

TRAJECTORIES

Official Newsletter of the Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum

Quote of the Month:

"In all of this emptiness, this is a whole bunch of nothing, this thing we call the universe – you have this oasis, this beautiful place that we get to exist together." Astronaut Victor Glover, Artemis II Mission

Cool Under Pressure



Historic preservation sometimes means caring for the systems behind the scenes as much as the artifacts on display. Earlier this year, the aging climate control system serving both the Exhibit Hall and Blockhouse at Launch Complex 26 suffered a major setback when its chiller finally failed after years of temporary fixes. In a harsh seaside environment, mechanical systems face a shortened lifespan, and this one had reached its limit.

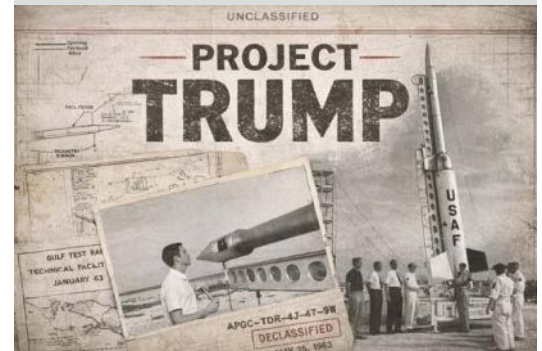
Because LC-26 has served as the Museum's operational heart since 1966, maintaining a stable preservation environment inside these historic spaces is essential. Temperature and humidity control help protect irreplaceable artifacts, archives, and exhibits entrusted to our care. Fortunately, the failure occurred during cooler months, buying valuable time as concerns mounted with warmer weather approaching.

Thanks to outstanding support from Installation personnel and skilled contractors, a temporary chiller was quickly installed and integrated into the existing system, restoring

stable environmental conditions. This interim solution will remain in place until a permanent replacement chiller is installed later this year.

It may not be the most visible preservation project, but it is among the most important. Sometimes protecting history starts with keeping it cool.

DID YOU KNOW?



In the early 1960s, Cape Canaveral supported a little-known secret effort called Project TRUMP, short for Target Radiation Measurement Program. Using Nike-Cajun and Nike-Javelin sounding rockets, scientists launched instrumented "flying laboratories" to trail major launches and study rocket emissions, motion, and atmospheric effects. The data helped engineers better understand missile and launch behavior and contributed to technologies tied to tracking and early warning. Explore this fascinating story in our new 10-part series on Museum social media.

Message from the Director

James W. Draper



If I sound a bit like a broken record, it is because the story keeps repeating itself in the best possible way, another remarkable two-month stretch has come and gone, and the pace has been extraordinary. This is not a static or sleepy historic site. It is a living, working museum operation embedded within the World's Premier Gateway to Space, where history is not simply interpreted, it continues to unfold around us every day.

The past two months captured that reality in full. The tempo was fast, the schedule often unpredictable, and demands came from every direction. Through it all, our museum team rose to the occasion with the professionalism, flexibility, and good humor that define this operation. I continue to be inspired by what this small but mighty team accomplishes.

The Artemis II launch brought that energy into especially sharp focus. Like any major launch campaign, there were delays, holds, and shifting timelines that tested calendars and required constant adjustments. Yet those challenges also created tremendous opportunities. When launch day finally arrived and Artemis II lifted off, it was nothing short of breathtaking. Hundreds of thousands came to Florida's Space Coast to witness history. Interest in our tours surged, bookings filled far in advance, and visitor traffic across our museum sites reached exceptional levels. It was a powerful reminder that the story we preserve here continues to resonate with people around the world.

And Artemis was only part of the picture. Alongside that historic launch, we maintained an ambitious calendar of specialty tours, educational programs, public events, military

ceremonies, and outreach activities. Spring Break brought heavy visitation as it always does, though this year seemed especially robust. What visitors often do not see is the constant effort required behind the scenes to keep everything moving, facility maintenance, volunteer scheduling, artifact stewardship, event coordination, and a long list of projects that rarely make headlines but are essential to our mission.

What makes it all possible is people. Our museum volunteers once again provided extraordinary daily support, often stepping in wherever needed and doing so with enthusiasm and dedication. Our staff, foundation members, and mission partners continued to strengthen this operation in countless ways. Their commitment is reflected throughout the updates in this newsletter, which showcase the breadth of what has been accomplished in just a short span.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributes to this mission. Together, we are preserving history, sharing it with growing audiences, and helping shape the future of this museum at a truly exciting moment. Thank you for being part of it. The momentum is real, and we are just getting started.

