!

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER (KSC)

Sources

Merri Anne Stowe, PDP '02-'03, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: HQ

Richard Kuhns, PDP '01-'02, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: MSFC

Lisa Malone, PDP '97-'98, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: HQ

Tricia L. Romanowski, PDP '96-'97, Home Center: LaRC, Host Center: KSC

Thomas D. Tokmenko, PDP '96-'97, Home Center GRC, Host Center: KSC

Sharon M. Wong, PDP '95-'96, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: HQ

Pam Bookman, PDP '95-'96, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: HQ

Linda T. Hannett, PDP '93-'94, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: HQ

Kenneth S. Monroe, PDP '93-'94, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: HQ

KSC is America's gateway to space and hosts an average of seven Space Shuttle launches per year. There is nothing like experiencing a Shuttle launch in person. You will feel the ground shake and thunder in your chest as you witness countless launches. NASA's fleet of Space Shuttles is housed in the three Orbiter Processing Facilities on base. It takes about 3 months to prepare a Shuttle, payload and facilities for launch. You will be exposed to Space Shuttle, Space Station and payload ground operations. There are just fewer than 1900 NASA civil servant employees and about 12,000 contractors (as of the end of 2001). The major contractors are: United Space Alliance which processes the Space Shuttles for flight; Boeing which performs payload ground operations processing (PGOC) which is transitioning to the new Checkout, Assembly, and payload Processing Services (CAPPSS) contract; and SGS which is the Joint-Base Operations Support Contractor (J-BOSC).

Thousands and thousands of spectators come to witness the Shuttle launches on base. (Car passes are issued on a first come first serve basis when a requestor writes in for a specific launch to: PA-PASS, KSC, FL 32899.) Astronauts routinely come back to KSC following their mission to thank the employees for their work in preparing the Shuttle for their mission. They will answer questions and give autographs. Check out the home page at <http://www.ksc.nasa.gov/>

About The Area

KSC is composed of 140,000 acres and is on the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge. There are thousands of species of animals on base including the bald eagle, a base population of about 7000 alligators (Do Not feed them!), manatees, wild boars, raccoons, etc. With the Banana River on the east side of the property and the Indian River on the west, you can plan on a lengthy but beautiful commute into work. Most aerospace contractors have some office in Brevard County to support KSC and the Shuttle, Station and Expendable Launch Vehicle programs and the activities sponsored by the Cape Canaveral Air Station (CCAS), which is adjacent to KSC. The Titan, Atlas, Delta and smaller launch vehicles are launched from CCAS on a regular basis. There are lots of historical launch sites to visit on the CCAS and space buffs would find that it is worthwhile to tour the CCAS museum and take the tour offered at KSC Visitors Center.

A few comments: Florida is very seasonal. Almost everywhere you go is casual. The population of Brevard County doubles from Christmas until about Easter, especially on the beaches. Popular restaurants can be very busy (read - long waits) during the winter. If you don't have the patience for waiting in line to spend your money on overpriced food, you'll have to adopt the "retiree style". (Eat before 6 pm) This can also be cheaper since many restaurants offer "early bird specials".

Places To Live:

(Tricia L. Romanowski, PDP '96-'97, Home Center: LaRC, Host Center: KSC)

If you are only going to be in the area for a year, Cocoa Beach is the place to be. But a couple of other options might be Cape Canaveral and Merritt Island. The area mostly consists of furnished 2 bedroom 2 bath condos that must be seen with a realtor. I used Dur-Rich Realty in Cocoa Beach and had more than adequate help finding a place. They can start searching before you come down on your Planning Trip. I lived at 2100 Towers which has the most amenities of any condo on the beach: pool, ping pong, hot tub, sauna, shuffle board, billiards, club house, and garages. But this condo is not a "young" place to live. If you want younger people in your complex I would suggest the Board Walk or Park Place condos. These two condos are located right by Coconuts, a fun hangout. Be sure to take the time to look at different condos before picking one. If you want something besides a condo, look in the newspaper, Florida Today. <http://www.floridatoday.com/!NEWSROOM/index.htm>

(Thomas D. Tokmenko, PDP '96-'97, Home Center GRC, Host Center: KSC)

For a year, live in Cocoa Beach, Cape Canaveral or Merritt Island. When looking in Cocoa Beach, don't forget to look on the "river side" not just the ocean side of A1A. There are zillions of high-rise condos everywhere so I will mention 3 townhouses if people don't like apartment style living. Village of Seaport in Cape Canaveral, Emerald Cove Townhomes of Cocoa Beach near 520/A1A and Ron Jon's, and Harbor Isles in south Cocoa Beach are nice.

(Richard Kuhns, PDP '01-'02, Home Center KSC, Host Center: MSFC)

I needed to rent for a six month period after selling my home and before the start of my PDP assignment. I used ERA Property Management 321-783-4000 to find a 3 bedroom duplex on Merritt Island. They handle lots of rental properties on north and central Brevard County. I also would recommend Treddar Realty in Titusville for rental property.

