

Speaker: Jonathan T. (Jon) Malay
President, Sea & Sky Science Company (S3C) of Fredericksburg, VA

Presentation Topic: "A Life of Looking Up"

Our guest speaker, Jon Malay, is well known in the NOAA satellite community, but not everyone may know the depth of his experience and how it qualifies him to share interesting and informed perspectives on the importance of space-based weather and ocean observations. Jon is recently retired and is now pursuing a third career as a writer and lecturer on Earth and Space science. Refreshingly unfettered by the concern about an employer's reaction to them, Jon's comments on the challenges facing the NOAA satellite world will be informed by two twenty-year careers, along with a year in the mid-1980s as a contractor/staff member in the front office at NOAA Satellite and Information Services.

After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy (B.S. Oceanography) and the Naval Postgraduate School (M.S. Meteorology), Jon embarked on his first career as a U.S. Naval officer, retiring in 1993 at the rank of Commander. Then, after two one-year "skip steps" at another employer and then at NOAA, he went on to a highly successful career in the aerospace industry as a Washington-based business development executive. Jon has held multiple positions over the years, which have afforded him various opportunities and experiences germane to the world of NOAA, NASA, and DoD environmental satellites.

During his naval career he served as: an operational user of environmental services as a "ship driver" in the Pacific at the end of the Vietnam era; a staff officer at the Navy's Fleet Numerical Meteorology & Oceanography Center producing computer-generated products and services for the fleet; a research oceanographer at the Naval Underwater Systems Center; an operational aircraft carrier meteorological officer on the USS NIMITZ; the first ocean/met staff officer to serve at the Naval Space Command in Dahlgren, Virginia; the "space guy" on the staff of the Oceanographer of the Navy; and the "weather guy" on the staff of the National Reconnaissance Office. As a civilian, he was a support staffer at NESDIS before becoming the Ball Aerospace, and then Lockheed Martin (LM), customer representative to NASA and NOAA in their pursuit of multiple satellite, instrument, and IT programs. Most notably, he played important roles in LM's successes winning the prime contracts for the GOES-R series satellites and GOES-R's Geostationary Lightning Mapper and Solar Ultraviolet Imager, along with multiple full science missions to interesting places like the sun, moon, Mars, asteroids, and Jupiter.

Along this path, Jon earned a reputation for integrity, hard work, and always knowing what he was talking about on the topic of satellites. He is also known for being an articulate and tireless political advocate for satellite programs. Finally, not discouraged after having been a finalist but not selected for NASA astronaut in 1984, he went on to serve as an active member and leader in a number of professional societies. He was elected a Fellow and President of both the American Astronautical Society (AAS) and the American Meteorological Society (AMS), the latter as the immediate predecessor to NOAA's own Louis Uccellini.