

Ames' Jack Boyd earns NASA History Award

For his significant contributions to NASA history, Jack Boyd was recently

The award citation commends him for "Energetic outreach and promotion of NASA history and for making history relevant to NASA's present and future."



NASA photo by Dominic Hart

Jack Boyd, NASA Ames senior advisor for history (center) with the NASA Ames History Office staff, Glenn Bugos (right) and April Gage (left). Boyd received the 2008 NASA Headquarters History Division Award.

awarded the 2008 NASA Headquarters History Division Award. In addition to his numerous other duties, Boyd has served as the NASA Ames senior advisor for history since 2003.

NASA Chief Historian Steven Dick commended Boyd for his vigorous lecture and outreach schedule, and his ability to describe NASA's present and its future in an interesting and informative manner. He noted how NASA benefits when those with corporate memory, like Boyd's, participates so actively in conversations about shaping the agency's vision.

In thanking the NASA history community for the award, Boyd said it a pleasure to work for an agency that has taken its history seriously.

Boyd thanked the NASA Ames History Office staff, Glenn Bugos and April Gage, for building a professional history and archive function at Ames, which is consistently relevant, cutting-

edge and working to achieve high academic standards. He marveled at how quickly and efficiently Bugos and Gage had established an archive, a system of finding aids, a way to track historic artifacts, and a reference culture so that people who have questions can get some answers.

He paraphrased a favorite quote, saying that "Historians never finish their work; for various reasons they simply abandon it." Not to abandon its responsibilities to the future, NASA Ames has just committed itself to substantially revising and updating its most recent history book, *Atmosphere of Freedom*, and republishing it for NASA Ames' 70th anniversary year.

Dick presented the award at the annual NASA History Program Review at NASA Langley Research Center. NASA has built one of the largest, most professional, and most mission-directed history programs of any government agency in the world. In April 2009, the NASA History Review will convene at NASA Ames so that historians and archivists can share their best practices.

Science fair students present ideas from sun beams to leaf blowers

BY DEBORAH ROBIN CROFT

One could be forgiven for thinking that all those kids and parents descending from busses in front of the Exploration Center in early May were just part of another elementary school field trip coming to see the sights at Ames. But these were not your average school kids -- they are tomorrow's leaders in science, engineering, physics and astronomy-- the winners of the 2008 Silicon Valley Science and Technology Championship, (Synopsis). They were here for a breakfast held in their honor and convened by Carl Pilcher, director of the NASA Astrobiology Institute and Brad Bedout of the Exobiology Branch of the Space Science and Astrobiology Division.

The students each stood up and described their projects to an audience in the World Room of Building 943 at 8 a.m., while drinking orange juice and snacking on bagels.

The students attending the breakfast were primarily elementary and middle school students in Santa Clara County. This year, out of 754 appli-

cants, 666 students participated and out of those, 218 students in grades six through eight received awards. One 140 participants in grades nine through 12 also received awards.

In her welcoming remarks at the beginning of the 2008 fair competition, Heidi Strahm Black, the Santa Clara Valley Science and Engineering Fair association president said, "It sounds corny, but growing up in the '60s and '70s I observed that no matter what the political problems between countries, regardless of walls, real or otherwise, athletes and scientists transcended the 'boundaries.' Strahm Black reiterated how important the study of science is for giving young people the intellectual tools to solve complex global problems.

Indeed, some of the projects the students described were ingenious in their simplicity. Kevin Shay called one project "Lighter Than Air." He constructed a "hover craft" with a leaf blower engine, a plywood board and plastic sheeting that remained suspended in the air and could support

up to 250 lbs., and travel a distance of about 70 feet. Another young inventor, Justin To, a sophomore at Oak Grove High School, created sub-critical, silica aero gel, a substance that NASA developed for its Stardust mission.

The students' projects illustrate a commitment to inventing and improving technologies in order to benefit society and the environment. The objective of the science and engineering fair is to awaken more students to the wonder and power of science and engineering and it certainly accomplished that goal with this group of young wizards.

In Strahm Black's words, "Whether the issue is global warming, bee colony collapse, or locating land mines, we need minds that are not just knowledgeable--they must be skilled in the processes of science. Today we celebrate the skills of critical thinking: analysis, observation, classification, inference, hypothesizing and -- for the engineers -- how to put it all together."

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