Restaurants

Cape Canaveral

- Rusty's - At the Port, Seafood, casual and inexpensive
- Frankie's - Wings at the port
- Grill's - At the Port, good for breakfast, lunch, happy hour (watch the cruise ships go out), & dinner. After-work hangout
- The Smokehouse - At the Port, smoked seafood & meats, informal, sandwiches at lunch plus retail sales (smoked alligator, anyone?)
- Kelsey's - Pizza and Greek salads (best pizza in Brevard)
- Gin Seng - good Chinese, associated with Yen Yen in Cocoa Beach
- Zachary's Greek/American
- Azteca II - Mexican
- Moon Hut - great breakfast!
- Manatee's - next to Blossom Natural Foods

- Durango's – steak

Cocoa Beach

- Sonny's BBQ - BBQ (good baby back ribs!)
- Taco City - Tex Mex (no credit cards)
- Atlantic Grille - On Cocoa Beach pier!
- Coconuts on the Beach - lively bar scene
- Bamboo Panda – Chinese
- Yen Yen – upscale Chinese
- Bernard's Surf – upscale, an old astronaut hangout
- Rusty's – Sibling to the one at the Port, Seafood, casual and inexpensive
- Heidelberg – German
- Alma's – Italian
- Roberto's Little Havana - Cuban
- Jack Baker's Lobster Shanty – seafood
- Mango Tree - expensive, best food in the area
- Italian Courtyard - (one block west of A1A on 520) inexpensive, good
- Gregory's – steak
- Thai Dixie – inexpensive Thai

Cocoa/Rockledge

- Grandpa's Steak House - A dive, but really great steaks.
- Lone Cabbage Fish Camp - great gator tail (out on the St. John's)
- Ashley's - great ghost stories (in Rockledge)
- Kaye's Bar-B-Que - Formerly Fat Boy Dixie Restaurant - Greek, great breakfast
- The Fairways - in Turtle Creek Community (in Rockledge), good specials

Cocoa Village

- The Black Tulip - trendy, gourmet, good value for the money
- Cafe Margeaux - across street from Black Tulip in courtyard, nice.
- Paradise Alley - sandwiches, and dinner specialties, trendy, casual and inexpensive
- Crackers - new

Indialantic

- Dos Amigo's – Mexican
- Blueberry Muffin - Breakfast and lunch
- Indian Harbor Beach
- Amigo's – Mexican
- Double's - Subs (really good)
- Mama's – Italian
- Hubb's Pub - Deli sandwiches, baked fries and tons of imported beer!

- Italian Oven - Gourmet pizza
- Miami Sub's - For fast food, it's the greatest!
- Fat Boy's BBQ - good local BBQ chain Charlie and Jake's - BBQ, w/ a drive thru window
- The Dove - great Italian, but a little pricey

Melbourne

- Conchy Joe's - Seafood (on river and really neat!)
- Fresh sha sha! - really good Italian food, a real sleeper!
- San Remo's - Real Italian and Pizza
- Shooter's - Variety (on river, has pool, volleyball and boats)
- Chart House - Steak and Seafood chain (on river at Melbourne Marina)
- Miyako - Japanese w/karaoke in the late evening
- Gen Nai - Japanese (all you can eat Sushi \$14.00/person)
- Name Unknown - Thai place next to Food Lion on Sarno Rd.
- Cracker Barrel - Great home cookin'
- Olive Garden - Italian chain
- TGI Friday's - Variety chain
- Bennigan's - Variety chain
- Cooker - Variety chain
- Fins - neat seafood place
- Islamorada - Cuban food, excellent
- Melbourne Beach
- Nick's Steak House - Steaks and seafood
- Jimmy Joe's - Best BBQ on south beaches
- Merritt Island
- Olive Garden - Italian chain
- Red Lobster - Seafood chain
- Outback Steak House - Steak House chain
- Shuttle's - KSC employee hangout
- El Toucan - Mexican
- China Garden - the best Chinese in town
- Tai Ho - great Japanese, cooked in front of you
- Italian Brick Oven - great Italian and lunch buffet
- Chili's - Southwestern Sportsbar Chain
- Applebee's - cheap draft beer anytime (not just happy hour) for \$.99 for 12 oz. drafts and \$1.99 for 24 oz. Drafts
- Carrabba's - Italian
- Longhorn Steakhouse - best steak ever
- Courtyard on the Grove - Converted house - Nice lunch/dinner place, patio dining optional.

Orlando (only a 45 minute drive)

- Orlando is the tourist capital of the world. If you can't find a restaurant here, you didn't look.

Satellite Beach

- Gyro's, Gyro's, Gyro's - Greek (inexpensive)
- Peg Leg's - Seafood (may be closed by now)
- Glenn's Ice Cream Machine - Ice cream and frozen yogurt
- Phoenix – Expensive
- Kyoto - good Japanese
- Titusville
- Dixie Crossroads Seafood (shrimp), unfortunately it's become a tourist attraction.
- Steamers- Seafood (river view)
- Ping On - Chinese, cheap, fast, lunch specials
- Peking Wok - Really good Chinese Paul's Smokehouse - BBQ, Steaks, Seafood (nice river view)
- Treehouse, 2 locations - Breakfast & lunch (Cozy {mom's kitchen type} atmosphere, great omelets and sandwiches - total seating about 20 people; don't even think about bringing the kids)
- Kelsey's - Pizza and Greek salads (best pizza in Brevard)
- Azteca – Mexican
- Fat Boys - Bar-B-Que
- Pumpnickels - great German and deli
- Kloiber's Cobbler - sandwiches, cobbler, soups
- S&S Middle Eastern Bakery & Deli
- Dogs R Us (sports bar, specialty buffalo wings)
- El Leoncito's - Mexican (good lunch spot)

Things To Do/Visit

Beaches

- Beach access is via any side street with available parking up and down the entire East Coast of the state. Paid parking is available at 520 and A1A on beach. Pets are not allowed on beaches. . Beaches do get crowded on weekends.
- Rent a beach bike and go for a ride at sunrise or sunset!
- Also great to walk, run on beach at those times which are surprisingly not very crowded
- Sign up for a night tour to watch sea turtles nesting (see newspaper for opportunities and seasons).
- They say surfing is best at the beach access near Patrick Air Force Base.

