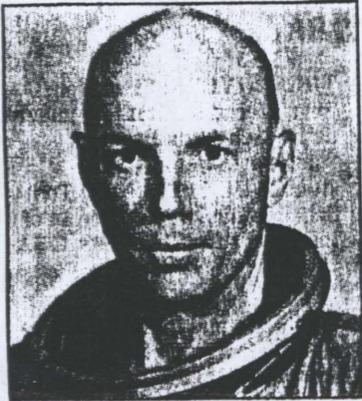


# UFO POTPOURRI

no. 374

The Houston Post/Wednesday, December 1, 1993



NASA photo

Story Musgrave, a member of NASA's "A-team," became an astronaut in 1967.

## He's ready for a close encounter

BY DAN FELDSTEIN  
OF THE HOUSTON POST STAFF

Don't be alarmed, but one of four astronauts who will spacewalk to fix the Hubble Space Telescope hopes to see aliens.

"I try to communicate with the life that's out there. I'm serious. It is not that far out," says Story Musgrave.

"When I'm circling around out there, I try in whatever ways I can to get them to come down here and get me."

That's not just a good sense of humor. He means it.

It fits neatly in the personality of a man who has been an astronaut since 1967, has at least six college degrees and takes every class he can find at University of Houston-Clear Lake purely for fun.

Musgrave, 58, is the senior member of the seven-member crew set to launch today on a space shuttle mission to repair the blurry Hubble.

All are veteran space fliers, and some at the space agency

have called them the "A Team" — an all-star cast for a critical mission.

Musgrave said his astronaut training started as a five-year-old boy fixing his tractor in Berkshire County, Mass. After high school he joined the Marines and eventually became a pilot.

Then there are his degrees: a bachelor's in math and statistics from Syracuse, an MBA from UCLA, a bachelor's in chemistry from Marietta College, a doctor of medicine from Columbia, a master's in physiology and biophysics from the University of Kentucky.

Those are just the ones he got before becoming an astronaut.

In a stroke of great fortune for Musgrave, NASA opened the astronaut corps to non-test pilot scientists in 1964. All his degrees

suddenly made sense and he was accepted into the program a few years later.

Musgrave served as backup scientist-pilot for the first Skylab mission in 1973. He helped design the spacesuits and spacewalking system now used on the shuttle.

In 1983, on the sixth space shuttle flight, Musgrave got his first ride in space and took the first spacewalk from a shuttle.

Physically fit and shiny bald, Musgrave loves parachuting, soaring and walking around downtown Houston looking at buildings. He is twice divorced and has five children ranging in age from 6 to 32.

His top recreation is taking literature and philosophy classes at UH-Clear Lake. He earned his master's in literature in 1987 and hints that there are other degrees he doesn't bother to put on his

resume.

As payload commander for the Hubble flight, Musgrave will set a number of records. He will be the world's oldest spacewalker, the first astronaut on five shuttle flights and should set the record for time in orbit on a shuttle — 861 hours.

After the flight, he'll look forward to more.

"I love space and I love the space business. There's no way I can conceive of walking away. I'm gonna die on the job probably, one way or the other," he said.

"You know, the night before a launch, I go down and I lie by the ocean down there and look at the stars and I see some satellites overhead and I think, 'Tomorrow you're going to be one of those. See that streak? That's you tomorrow.'"



BY JOHN F. SCHUESSLER  
P. O. BOX 58485  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77258-8485

## United Nations urged to end UFO 'cover-up'

Reuters News Service

UNITED NATIONS — As if the United Nations hasn't got its hands full dealing with problems on Earth, a small group of demonstrators marched near U.N. headquarters Friday to demand action concerning visitors from outer space.

Specifically, they want the world body to take the lead in disclosing information about unidentified flying objects (UFOs), or so-called "flying saucers," which they say is being covered up by many governments.