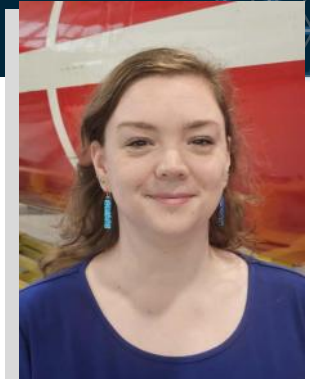
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James W. Draper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James W. Draper, Museum Director



The Curator's Corner

with Sabra Gossett



The word “*lunatic*” comes from the Latin *lunaticus*, meaning “moonstruck.” Recently, that definition felt especially fitting—millions of people turned their attention back to the Moon during Artemis II, when four astronauts traveled around it, coming closer than any humans had in over fifty years.

That renewed interest sparked a simple but surprisingly common question: does the Moon actually have a name?

The answer is both yes—and no.

The word “*moon*” itself comes from the Old English *mōna*, rooted in even older terms connected to measuring time. Officially, Earth’s natural satellite is simply called the Moon (with a capital “M”). Meanwhile, the natural satellites of other planets are called *moons* (lowercase).

So why does ours get such a plain name?

For most of human history, it didn’t need anything more specific. The Moon was the only one we knew existed. That changed in 1610, when Galileo Galilei observed four moons orbiting Jupiter—revealing that our Moon was not unique after all. Today, scientists have identified more than 800 moons throughout the solar system, each with its own distinct name.

Even so, our Moon has kept its original, straightforward title.

That doesn’t mean it lacks alternatives. Across cultures and history, it has also been called Luna (Latin), Selene (Greek), and even Cynthia—a lesser-known name tied to the goddess Artemis, who was said to have been born on Mount Cynthus.

The Moon has also played a central role in space exploration. The first missions to another celestial body began in 1959 with the Soviet Union’s Luna program, including *Luna 1* (a flyby) and *Luna 2* (the first human-made object to impact the Moon). By 1966, *Luna 9* achieved the first soft landing, and *Luna 10* became the first spacecraft to orbit it.

Humans reached lunar orbit for the first time with Apollo 8 in 1968. Just months later, Apollo 11 made history when astronauts set foot on the lunar surface. Between 1969 and 1972, six Apollo missions landed a total of twelve people on the Moon—making it the only world beyond Earth ever visited by humans.

Now, more than half a century later, we’re preparing to go back. Following upcoming Artemis missions, NASA plans to return astronauts to the lunar surface later this decade.

Despite everything we’ve learned—and all the names we’ve given to other worlds—our closest celestial neighbor remains simply, and fittingly, the Moon.



Museum Updates and News

Rupert Steps into the Spotlight

Visitors to the Sands Space History Center are now greeted by a new Rupert the Space Armadillo pop-up banner outside the gift shop. The display introduces Rupert's story, adventures, logo, fun facts, and includes a QR code linking to his online biography. It is a playful new way to connect guests with the Museum's orbiting mascot and help make Rupert a household name. *(To the right the new Rupert banner stands aside Jamie Draper during a recent presentation at the History Center.)*



Museum Reels Expand Outreach

The Museum's new daily educational reels are reaching new audiences across social media. These short-form videos highlight artifacts, facilities, events, and overlooked Cape history in fresh, accessible ways. Audience engagement and interaction have risen significantly as these "micro-stories" connect with viewers well beyond the Space Coast. More creative digital outreach is on the horizon. *(To the right is Jamie sharing some history on old Mission Control on a social media reel for the International Day for Monuments and Sites.)*



New Volunteers Join the Mission

More than a dozen incoming museum volunteers completed orientation and training in March. Thanks to Cecil Walker, Al Therriault, Ed and Patty Riskosky, Carl Claunch, Jack Kennedy, and Randy Coppola for helping guide the process. New volunteers toured facilities, met the team, began shadowing, and several have already earned certification. Our volunteer corps continues to grow stronger. *(On the left is a photo of new volunteers learning opening procedures for the History Center.)*