Sports

- This is baseball training camp mecca. The Cleveland Indians, Los Angeles Dodgers, Detroit Tigers, Cincinnati Reds, Minnesota Twins, plus many more come to Viera to play pre-season games in March.

Scuba Diving

- West Palm/Boynton Beach/Lantana has the best scuba diving on the east coast.
- Key Largo has great shallow dives. Lots of marine life where ever you go.
- I would suggest Ron Jonís for lessons with the instructor Bear. You can even dive with the Manatee's in Crystal River or Indian River Lagoon. Ask Bear for information on dive sites and boats.

Windsurfing

- Kelly Park on Merritt Island and 528.
- Also on 520 and Merritt Island.

Golf

Tons of places in the area and throughout the state. Usually have discounted fees after 2 p.m. Fees are higher in winter.

- Baytree in Melbourne is probably the nicest public course but a little pricey.
- Savannahs is closest to KSC and is very reasonable

Cape Canaveral

- Jungle Fun Center - mini-golf, go-karts, video games
- Mountasia - mini-golf
- Live music at Lloyd's at the port
- Fishing contests on weekends at the Port
- Cruise Ships, fishing ships for charter (If you have never been on a cruise, now is your chance, take a 3-day cruise to the Bahamas!)
- Tiki bar at Port
- Great for watching launches if you are not on base (Delta, Atlas Centaur, Titan, etc. Look in Florida Today front page, left column for schedules.)
- Jetty Park - good place to go to beach, facilities available, also great for launch viewing

Cocoa Beach

- Live music at the pier
- Surfside Playhouse - plays
- Ron Jon's Surfshop - world's largest surfshop open 24 hours.
- Surfside - open air deck on second floor
- Dino's - jazz
- Heidi's - jazz
- Coconuts - live music, great place to hang out on the beach, surfing, volleyball
- Desperados - great place to hang out on the beach, surfing, volleyball

- The Pier - live music, one of few beachy hang outs, great place to hang out on the beach, surfing, volleyball
- Jonathan's Pub - local hangout - pool tables, dart boards, bands

Cocoa Village

- Jazz at Thorpe Square - Saturday nights
- Cocoa Village Playhouse - plays, etc.
- Grumpy's - cigar bar
- Antique shops, gourmet store, misc. shopping, etc

Cocoa

- BCC Planetarium
- Lone Cabbage Fish Camp - air boat tours
- Viera Stadium - Marlins Spring training games (March and April) - great fun!!

Daytona

- NASCAR racing - Speedweek is in February, NASCAR museum
- Bike week is in March

Keys

- Fishing
- Snorkeling
- Scuba Diving
- Key West - Duval Street - Hemingway's house featuring 6-toed cats, Truman's summer home, Treasure hunter Mel Fisher's museum, shops, bars, bands (lots of Jimmy Buffett types), restaurants including Margaritaville, Sloppy Joes, Mallory Square side shows (See the Frenchman who trains cats to jump through hoops!)

KSC

- Spaceport
- Apollo/Saturn V Exhibit
- Open House for employees usually in the fall when its cooler - chance to bring family to see the Space Shuttles, launch pads, etc.
- KARS Park - available for employee use. Site of annual KSC picnic in spring.
- KSC Exercise Facilities at OSB in Complex 39 and at O&C in Industrial Area on base.

Melbourne

- King Center for the Performing Arts

- Turkey Creek Wildlife Sanctuary - canoe rental nearby

Merritt Island

- Spaceport - IMAX, KSC Visitor Center, astronaut Center, Apollo/Saturn V exhibit
- National Wildlife Refuge

Mount Dora

- Shops, annual art show

Ocala

- National Park, camping, hiking, hunting

Orlando

- Check the Orlando Sentinel Friday weekend magazine for events, ideas. KSC Sundry stores frequently have discounts for major attractions.
- Disney, Epcot, MGM studios, Pleasure Island, Planet Hollywood, etc.
- Disney Village and Boardwalk - mainly shops and restaurants, special events, great place for large family- no entry or parking fees
- Wet & Wild
- Universal Studios
- Sea World
- Cypress Gardens
- Lakeridge Winery
- Park Avenue - chic place to shop and eat
- International Drive - very touristy area but good restaurants, outlet malls
- Arena - pro-Sports basketball, hockey, arena football, music performances, etc.
- Church Street Station - Rosie O'Gradies, restaurants, shops, bars, very popular at night.
- Orange Ave. - Antique district
- Malls: Altamonte, Florida Mall, Belz Factory Outlet Mall

St Augustine

- Old Downtown area, great around Christmas

Tampa

- Busch Gardens - one of the best roller coasters in the country

Titusville

- Gator Jungle - gator show and Indian village (five miles out of town)
- Emma Parish Theater - plays
- Antique strip - antiques
- Canaveral National Seashore Wildlife Refuge self-guided tour
- Playalinda Beach (be advised there are nude sunbathers there!)

