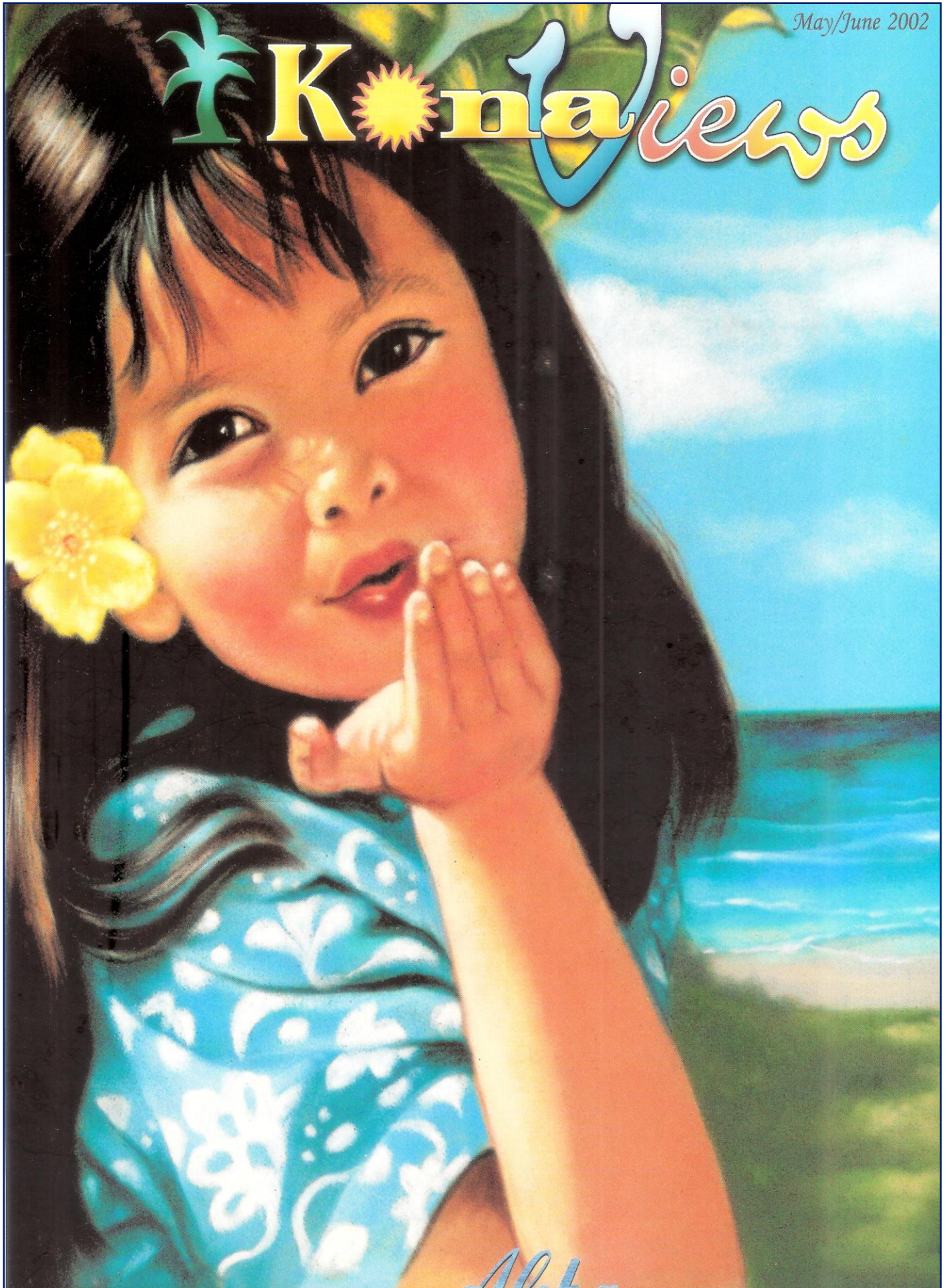


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Kona Views



A community publication spreading *Aloha* to the Kona-Kohala Coast

The **SPACE** AMBASSADORS

FROM OUTERSPACE TO KONA COAST,
ASTRONAUTS SEND A HUMANITARIAN MESSAGE

Photos & Story by
Steven Andrew Martin

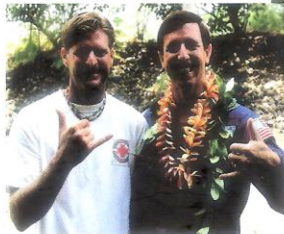
The idea to bring astronauts to the Big Island was born on a beautiful summer day—the ocean was glassy, the waves fun and clean—the kind that Kona dreams are made of. That's when I met Colonel Scott Horowitz, USAF, three-time traveler to space, while I was volunteering as a reef education guide at the Keauhou Beach Hotel. I wondered how an astronaut would do his first time surfing and Horowitz agreed to try. He stood up and rode his very first wave, turning and accelerating along the open face, exclaiming ironically, "Surfing is out of this world!"

Consequently, I followed the NASA web site for a year finding that communities could support post-flight astronaut appearances at schools. I imagined our little surf school, Hawaii Lifeguard Surf Instructors (HLSI), sponsoring a shuttle crew to come to West Hawaii. We proposed to NASA that they come to the Big Island for three main reasons. We are home to the world's foremost observatories and the Onizuka Space Center which honors Ellison Onizuka of the Challenger crew as well as Hawaii's tradition of navigation and discovery. (The Hawaiian flag flown on Hokulea's Rapa Nui voyage was taken on Discovery's STS-105 flight to the International Space Station).

After two years of enormous effort a visit was organized for September 14, 2001. Within minutes of the September 11th tragedy, the event was *officially* cancelled. However, a few weeks later NASA informed us two astronauts would still come. Determined to be at the Onizuka Space Center on October 9, Discoverer's Day, Commander Horowitz who has appeared at almost 1000 schools, and Mission Specialist Pat Forrester, brought to students the message that mankind has an inherent spirit for adventure, exploration and discovery, and now more than ever, for the benefit of humanity. Beyond a job, or government and politics, these astronauts came as humanitarian space ambassadors.

