

COLLECTIONS-GRAM JANUARY 19, 2016

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT

New on the floor at UHC: A six-foot model of the Goodyear Blimp *Columbia* has been placed near the gondola currently undergoing restoration by curator Tom Crouch and volunteer Scott Willey at the south end of the Aviation Hangar. The model is displayed on its storage pallet, demonstrating artifact mounting and care in storage, and is in a nose-up semi-inverted attitude that the real blimp never achieved (we hope!). The restoration is proceeding well; most recently, the left engine fuel tank, with all its guy wires, was reinstalled.

Standing for it: Right now the Restoration Shop is focusing on stands for several artifacts destined for the Milestones gallery. Fabrication is complete on the *Friendship 7* Mercury capsule stand (shown below); the Gemini IV stand is being fitted as of this writing. Stands for the Jumo and Whittle engines are next in the queue.



Welcome aboard: Amanda Malkin joins the Conservation lab as a paper conservator; her first project involves Chinese kites.

Congratulations: Amelia Kile and Lance Brown have received crane operator certification.

We get questions: A UHC docent was asked by a third grader what the shallow tray of black, granular material in the bottom of the Buzz Aldrin spacesuit case was for. It is activated charcoal, used to scrub the air of outgassed vapors from the rubber and plastics in spacesuits.

Also in the shop: The Fleet Model 2 is being prepared for its "balloon"

tires, similar to tundra tires. The aircraft also needs 5 exhaust pipes made to replace the badly corroded originals. A year-end review of *Flak Bait* showed good progress on engines, landing gear, cowling panels, and fabric treatment protocol. The Marine Corps museum staff is into “crunch time” finishing up the Douglas SBD Dauntless and H-34 helicopter, which are scheduled to ship back to their museum on Feb. 1 to meet a tight construction deadline.

In the Conservation Lab: Hands-on work on the Star Trek *Enterprise* model includes initial design of blinking and steady LED lights in the nacelles to replicate engine effects, replica nacelle dome tabs of Plexiglas, internal secondary hull reinforcements, and paint matching. *Discoverer XIII*, precursor to the Corona photoreconnaissance satellites, is being prepared for the Milestones gallery. Last, the valve covers on a recently-arrived Pitcairn Brewer experimental radial engine the Lab have been found to have been meticulously numbered – and assembled in entirely the wrong order!

And finally: How many forklifts does it take to install a Gemini capsule on its stand? Here, Gemini IV is lifted by three points during stand fitting.