For an Attraction Guide look in Florida Today's Friday "Weekend" section.

Colleges/Universities

- Brevard Community College - BCC -campuses in Titusville, Cocoa and Palm Bay
- University of Central Florida - UCF - Orlando, Cocoa, and at KSC
- Florida Institute of Technology - FIT - Melbourne and at KSC
- Rollins College - Rockledge (the main campus is at Winter Park)

LANGLEY RESEARCH CENTER (LARC)

Sources

Carolyn Mariano, PDP '98-99, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: LaRC

Al Mariano, PDP '98-99, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: LaRC

Xuan Nguyen, PDP '98-99, Home Center: GRC, Host Center: LaRC

Bill Pannell, PDP '98-99, Home Center: MSFC, Host Center: LaRC

Debbie Morris, PDP '97-98, Home Center: KSC, Host Center: LaRC

Tricia L. Romanowski, PDP '96-'97, Home Center: LaRC, Host Center: KSC

Kelli F. Willshire, PDP '93-94, Home Center: LaRC, Host Center: HQ

Langley's primary areas of responsibility concern Aeronautics research and technology development. Agency lead for high-speed research; hypersonics; advanced subsonics; and critical aeronautics disciplines. Some research and technology development for the following Space areas: advanced spacecraft concepts, remote sensing, atmospheric science, and small flight projects. Engineering and Facilities support, especially wind tunnels, is another major effort. Technology transfer and commercialization is being increasingly emphasized, and a major office has been established to facilitate this.

Administrative Trivia

- Badges, Automobile Decals

Badge and Pass Office is located in building 1228 (Main Gate). New on-site employees are required to have LaRC badges. To obtain LaRC badge, you need to fill out a NASA LaRC Identification badge Request form in Badge and Pass Office.

LaRC also offers Entry-On-Duty Orientation briefings to new on-site employees. Check with Badge and Pass Office for the briefing schedules.

To obtain LaRC automobile decal(s) for your car(s), you have to fill out the Application for NASA LaRC Vehicle Identification Decal form, show your car registration, car insurance card, and badge to Badge and Pass office personnel.

(In Hampton Roads, there are so many out of state license plates because of the military personnel here I don't think motor vehicle bothers).

- **Work Hours**

Core hours are from 9:00am to 3:00pm, including one-half hour lunch period. Flexible time bands are from 6:00am to 9:00am and from 3:00pm to 6:00pm. Comp time is subject to supervisory approval. Comp time needs to be worked out with your PDP supervisor and your Home managers.

Your work hours should be coordinated with your PDP supervisor. Your timecard is submitted to your Home Center, therefore your hours should still be based on your Home Center policy (i.e. First 40, straight time, etc.).

Services

- **Cafeteria**

The cafeteria is located in building 1213. Breakfast is served from 6:15am to 8:30am, and lunch is served from 10:30am to 1:30pm, Monday through Friday. The cafeteria menu can be found at <http://ltw.larc.nasa.gov/news.html#cafe>

- **Travel Office**

LaRC travel office provides both official and personal travel services for Center employees. Government vehicle reservation phone number is (757) 864-2653. To reserve a GSA vehicle for travel in the area, call 4-2653. Travel Orders, driver's license and a LaRC badge are needed.

- **Langley Federal Credit Union (LFCU)**

Langley Federal Credit Union NASA Branch is located in building 1310 in the West Area. LFCU Air Force Branch is in building 467 in the East Area. LFCU Main Office is on Mercury Boulevard, Telephone number (707) 827-7200. The offices open from 9:00am to 4:30pm.

- **Fitness Center**

Langley Fitness Center is located in building 1222B (behind the H. J. Reid Conference Room). The Fitness Center is available to all permanent civil servants. It is open from 6:00am to 7:00pm. For more information about physical requirements, aerobic classes, or schedules, contact Langley Fitness Center at

(757) 864-3189. There are many sports clubs connected with the Langley Athletic Association that may be joined.

- **Medical/Health Benefit Information**

Members of Blue Cross Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan do not have to change a thing when you go to a different Center.

About The Area

Langley Research Center is adjacent to Langley Air Force Base (which boasts two 18-hole golf courses and a marina) in Hampton, Virginia. The Mother Center covers more than 1100 wooded acres next to Back River off the Chesapeake Bay. Hampton Roads is an excellent area for sailing, fishing, windsurfing or any water sport (except scuba diving or snorkeling). Virginia Beach is 45 minutes north. Norfolk and Newport News are nearby. Colonial and Civil War history buffs would go crazy in this place. Washington DC is within 3 hours; the Eastern Shore of Virginia and North Carolina beaches are within 2 hours, and Virginia mountains are within 3 hours.

Web Sites

- Information about NASA Langley: <http://www.larc.nasa.gov/>
- Information about Hampton Roads: <http://www.hamptonroads.com/>
- Restaurants & Local Activities: <http://www.hrtide.com/>

Places To Live

Apartments - Pick up an apartment locator guide in the grocery store. Many apartments are located around LaRC on Magrueder Blvd. (134) and in the Coliseum Mall area.