At the first school appearance, hundreds of kids, mesmerized by the concept of outer space, were attentive, focused, curious and on good behavior. They asked some thought provoking questions (see info box), and I was intrigued by the extent to which kids see the magic and mystery in outer space. Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." Horowitz remembers his imagination finding support when his 6th grade teacher wrote in his yearbook —

"You could be an astronaut!"



Inquiring Minds want to know: Big Island kids ask the astronauts
Astronauts visit Kealakehe Middle and Intermediate, Hualalai Academy, Makua Lani Christian HS, HPA and Parker Schools.

Q: How big is space?
Scott: Infinite.
Q: How big is infinite?
Scott: Just pick the highest number you can think of, and then add one.

Q: How big is the space station?
Scott: About the size of a football field.

Q: What does take-off feel like?
Pat: G's on take-off are like having a gorilla standing on your chest.

Q: Have you ever seen aliens?
Scott: Yes, on the first mission, there was a Costa Rican, Italian, and a Swiss.

Q: Do people get sick in space?
Scott: Yes, space adapted sickness, but the body is amazing and remembers what it is like to be in space, so the more you go, more adapted you become.



Q: Do they go crazy out there?
Scott: Crew needs to get along. They now have phones. Stay entertained.

Q: How much fuel is burned at take-off?
Scott: It's like emptying a large swimming pool in 20 seconds.

Q: What is it like at the space station?
Pat: Locked in a tin can with door welded shut.

Q: What is the most important thing you've learned?

Scott: You can do whatever you set your mind to.

Pat: Listen to the things the teachers are teaching: math, science, engineering, and much more. Use this golden opportunity.

