

## TRAVEL

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Monday, December 2, 1991 O&amp;E



crossroads

Iris Jones

## 'Tis the season for holiday happenings

It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas.

The First Annual Battle Creek International Festival of Lights will light up the sky through Dec. 31. More than 500,000 lights and family entertainment will be featured. For more information call (616) 968-1515.

In the mood to pick and cut down your own Christmas tree? Visit Ottawa County (Holland, Grand Haven and Zeeland) for the Michigan Christmas Tree Festival through Dec. 22. Call (616) 398-4221 or write Holland Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, 150 W. 8th, Holland, Mich. 49423.

The City Opera House in downtown Traverse City presents a Festival of Trees through Dec. 8. Live entertainment, storytellers and craft demonstrators provide the holiday spirit. Call (616) 922-8562 or (616) 947-0180.

A free guide to Detroit area holiday events can be obtained from the Metropolitan Detroit Convention & Visitors Bureau, Two E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, 48226 or by calling toll-free (800) DETROIT.

Highlights include "A Christmas Carol" at Meadowbrook Hall in Rochester, "The Nutcracker" at the Birmingham Theatre and "The Jack Frost Follies" presented by the Detroit Youththeatre.

Going south? There's a Madrigal Dinner Dec. 7-8 in Bloomington, Ind.; the Nashville Country Holiday Dec. 6-8 in Nashville, Tenn.; the Columbus, Ind. Festival of Lights Dec. 6-8; and New Year's Eve with the Oak Ridge Boys Dec. 30 to Jan. 1 in Merrillville, Ill.

Fort Wayne, Ind. hosts six weeks of festivities including the Festival of Trees and Christmas at the Zoo. Call Fort Wayne Visitor Information Center toll-free (800) 767-7752.

Ice sculptures, camel rides and animated animals highlight Cincinnati's Zoo Festival of Lights through Jan. 5 (closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve). Call (513) 281-4700.

The Ohio Historical Society celebrates the season with sleigh rides, candlelight tours, mummer's plays and Victorian feasts throughout December. Highlights include A Poet's Christmas at the Dunbar House in Dayton, Christmas Under the Western Stars in Norwalk, and Christmas Dinner at Spiegel Grove in Fremont. Call toll-free (800) 685-1544.

Yes, there really is a Santa Claus. On Dec. 14 and 15 residents of Santa Claus, Ind. celebrate the Festival of Lights with a Santa's Workshop, herds of sheep and electronic lighting displays. Call toll-free (800) 488-0890.

Ride a train or visit Santa on Dec. 7 in Monticello, Ill. at the Wabash Depot. Contact the Chamber of Commerce at (217) 762-7921.

A live nativity scene is featured at the Festival of Lights in New Albany, Ind. through Dec. 31. Call (812) 944-0448 for details.

From Dec. 7-22, music, reindeer and dolphin shows transform the Indianapolis Zoo into a Winter Wonderland. Call (317) 630-2030.

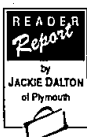
A Smoky Mountain Christmas at Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tenn., will feature live musical shows and traditional crafts. Call toll-free (800) DOLLYWOOD for dates and reservations.

Going north? Toronto winter events include Santa - The Real Thing, a display of oil paintings; a holiday show (titled "The Christmas Stars"); and the One-of-a-Kind Christmas Canadian Craft Show & Sale. For information contact the Metro Toronto Convention & Visitors Association toll-free (800) 363-1990.

And if that won't satisfy your exotic seasonal urges: Torch-bearing skiers will lead a Christmas Eve procession down the slopes of Winter Park Resort in Colorado. Fireworks and church services complete the annual holiday tradition. Call (303) 726-5514.

Christmas in Finland packages offer a snowmobile safari to a reindeer farm, lessons in reindeer driving and traditional Finnish saunas. Contact the Finnish Tour Desk toll-free (800) 950-5000 or the Finnish Tourist Board, 655 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

## Grandma goes to Space Camp



by JACKIE DALTON of Plymouth

I arrived in Huntsville, Ala., armed with curiosity and a feeble conviction that continued personal growth is the key to happy retirement. Most Space Camp trainees at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center are young people but Adult Space Camp is open to anyone over age 19. Our group of 24 participants averaged age 40, with only two of us on the downhill side of 60.

Could we keep up?

I enrolled in the easiest of the adult programs, a weekend program that combined classroom instruction with hands-on activities. I will never again see a shuttle launch without recalling how I felt during those simulated space missions.

The course emphasized teamwork, decision making and leadership. Each participant was assigned to a team. No one goes into space alone.