Houses/Townhouses - The Daily Press newspaper would be the best source plus realtors.

The Daily Press is on line at: <http://hamptonroads.digitalcity.com/> The Virginia Pilot is on line at: <http://www.pilotonline.com/>

Call the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce at (757)766-2000; for \$8, they will send you a 1" thick packet full of house and apartment guides, utility, banking, etc. information on the area.

Restaurants

Hampton

- Coliseum Mall area - Steak and Ale, Bennigans, Applebees, Chilis, etc.

- Italian place is incredible in the strip mall behind Applebees
- Fire & Ice
- Harpoon Larry's - great seafood, bar atmosphere
- Tommy's - breakfast/lunch
- Downtown Hampton has various places - Second Street, Roonies, Gray Goose, etc
- Buckroe's Island Grille - great view on the water
- Pheobus area

Newport News

- Patrick Henry Mall area - Outback Steakhouse, Cheddars, etc.
- Manhattans
- County Grille - great Texas style BBQ plus a bunch of micro brew
- The Virginia Brewing Company and Smokehouse
- Carmela's Home Style Italian Cuisine
- Herman's Harbor House Seafood Restaurant

Norfolk

- Ward's Corner area - Uncle Louis', Regmo's, etc.
- Ghent area - Tap House, Dumb Waiter, Café 21, Fellini's, etc.
- Waterside area - food court plus restaurants, Reggie's, Phillips, etc.
- Downtown area - La Galleria (and the French Restaurant next door)
- Freemason Abbey
- *O'Sullivan's - on the water

Poquoson

- The Poquoson Deli - good place for a workday lunch
- El Zarape - Good Mexican
- Poquoson Seafood House

Virginia Beach

- Tons in the beach area
- Duck Inn
- Henry's
- Raven
- Jewish Mother - great food, desserts, and micro brew

Williamsburg

- Paul's - deli, college crowd
- Greenleaf - college crowd, micro brew
- Colonial area - very nice restaurants, historic taverns, pick up a Williamsburg guide

York County

- Yorktown Pub

Things To Do/Visit

Hampton

- TGIF - at Strawberry banks (outdoors, band, beer)
- Downtown Hampton block party on Saturday nights in the summer
- NASA LaRC bar - opens at 4:00, special social every other Friday
- Virginia Air and Space Museum
- Virginia Living Museum
- Mariners Museum with a 5 mile hiking trail
- Langley Raceway - stock car racing on Saturdays
- Buckroe Beach - movies on Wednesday evenings in the summer, big band music on Sundays in the summer
- Bay Days in September
- Places to see Bands - Second Street, Roonies, Buckroe's Island Grille

Newport News

- Newport News Park - hike/bike trails, camping, art festival, Christmas drive through lights display
- Mid-Week Oasis - like TGIF, but on Wednesdays in the Oyster Point area
- Places to see Bands - Wipe Out Eddies, Mitty's

Norfolk

- TGIF - at Waterside/Town Point Park (outdoors, band, beer)
- Naro - artsy movies played at this theater
- Chrysler Hall - music, plays
- Cultural events - check the newspaper
- Waterside - weekly festivals, Spirit of Norfolk cruise, sailing cruises, concerts Harbor Fest in June
- Chrysler Art Museum
- Nauticus - a maritime museum
- Arcade
- Places to see Bands - Reggies (Irish music),
- O'Sullivan's, ODU area, La Galleria

Virginia Beach

- Tourist beach area has tons of shops, putt-putt golf, go-cart track, night life, etc.

- Amphitheater - concerts
- Concerts on the beach on summer holiday weekends
- East Coast Surfing Championships on Labor Day Weekend
- Neptune Festival in September - local's thing, sand castle contest
- Marine Science Museum
- Places to see Bands - Jewish Mother, too many places to name
- Virginia Beach and Norfolk have a special entertainment weekly newspaper.
- Web sites exist indicating what's going on in the area, including concerts.
- Bay Watch - free weekly guide to museums, theaters, special events
- By the Bay - free weekly guide to events.
- Williamsburg Virginia
- Monticello, drive the Blue Ridge Parkway and Sky Line Drive, wineries, see historic plantations, etc.

West Virginia

- Lots of outdoor stuff to do - white water rafting, hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, skiing, etc. White water raft the New River and the Gauley. The Upper Gauley has a dam release in September and October that guarantees excellent white water and is rated one of the top 7 rivers in the country.