Museum Updates and News



Dr. Gretchen Green Speaks

March's CAPE Series featured Dr. Gretchen Green, radiologist, educator, and STEAM advocate who flew aboard Blue Origin's New Shepard NS-32 mission. She shared an inspiring story of curiosity, exploration, and lifelong learning. Held on Girl Scout Day, the event also honored Dr. Green's Girl Scout roots and the origins of the CAPE Series itself, which began as a Girl Scout Gold Award project. *(On the left is an image of Dr. Green sharing her adventures with a captivated crowd at the History Center.)*

Cape Joins March of Museums

For the first time, the Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum participated in Florida's statewide March of Museums program. Sponsored by the Florida Department of State, the initiative highlighted the creativity and impact of museums across Florida. The showcase introduced new audiences to the Museum's story and underscored our place in Florida's vibrant cultural landscape. *(To the right is a screen grab from the official [March of Museums website](#).)*



National Space Club Breakfast

Museum staff and volunteers filled three tables at the National Space Club Florida Committee breakfast in March, showing strong support for the regional space community. Featured speaker Colonel Brian Chatman, Commander of Space Launch Delta 45, shared recent achievements and future opportunities. Special thanks to Jack Kennedy for helping organize the Museum's strong showing. *(To the left is a view of the Museum group preparing for a group photo with the Commander.)*

Museum Updates and News

Honoring Lee Starrick

Longtime volunteer Lee Starrick received the Department of the Air Force Volunteer Excellence Award, recognizing sustained and consequential service. Lee's more than 40 years of dedication to the Museum have inspired generations of visitors and supported countless programs behind the scenes. We proudly celebrate this well-earned honor and thank Lee for a lifetime of service. *(To the right, Lee poses with Col Chatman and Chief Apodaca at the official VEA ceremony.)*



Capturing the Collection in Full

A major milestone was reached with completion of a new 100 percent artifact inventory, paired with a full re-photographing of the collection. Led by Curator Sabra Gossett and museum volunteer Roger McCormick, the photography provides a visual record of each object's condition at a moment in time. It is essential work supporting stewardship and long-term collections management. *(To the left is a view of Sabra Gossett preparing an artifact for photographing.)*

Roland Miller Returns to the Cape

Acclaimed space photographer Roland Miller returned to document historic sites across Cape Canaveral. Known for preserving overlooked launch complexes through powerful imagery, Roland revisited structures rich in history and character. His work continues to capture the visual legacy of America's early launch infrastructure and remind us why preserving these places matters. *(To the right Jamie, Rupert, and Roland take a break from explorations to pose for a photo at historic Launch Complex 18.)*



Museum Updates and News



History Takes the TAAD Stage

The History Center hosted a Space Coast Chamber TAAD event in early April featuring thought-provoking talks on technology, aerospace, aviation, and defense. Jamie Draper spoke on the military origins of America's space program, joined by Megan Miller of Blue Origin and Peter Robbins of Floating Ventures. The evening sparked lively discussion and fresh perspectives. *(On the left is an image of the crowd enjoying Megan Miller's presentation about upcoming Blue Origin projects.)*

Cape Family Day Returns

Cape Family Day returned after a two-year hiatus and brought thousands through the gates. Families explored Museum facilities, enjoyed activities in Hangar C, and discovered the story behind America's space and missile programs. With vendors, food trucks, astronaut Teslas, and hands-on experiences, the event transformed the Cape into a vibrant celebration of heritage and discovery. *(To the right is a view of children enjoying STEAM activities at Hangar C during the Cape Family Day event.)*



Blue Marble Recognition

Museum Director Jamie Draper was inducted into the Blue Marble Hall of Fame in March. This international community honors those working to protect and enhance life on Earth, drawing inspiration from the "Blue Marble" view shared by Apollo astronauts. The recognition reflects the connection between preservation, stewardship, and the larger perspective inspired by space exploration. *(To the left, Jamie and Rupert pose with the blue marble after a long 14-hour day at work.)*

Museum Updates and News

Legacy of Launch Meets Artemis

More than 100 supporters gathered at the History Center for a special Legacy of Launch evening hosted by the U.S. Space Force Historical Foundation. Guests enjoyed remarks, refreshments, and activities before stepping outside for a memorable Artemis II launch viewing. The evening celebrated both the Museum's future vision and the enduring power of launch from the Cape. *(To the right is a view of the crowd enjoying the milestone Artemis II launch from outside the History Center.)*