My first challenge came when I was confronted with the sleeping arrangements: six bunks, most of them uppers. My second challenge was a test to ascertain my knowledge about space. I barely understood the questions, let alone the answers.

The test paper included 44 acronyms, little groups of letters like ELSS and MECO which stand for Environmental Life Support System and Main Engine Cut Off, stuff you'd really like to know when you're zooming through space.

We divided into three categories for our two simulated space missions, depending on test scores and preferences. Mission control trainees stayed on the ground during a mission. Cockpit members operated the shuttle in space. Science specialists performed experiments in space.

I was in ground control on one mission, in the cockpit for the second mission.

After touring the facility we tackled the simulators. The Multi-Axis training simulator spins not on one axis, but three! Watching is scary. Riding is not. We tumbled too fast to think about what our bodies were doing.

There was no pressure to try an activity. We could say "no thank you" to our team counselor. Staff members, well-trained young people the age of my grandchildren, participated in all phases of the training. They knew my fears before I did.

Other simulators let us feel motion without gravity and to practice walking on the moon. We each tried to dock the shuttle at a space station.

On the third try I finally got the orbiter lined up, but the approach was a tad swift. Chalk one up for seat belts. Vehicles handle differently without gravity. Landing on the runway is also tricky for the first-time pilot. Next step in the program was training, learning required tasks at our assigned stations. Each two-hour mission had a script detailing every order, action and response, with each position highlighted.

Sunday, day 3, was mission day. One two-hour flight followed by a 30 minute debriefing in the morning, early lunch and back aboard for the second trip. The simulations were very realistic. The engines powered up with a roar. The orbiter trembled as it lifted away from earth.

Missions are designed to teach decision-making. The simulation director sat in the control room, gleefully flipping switches, causing crisis after crisis for the crew.

The meteor shower hit us while yours truly, temporary scientist, was crawling through a skinty metal tube leading from the laboratory back to the cockpit. Being numbed by meteors is noisy and bumpy, a potentially bruising experience.

Despite damage and inclement weather, we landed safely. During debriefing we learned that crew member had accidentally crashed south Florida. Miami was obliterated, and I didn't even make the national news!

The price for Adult Space Academy Level I is \$450, which includes housing Friday and Saturday nights plus meals, lunch Friday through lunch Sunday.

For information about this program and other U.S. Space Camp programs call toll-free (800) 63 SPACE or write to Space Camp, One Tranquility Base, Huntsville, Ala. 35807.



Jackie Dalton of Plymouth "trains" for space at Adult Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala.

## So you want to go to Space Camp

By Iris Sanderson Jones  
special writer

Jonathan Finnegan of Canton went to Space Camp with his friends Aaron Worpel and Andy Middlestead, students at the Lowell Middle School in Livonia. The boys are part of Boy Scout Troop 898.

His favorite part was riding the weightless simulator. "It's like a ride. You're just hanging there, floating around," he said.

Jonathan is one of thousands of young people and adults who have attended Space Camp, one of the 6 million people who have visited the U.S. Space and Rocket Center since it opened in 1970 in Huntsville, Ala.

German-born scientist Werner von Braun developed the first U.S. ballistic missile at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville in the 1950s. He lobbied for a non-profit space science museum called the Space and Rocket Center, opened by the state of Alabama

in 1970, and later inspired Space Camp, which encourages young people to have fun while learning about science, technology and aerospace.

The U.S. Space Camp offers five-day programs for students grades four through six. Space Academy Level 1 is a five-day program for students in grades seven through nine. Space Academy Level 11 offers eight-day programs for high school sophomores, juniors and seniors. Costs range from \$425 to \$675.

Adult Space Camp in Huntsville offers three-day \$450 sessions for adults 19 years and over and a five-day Teacher Space Orientation for \$750. A second U.S. Space Camp in

Titusville, Fla., has programs for kids in grades four through seven.

Students must have a teacher's recommendation and parent's permission to attend, but there are no course prerequisites or grade requirements.

"I went on two space missions," Jonathan said. "On the Endeavor, I was part of the crew that went out into space to repair the satellite. On the Atlantis, I was part of the ground crew, making sure the engines worked."

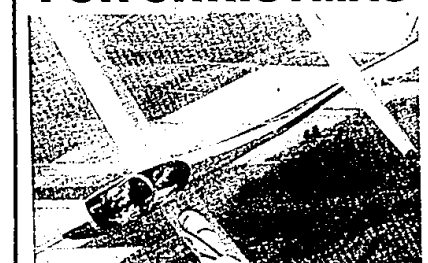
"If I go again I'll wait until 10th grade so I can be part of Space Academy Level 11. I might get to fix a space ship under water."

## LAS VEGAS SALE

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