"We call upon the U.N. secretary-general to end the worldwide UFO cover-up and acknowledge to the world's people that the UFO phenomenon is extraterrestrial," says one of their pamphlets.

The demonstration, with about 36 participants, was organized by the New York Center for UFO Research and Operation Right to Know, in connection with a two-day UFO conference at a New York hotel.

In a recent letter to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the two organizations said the United Nations already has the necessary means at hand.

They cited a 1978 decision by the General Assembly that invited interested member states to "take appropriate steps to coordinate on a national level scientific research and investigation into extraterrestrial life, including unidentified flying objects."

Adopted without a vote, it was the result of lobbying by the then-prime minister of Grenada, Eric Gairy, who wanted the United Nations to set up an agency to explore UFOs and similar phenomena.

Like many other Assembly decisions, it remained a dead letter.

# Volatile particles stabilized

## Result may lead to new elements

By CHARLES PETIT  
San Francisco Chronicle

LIVERMORE, Calif. — Russian and American scientists are reporting that, using a powerful cyclotron in a lab north of Moscow, they may have found a way to break a scientific logjam blocking efforts to make elements beyond the 109 now known.

The new work suggests that extremely heavy elements, virtually all of them man-made and never seen in nature, can be much more stable than believed, making it easier to extend the list of elements.

The scientists did not make a new element but say they did make a handful of atoms of element 106 with an unprecedented number of the subatomic particles called neutrons in their centers. The atoms lasted as long as 30 seconds or even longer before spontaneously disintegrating in radioactive decay.

Element 106, which has no formal name, was first reported nearly 20 years ago by a team at the University of California's Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, but the Berkeley version had a half-life of less than a second and also had few neutrons in its core.

"The goal was to be at the limits of nuclear physics, where theory is stretched to the extreme of what we can understand," said Ronald Loughheed, a leader of the effort and chemist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. "What our results indicate is that things are

much more stable out there than the usual theories would have predicted."

An element's atomic number refers to the number of electrically charged protons in its nucleus. The nucleus also contains a similar or larger number of neutrons, which have about the same mass as protons but no electric charge.

Since the discovery of 106, German scientists have managed after great effort to create in the laboratory elements 107, 108 and 109, but each disintegrates in fractions of a second.

Worry had grown that elements heavier than 109 might be impossible to make.

If so, it would bring to an end an intellectual journey to discover all chemical elements permitted by the laws of nature. It is a quest begun by ancient civilizations such as the Greeks — who believed all things are combinations of earth, air, fire and water.

Modern science recognizes 92 natural elements. Since the 1940s, 17 more elements have been created, including plutonium, neptunium, lawrencium and einsteinium.

Loughheed spoke during an interview at the laboratory that included two members of the Russian portion of the collaboration, Yuri Lazarev and Vladimir Utyonkov of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research at Dubna, about 90 miles north of Moscow.

Although preliminary, the work inspires intense excitement among the relative handful of scientists who still pursue the hunt for ever-heavier, more exotic elements.

"Boy, I hope they are right," said Albert Ghiorso, a senior Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory physicist who has been a major figure in creation of man-made elements since the 1940s. "This gives a whole new twist to it (theories of atomic stability). I would get busy right now if I had a machine to work with."

The scientists base their conclusions on only a small bit of data. They ran the cyclotron, a subatomic particle accelerator, for 16 straight days in April. Its intense beam of neon nuclei slammed into a target of curium. The hope was that among the trillions of collisions, a few neon and curium nuclei would merge into an isotope of element 106 with 160 neutrons that might be unusually stable.

The evidence of success came from measuring decay products, called alpha rays, released by atoms. Only four alpha rays of the computed energy were detected. Factoring in the efficiency of the Livermore-supplied detector, the scientists estimate they made about 150 neutron-rich atoms of element 106.

'Boy, I hope they are right. This gives a whole new twist to it (theories of atomic stability).'

Albert Ghiorso,  
physicist

27A

Houston Chronicle

Saturday, Nov. 20, 1993