Protecting Priceless Hardware

Thanks to the craftsmanship of volunteer Chip Sams, historic equipment in the LC-26 Firing Rooms is better protected for the future. Chip installed custom acrylic covers for the rare Burroughs Guidance Computer console and added barriers to protect additional hardware in Firing Room B. This careful preservation work helps safeguard irreplaceable artifacts for generations. *(To the left is the new protective barriers in place over the Operating Console for the Burroughs Guidance Computer.)*

Forward Feeding Facility

April's CAPE Series explored the little-known Forward Feeding Facility that supported Project Mercury. Jamie Draper shared the recent search for this forgotten site and the remarkable women of the Air Force Bioastronautics Office uncovered along the way. Presented alongside the "Space Eats" exhibit, the program revealed a hidden chapter in America's earliest human spaceflight story. *(To the right is an image of Jamie wrapping up his CAPE Series presentation and taking questions from the audience.)*



Museum Updates and News



Twenty Nations Visit

The History Center hosted international visitors during the World Innovation Network's Sovereign Space Synergy forum. Space ambassadors from twenty nations gathered for discussions on global space collaboration, accompanied by State and Commerce Department escorts. The group toured Museum facilities the next day, bringing an international dimension to the shared story of space exploration. *(On the left, Jamie Draper tours the distinguished international delegation through Hangar C.)*

Artifact Readiness Center Opens

The Museum's new Artifact Readiness Center, or ARC, is now complete. Coordinated by Sabra Gossett, the repurposed former gift shop at LC-26 has been transformed into secure, modern storage for accessioned artifacts. New shelving, cabinetry, and improved organization strengthen both physical and intellectual control of the collection and advance the Museum's preservation mission. *(To the right is a view inside the new Artifact Readiness Center.)*



Pet the Jet Outreach

The Museum participated in the Pet the Jet event at Patrick Space Force Base during Cocoa Beach Air Show activities. Sabra Gossett and Jamie Draper shared Museum information, Rupert giveaways, brochures, and family-friendly activities with hundreds of visitors. The event introduced many new audiences to the Museum and broadened outreach beyond the Cape. *(To the left, Sabra and Rupert pose at the Museum outreach station.)*

Museum Updates and News

Rupert Makes Headlines

Rupert the Space Armadillo was featured in a March article by Burt Dicht of the National Space Society. The [story](#) highlighted Rupert's journey as a museum mascot and his recent adventure to the International Space Station, where he set unique mascot milestones. The article introduced Rupert's remarkable story to an even wider audience. *(To the right is a view of Burt Dicht posing with Rupert at the Sands Space History Center.)*



Beautification Project

A volunteer beautification committee has begun revitalizing the pathway to the History Center. Neglected planters long overtaken by dead and overgrown vegetation are being cleared and replanted. The effort will improve the visitor approach and create a more welcoming landscape experience. It is another example of volunteers enhancing the Museum in meaningful ways. *(To the left is an image of the planters cleared of dead plants and ready for planting of new ones.)*



Tiny Rockets, Big Dreams

Families gathered at the History Center in early April to build model rockets during a hands-on STEAM event. Young participants learned basic rocketry concepts before launching their creations at a nearby park the following weekend. Rupert the Space Armadillo joined both sessions, helping turn curiosity into experience and inspiring the next generation of explorers. *(To the right, a young girl and her father construct a model rocket at the History Center.)*

Our Museum Family



CAPE CANAVERAL
SPACE FORCE
MUSEUM

Museum Staff:

James Draper, Museum Director
Sabra Gossett, Museum Curator
Rupert the Space Armadillo, Mascot

Museum Volunteer Association:

Bill Jelen, Chairperson
Susan Dabrowski, Vice Chairperson
Jack Kennedy, Secretary



UNITED STATES
SPACE FORCE
HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Executive Committee Members:

Raymond Sands, Chairman
Stephen Houser, Vice Chairman
Rob Quigg, Treasurer
Roger McCormick, Secretary

Board Members:

Robert VanVonderen
Victor Latavish
Tim Oliver
Joey Genovesi
Jim Banke (*Honorary Member*)

Foundation Employees:

Deborah Allison, Foundation Services Manager
Sharon Rodriguez, Executive Assistant



Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum

191 Museum Circle

Cape Canaveral SFS, FL 32925

321.853.9171

ccspacemuseum.org



Sands Space History Center

100 Space Port Way, Bldg. 90328

Cape Canaveral, FL 32920

321.853.1919

ccspacemuseum.org