Sports

- Mountain Biking - Newport News State Park - several different levels of mountain biking trails
- NASA Fitness Center - sand volleyball only and NASA LaRC.
- LAFB Fitness Center - available for your use. Much larger than the NASA facility. Indoor and outdoor swimming pools.
- Langley Air Force Base - you can rent all sorts of equipment there from barbecues to campers, canoes, kayaks, tents, skis, etc.
- NASA LaRC - Basketball, Volleyball, Karate, Bowling, Softball, Flag Football, Aerobics, etc.
- Baseball - Tidewater Tides, a AAA minor league team, has a new stadium in Norfolk by Waterside.
- Golf - Langley Air Force Base has 2 golf courses plus many others in the area.
- Hiking/Backpacking - Appalachian Trail in the Virginia mountains is 3.5 hours away. Check area stores for more information à Wild River Outfitters and Blue Ridge Mountain Sports.
- Hockey - Admirals, a minor league team - stadium is the Scope in Norfolk.
- Mountain Biking - check area bike shops.
- Sailing - Many people sail at LaRC and race in Hampton Yacht Clubs regattas.
- Skiing - Check out Ski World in Newport News for equipment and information. Virginia à Bryce, Wintergreen, White Tail, Massanutten. West Virginia à Canaan Valley, Snowshoe, Silver Creek, etc.
- Soaring - in Suffolk

- Volleyball - Newport News and Hampton YMCAs, Tidewater Volleyball Association, Sentara Hampton Health and Fitness Center - sand volleyball only, and NASA LaRC.

Night Life

- All bars serve food, this is a Virginia law
- Check out the Daily Press weekend section on Fridays
- Virginia Beach/Norfolk have a special entertainment weekly newspaper
- Web sites exist indicating what's going on in the area, including concerts
- Bay Watch - free weekly guide to museums, theaters, special events

College/Universities

- Thomas Nelson Community College - Hampton
- Hampton University
- Christopher Newport University - Newport News
- William and Mary - Williamsburg
- Old Dominion University - Norfolk and also a Peninsula Campus

MARSHALL SPACE FLIGHT CENTER (MSFC)

Sources

Andy Prince PDP '01-02, Home Center: MSFC, Host Center: LaRC
Mark Collard, PDP '00-01, Home Center: DFRC, Host Center: MSFC
Nancy J. Gibson PDP '97-98, Home Center: MSFC, Host Center: HQ
Patricia M. Doty, PDP '96-'97, Home Center: MSFC, Host Center: HQ
Steven J. Lambing, PDP '96-97, Home Center: MSFC, Host Center: HQ

Marshall is the world's premiere space propulsion Center and has been a vital part of America's space program since its creation in 1960. Under the leadership of its first director, Dr. Wernher von Braun, MSFC provided the Mercury-Redstone vehicle that put Alan Shepard into space and developed the Saturn rockets, which took the nation to the Moon in 1969. Marshall Center has managed many significant space projects during its history, including the Lunar Roving Vehicle (1971), Skylab (1973), Space Shuttle Main Engines, External Tank and Solid Rocket Boosters (1981), the Hubble Space Telescope (1990), and the Chandra X-Ray Observatory (1999). For the International Space Station, MSFC has provided management oversight for all of the pressurized elements (including the Multi-Purpose Logistics Modules), lead the development of the regenerative life support system and payload facilities such as the EXPRESS Rack, and is responsible for the management, integration, and execution of the Payload Operations Integration Center (POIC).

As a Space Propulsion Center, MSFC performs leading edge research in Earth-to-orbit and in-space propulsion systems. MSFC's mission areas are Space Transportation Systems Development, Microgravity, and Space Optics Manufacturing Technology. As part of Space Transportation Systems Development, Marshall is responsible for all of the primary propulsion elements of the Space Shuttle. Marshall is the Lead Center for NASA's Space Launch Initiative Program, intended to support Government and private-sector decisions on development of a full-scale operational next generation reusable launch system by 2006. In the area of Advanced Space Transportation Technology, MSFC manages the X-37 Program and develops 3rd Generation reusable launch vehicle technologies. The Microgravity Research Program Office (MRPO) is responsible for implementing the Agency's microgravity initiatives. MRPO accomplishes its mission by providing program management of research and associated instrumentation, apparatus, and facilities. The Space Optics Manufacturing Technology Center (SOMTC) is continuing the development of new technologies for the production of large-aperture, lightweight optics for space-based systems. SOMTC is managing and evaluating the development of advanced mirror technologies for use in space based observatories including the Next Generation Space Telescope and the Constellation X-Ray mission.

MSFC engages in two collaborative activities with academia and industry: the Global Hydrology and Climate Center (GHCC); and the National Space Science and Technology Center (NSSTC). The GHCC focuses on advanced technology to observe and understand the global climate system, and applies this knowledge to agriculture, urban planning, water resource management, and operational meteorology. The NSSTC combines cutting edge and applied research with education.

It's unique blend of people, facilities, and tools is designed to encourage advanced in Earth Science, Space Science, Biotechnology, Optics, Energy Technology, Propulsion Physics, Materials Science, and Information Technology.

Much more information on Marshall's missions and activities can be found at <http://www.msfc.nasa.gov/>.

About The Area

Huntsville's population truly reflects international cultures. Of the 180,000 city residents, more than 10 percent are natives of other countries. More than 100 languages and dialects are spoken here. Visitors who want to be "astronauts for a day" can sample astronaut training activities at the sprawling U.S. Space and Rocket Center. The hands-on showcase of space technology is the state's largest tourist attraction. It is home to the internationally known U.S. Space Camp, which has franchise operations in Japan, Belgium and Canada. A variety of city museums downtown and an outstanding symphony orchestra offer rich cultural opportunities involving the arts. The legendary Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, which encompasses 18 courses in seven cities in Alabama, begins here at the 54-hole Hampton Cove Golf Course. Hampton Cove features two championship courses surrounded by mountains and lakes. Alabama now ranks fifth in the nation for public golf courses per resident.