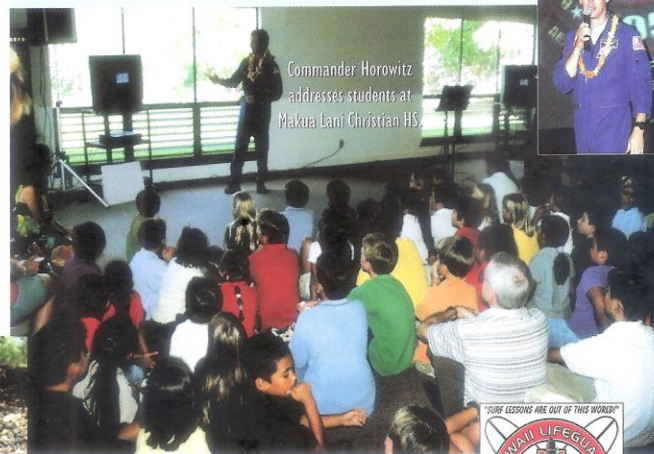
The #1 question?

Q: How do you go to the bathroom?

A: A space potty resembling a toilet in an airline, with a restraining device to keep astronauts on the seat in zero gravity, has air flow fans creating a vacuum which sucks waste materials into a freeze-dry steel container.

Q: Were you scared?

Scott: Too busy to be scared, but mostly scared of making a mistake or messing up.



Commander Horowitz addresses students at Makua Lani Christian HS.



A special MAHALO to everyone who participated in making the astronauts' visit possible, especially my surfing buddy, Barry Crivello, MBA, CPA and:

Nancy Tashima, Onizuka Space Center • John Colson, HPA Headmaster • Kona Seaspray
Laurie Ainslie, CFO of HPA • Piper Toyama, Parker School Headmaster • Big Island Retreat
Drysdale's Two • Wayne Easley • Hawaiian Airlines

TWO CREW MEMBERS

From Space Shuttle Discovery's Mission STS-105
VISIT BIG ISLAND SCHOOLS

Scott Horowitz earned a BS in Engineering, MS in Aerospace Engineering and Doctorate in Aerospace Engineering at the age of only 25, earning him the nickname "Doc." This highly honored astronaut has logged 5,000 hours flying in over 50 different aircraft and made 4 Shuttle Missions, earning him the position of Commander.



Pat Forrester: Although with just one trip to space, Pat's expertise led to his involvement with the development of robotics at the International Space Station. He is a West Point graduate with an MS in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. He was inducted as an Astronaut candidate in 1996.



The HLSI team flag has flown with Scott aboard Space Shuttle "Discovery" and the International Space Station, Flight STS-105 August-2001 (distance: 4,912,386 mi, speed: 17,500 mph). To remind the surf instructors of this special honor, a friend created artwork (right) which they now use on t-shirts.





PHILOSOPHY OF SPACE

Spending 10 days with the Discovery astronauts last October, made me realize that sometimes I see the world like a frog in a well, watching the clouds go by, wondering what I'm missing. Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, spoke of, "Universal Prayers," which to me suggested that "spirituality

and universality has a commonality in humanity," especially in the discernment that there is more to life than meets the eye. As a philosophy student with U of H and Peking University, I study the interrelationship of mankind and the universe. From the astronauts I gained a personal perspective that space travel has an enchantingly positive affect on the human mind. Horowitz told me that looking at the earth from space caused him to think deeply about humanity, wanting everyone to get along, and realizing a simple truth: "Don't sweat the small stuff in life — look at the big picture." Forrester said to imagine how the stars look from the city, and then compare the night sky deep in the country, next consider the scope during a space walk, perhaps ten thousand times more magnificent, "Fantastically beautiful and peaceful." - Steven Andrew Martin

Steven Andrew Martin, long time lifeguard and surf instructor, is pursuing his masters with UofH and Peking University, participating in seven US accredited study-abroad programs. For more photos and information see previous articles in KonaViews by Steven (May/June '00, Sept/Oct '00 & Mar '02), check out websites: www.surflessonshawaii.com & www.studyabroadjournal.com or call 936-7873.