

SPACE SHUTTLE PAYLOAD PROJECT

In the fall of 1976, NASA announced a program known as the getaway special (GAS), also known as small self contained payloads (SSCPS). Its stated purpose is to:

- Encourage the use of-space by all researchers-, private individuals and organizations.
- Foster enthusiasm in younger generations.
- Increase knowledge of space.
- Be alert to possible growth of GAS investigation into a. prime, experiment.
- Generate new activities unique to space.

Matt Mathews proposed that the club sponsor a contest to develop a small payload to be flown on a space shuttle flight. U of H CLC and Clear Creek School District are interested. University of Houston would take care of cost of reservation, balance of \$2,500.00 to be paid by club. Matt to study further and report back by next meeting.

April 13, 1977 Board meeting minutes

June 8, 1977 Board of Directors meeting minutes noted: "Moved by Don Kirk, seconded by Fred Joy, that SCRC make a \$500.00 payment to reserve space on a shuttle flight for a science project from the Clear Lake schools. Amended by Bob Mitchell that the payload must be in keeping with the concept of Rotary. Seconded by Pete Gist."

To date more than 326 GAS reservations have been made by over 197 individuals and groups. The Rotary Club of Space Center is 24th in line, space having been reserved for student experiments in the Clear Creek and Clear Lake High Schools. The first GAS payload was flown on STS-4, the most recent Shuttle flight. It contained nine experiments by students at the University of Utah. It appears that we may be able to fly in the first part of 1984.

August 23, 1982 Blastoff

An update on the Shuttle Payload Project is noted in the March 6, 1984 Board meeting minutes as follows. Jack Winters, Chairman of the Space Shuttle Payload Committee, gave a report on the Get-Away-Special (GAS) payload being developed by students at Clear Lake High School. The experiment examines the effect of wave action on live fish in zero-gravity and is being coordinated thru

Goddard Space Flight Center, the NASA center in charge of GAS experiments flown on the Shuttle. The students hold weekly meetings at the McDonnell Douglas building and are following a schedule leading toward a launch in the summer of 1985. Johnson Space Center, as well as area aerospace contractors are lending assistance as advisors. The experiment apparatus should be designed, manufactured, tested, and ready for flight by January 1985.

The Board of Directors meeting minutes dated October 1, 1985 noted: "The Gateway Special launch was announced pending for the Fall of 1987."

The Board of Directors meeting minutes dated August 2, 1988 noted that the Club had received a letter from NASA JSC inquiring whether the Club was interested in staying on the Space Shuttle's payload schedule or receiving a refund of the deposit. The Club will request a refund.

(Historian 2009: There was no written information in the available records pass August 2, 1988 except for a comment made by Billy R. Smith in regard to another subject. He noted in a letter to President Donnie Johnson September 18, 1997 "To assist in the initial forward funding reserve, some existing savings deposits, including \$10,000 that had been set aside several years earlier to fund a Clear Creek High School science project that would fly on the Space Shuttle, were used. The science project had been abandoned after several attempts to get it ready for flight." There was a line item placed in the budget for the project from Rotary year 1976-77 to Rotary year 1986-87 for a total of \$13,000 with some years no money budgeted. It is not clear as to whether the money was actually set aside each year. But based on what Billy Smith noted in 1997, apparently \$10,000 had been set aside for the project. From several conversations with club members who were with the Club during this period, the problem was that the students did not have enough time to work on the multiyear project before graduating, therefore turning the project over to the next class who essentially who had to get acclimated to the project or start a new one.)