“Here’s some of the stories trending This Week at NASA!”

On Sept. 15, our Cassini spacecraft concluded its remarkable mission with a plunge into Saturn’s atmosphere.

“Just heard the signal from the spacecraft is gone…”

This was the last of 22 close orbits Cassini made between Saturn and its rings as part of the mission’s Grand Finale.

No other spacecraft has ever explored this unique region.

Although the spacecraft may be gone after the finale, the enormous amount of data collected about Saturn, its magnetosphere, rings and moons during this last dive is expected to
yield new discoveries for decades.

The mission arrived at Saturn in 2004 as Cassini-Huygens -- a joint endeavor of NASA, the European Space Agency, and the Italian Space Agency.

After completing its primary mission, it was extended twice – first in 2008, and again in 2010.

The mission is considered one of the most scientifically rich voyages yet undertaken in our solar system.

Data from the Global Precipitation Measurement, or GPM, mission estimated the total amount of rain that Hurricane Irma dropped from September 5 to early September 12.

During that period, Irma dropped heavy rain along its path from the Leeward Islands until
weakening to a post-tropical cyclone over the southeastern United States.

Rainfall totals were often greater than 6 inches around Irma.

A post-storm aerial survey of our Kennedy Space Center in Florida revealed damage to several facilities.

The center also experienced interruptions to power and water services.

A damage assessment report will be compiled over the next several weeks after a full inspection of the center has been conducted.

Our astronauts Mark Vande Hei and Joe Acaba along with Russian cosmonaut Alexander Misurkin launched to the International Space Station from Kazakhstan, at 5:17 p.m. EDT on Sept.

The trio arrived at the station six-hours later - and were welcomed by Commander Randy
Bresnik, of NASA, and other members of the crew already onboard.

Vande Hei, Acaba, and Misurkin are scheduled to spend five-and-a-half months on the station.

We completed a successful test of the parachute system for our Orion spacecraft on Sept. 13 at the U.S. Army Proving Ground in Yuma, Arizona.

NASA is qualifying Orion’s parachutes for missions with astronauts.

During this test, engineers replicated a situation that would require Orion to abort off the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and bypass part of the normal parachute deployment sequence that helps Orion slow down on its return to Earth after deep space missions.

Orion’s full parachute system includes 11 total parachutes.

Astronaut Shane Kimbrough shared imagery and experiences from his time in space, during a Sept. 11 presentation at the Smithsonian’s National Air & Space Museum in Washington.
Kimbrough returned to Earth in April 2017 after a 173-day mission aboard the International Space Station where he served as Commander of the station's Expedition 50 crew.

And that's what's up this week @NASA …

For more on these and other stories follow us on the web at www.nasa.gov.