Huntsville was still a cotton market town of 16,437 people in 1950 when U.S. Sen. John Sparkman (who lived in Huntsville's historic Twickenham neighborhood) brought a band of German rocket scientists to Redstone Arsenal to develop rockets for the U.S. Army. By the end of the decade, Wernher von Braun's team had developed the Redstone ballistic missile, which, when combined with a fourth stage and renamed the Jupiter, orbited America's first satellite. They eventually put the first American in space and transported the first astronauts to the Moon. The influx of engineers, scientists and other technical specialists has transformed the small town into a cosmopolitan community, which nonetheless maintains its heritage and reputation for hospitality. The Huntsville area remains one of the South's fastest-growing. The county's population is estimated at 260,000. It has the highest per capita income in the Southeast. Atlanta's is second. The Huntsville Chamber of Commerce telephone number is 256-535-2000.

Web Sites

- The Huntsville Convention & Visitors Bureau can be reached at 256-551-2230 (<http://www.huntsville.org/>).
- The local paper is The Huntsville Times, their Web site is <http://www.al.com/huntsvilletimes/today>
- General information about the Huntsville area can be found at <http://www.al.com/huntsville/>
- The Huntsville visitors bureau Web site (<http://www.huntsville.org>) has information on local attractions

Lots of good relocation information, phone numbers, etc. is available at <http://www.introhuntsville.com/>

Places To Live

Two Free resources for apartments are the Quest Publications Apartment Guides, (256) 461-9911, and Apartment Finders by APT Relocation Inc., (256) 881-1660 and (888) 883-1611 (<http://www.aptrelocation.com>). Numerous apartments are within an easy commute to MSFC, shopping, etc. Rental homes are also plentiful. The preferred locations are Madison and Southeast Huntsville. The best source for rental property is the classified section of The Huntsville Times (<http://www.al.com/huntsvilletimes/today/>).

Huntsville City Schools: <http://www.hsv.k12.al.us/>

Note: Huntsville and Madison County Schools start in early August.

There are also numerous private schools

Important Phone Numbers:

Telephone: BellSouth (256) 557-6500

Utilities: Huntsville Utilities (256) 535-1200
(Electricity, natural gas, and water)

Restaurants

Like most metropolitan areas of our country, Huntsville is blessed with the usual selection of chain restaurants such as Friday's, Applebee's, Chili's, etc. Fortunately, a number of local eateries provide great food, unique dining experiences, and local flavor. The following is a sampling of restaurants by type that I am familiar with. Huntsville has many more excellent restaurants than those listed below. Ask around or check the Yellow Pages.

Chinese:

Huntsville has a large number of good Chinese restaurants. They are located throughout the area and one or two are almost always nearby. Below is a short list of those that I have experienced and found to be worth the trip.

- Ding How Chinese Restaurant, Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville
- Tai Pan Chinese Restaurant, locations in Madison and South Huntsville
- Jade Palace, 4925 University Dr., Huntsville, great lunch buffet

Japanese

- Huntsville has two traditional Japanese steak houses (the ones where they cook it before you eyes): Shogun Japanese Steak & Sushi Bar, 3780 University Drive, and Mikato Japanese Steak House & Lounge, 4061 Independence Drive (on Jordan Lane). Both have good food and are fun for a group outing.
- For something different (and more traditionally Japanese) try the Edo Japanese Restaurant in Madison (just off of Madison Blvd). The food and service are excellent.
- Huntsville also has at least two sushi bars: Miwon on Jordan Lane and Nikko Japanese Restaurant and Sushi Bar in Hampton Cove.

German

Not only did von Braun and his fellow Germans bring rocket science and high culture to Huntsville, they also brought great German food. You can find great snitzel, bratwurst, incredibly rich deserts, and other German delicacies at any of the following restaurants.

- Café Berlin, 505 Airport Road, Huntsville
- Biergarten Café, 3810 Wall Triana Highway, Madison
- Ol' Heidelberg Café, 6125 University Drive, Huntsville (the original Huntsville German Restaurant)

Mexican

Recent immigration of workers from south of the border has dramatically increased both the quantity and quality of Mexican restaurants in the Huntsville area. Below are just a few of the many Mexican restaurants worth trying.

- El Camino Real, 5 locations, good food at a good price
- El Palacio of Mexican Food, 2008 Memorial Parkway, the original Huntsville Mexican Restaurant
- Mazatlan Mexican Restaurant, 7904 Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, different and very good
- Pepito's Mexican Restaurant, 3508 Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, large menu, great margaritas
- Rosie's Mexican Cantina, 2 locations, very good food, a little nicer than your typical Mexican restaurant

Italian

Huntsville is poor in quantity but high in quality of Italian restaurants.

- If you want basic Italian, go to Olive Garden.
- If you want excellent food, service, and a great dining experience, try either Tortellini, 7500 Memorial Parkway, or Villa Fiore, 11050 Memorial Parkway (reservations recommended).

Both restaurants serve Italian cuisine that is above and beyond your typical pasta dishes.

Bar-B-Que and Catfish

If any two foods are representative of North Alabama, it is Bar-B-Que and Catfish. Shredded pork Bar-B-Que, ribs, and deep fried whole catfish (fillets are for sissies) are required as part of your Huntsville experience (note to vegetarians: if MSFC is your PDP location, you are in for a long year). If you don't raise your cholesterol level by at least 25 points during your stay, you ain't eatin' right. The following are just a few of the Bar-B-Que and Catfish places you should try.

