

Re: Hubble to be Repaired

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- *From:* sal <pragmatist@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 01 Nov 2006 13:46:27 -0500
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On Tue, 31 Oct 2006 16:35:17 -0800, William Elliot wrote:

NASA Approves Mission and Names Crew for Return to Hubble

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RELEASE: 06-343

Shuttle astronauts will make one final house call to NASA's Hubble Space Telescope as part of a mission to extend and improve the observatory's capabilities through 2013.

NASA Administrator Michael Griffin announced plans for a fifth servicing mission to Hubble Tuesday during a meeting with agency employees at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md. Goddard is the agency center responsible for managing Hubble.

"We have conducted a detailed analysis of the performance and procedures necessary to carry out a successful Hubble repair mission over the course of the last three shuttle missions. What we have learned has convinced us that we are able to conduct a safe and effective servicing mission to Hubble," Griffin said. "While there is an inherent risk in all spaceflight activities, the desire to preserve a truly international asset like the Hubble Space Telescope makes doing this mission the right course of action."

The flight is tentatively targeted for launch during the spring to fall of 2008. Mission planners are working to determine the best location and vehicle in the manifest to support the needs of Hubble while minimizing impact to International Space Station assembly. The planners are investigating the best way to support a launch on need mission for the Hubble flight. The present option will keep Launch Pad 39-B at the Kennedy Space Center, Fla., available for such a rescue flight should it be necessary.

Let me see if I understand this.

2008 is two years away and bad stuff could start happening sooner. If the

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Hubble loses its last gyro and starts tumbling before that, it is no longer repairable. Right?

So is the "launch on need" mission discussed above intended for use if it looks like the HST is failing faster than hoped? I.e., does this say they're planning to do an emergency launch, say, in June 2007 if it looks like the patient can't wait until the scheduled appointment? Or does it just indicate that they still haven't really figured out how to slot the final mission into the schedule?

It sounds to me like the former, which is presumably good news, at least for those of us who don't believe in NASA plans for a new ST until we actually see the thing on the launching pad.

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