- Corky's Ribs & Bar-B-Que, 3777 University Drive, Huntsville, Memphis style dry ribs
- Gibson Barbecue, 2 Huntsville locations, local atmosphere
- Greenbrier Bar-B-Que, Highway 20, Madison, original restaurant, great catfish
- Greenbrier Restaurant, 27028 Old Highway 20, original location of Greenbrier Bar-B-Que, lots of local atmosphere, great food, try both Greenbrier's and you can join in on the local debate over which is the best
- Lawler's Barbecue, 5004 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, good take-out food
- Thomas Pit Barbecue, Highway 72, Madison, slow but well worth the wait, local atmosphere

- Big Bob Gibson's, 6th Avenue, Decatur, THE BEST Bar-B-Que in North Alabama, make the drive
- Four MC's Family Restaurant, Highway 72 East, catfish, BBQ, steaks, highly recommended

Gourmet/Fine Dining

For its size, Huntsville has a number of excellent gourmet and fine dining restaurants. Most of these places are small and provide an intimate atmosphere that may be just right for that special occasion. All have great food and service. Reservations are recommended.

- Pauli's Bar & Grill, corner of Slaughter Road & Highway 72, Madison
- Jazz Factory, North Courthouse Square, Downtown Huntsville, San Francisco Cuisine
- Hampton House Restaurant, Hampton Cove, casual gourmet dining
- Salmon Bar & Grill, Airport Road, Huntsville
- Café Paris, 4800 Whitesburg Drive, excellent French cuisine
- Wildflour Bistro, 600 Jordan Lane, Huntsville
- Villa Fiore, 11050 Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, excellent gourmet Italian

Local Flavor

The following are Huntsville eateries that will provide you a real local experience. Some are long time establishments, some are newer, most have good food. Your PDP year will not be complete without trying a few of these.

- Eunices, on Andrew Jackson Way (ask a local for directions) for a good southern breakfast
- Rolo's, Airport Road near Books 'A' Million, home style cooking, plate specials
- Duffy's Delicatessen, 2324 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, try the white chili
- Fogcutter Restaurant & Lounge, 3805 University Drive, Huntsville, steaks and seafood, upscale atmosphere, great food
- Krystal Burgers, numerous locations, southern version of White Castle
- Mullins Drive In, 607 Andrew Jackson Way, classic local drive-in
- Stanlieo's Sub Villas, 2 Huntsville locations, best subs in town
- Tenders, 2 locations, chicken tenders & fries, part of a small chain started in Auburn, Alabama
- Tim's Cajun Kitchen, 114 Jordan Lane, Huntsville, good, good, good, hot, hot, hot
- Terry's Pizza, 3 Huntsville locations, bikers, booze, best greasy pizza ever, extreme local experience
- Zesto's Drive In, Five Points area of Huntsville, unusual menu items

Things To Do/Visit

- U.S. Space & Rocket Center, I565, just East of Gate 9. World's largest space attraction, features U.S. Space Camp Training Center and Spacedome Omnimax theater (<http://www.ussrc.com/>)
- Monte Sano State Park, on top of Monte Sano mountain. Take University Drive east, it becomes Pratt Ave., which then becomes Bankhead Parkway. Includes Mansion/Museum, picnicking and hiking trails.
- Huntsville Stars minor league baseball
- Big Spring Park, downtown Huntsville.
- Alabama Constitution Village Park
- Twickenham Historical District
- Huntsville/Madison County Botanical Garden - 112 acre garden
- Burrit Museum and Pioneer Village
- Huntsville Museum of Art
- Historic Huntsville Depot Museum
- Huntsville Depot Trolley
- Von Braun Astronomical Society Planetarium
- Panoply - Huntsville's Fantastic Festival of the Performing and Visual Arts (<http://www.panoply.org/>)
- Spirit of Alabama - Memorial Day weekend in Decatur, AL with festivities including fireworks and hot air balloon races
- Big Spring Jam - festival of music usually held in September
- Ocoee River with whitewater rafting 1 1/2 hours away in Tennessee
- Tennessee Aquarium 2 hours away in Chattanooga, TN
- Nashville, TN and the Grand Old Opry, 2 hours away
- Birmingham Zoo, 1 1/2 hours away
- Atlanta, GA is less than 4 hours away with professional sports, Six Flags over GA, Zoo, Stone Mountain Park and much, much more.
- Gulf coast beaches are approximately 6 hours away.
- Redstone Arsenal has many activities and facilities that can be used by NASA employees. The base has a 27 Hole golf course, flying club, several exercise facilities, hobby shops (auto, woodworking, crafts, etc.) and restaurants/clubs. Club information can be obtained via the Redstone Web site.

Colleges/Universities

- University of AL in Huntsville (UAH) (256) 824-3000
- Alabama A&M University (256) 851-5000
- Calhoun Community College, some classes taught in Huntsville (256) 890-4700
- Athens State College, some classes taught in Huntsville
- Florida Institute of Technology, classes taught on Redstone Arsenal

Miscellaneous

Bama Brew, Home Brewing Supplies (256) 534-8807, owned by a '97-'98 PDP

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