

## Chauncey Uphoff

Dec 14, 2004

I worked the past 30 years with Chauncey, and with our colleague C.B. Boff. Chauncey was solid, but not stolid. He insisted on doing things correctly, but some of those things were really wild. Many worked out – he introduced me to the idea of solar sailing and orbit pumping when I was his supervisor at JPL. I pooh-poohed them when he first brought them up, but he was patient and finally explained it in terms I could understand.

Some didn't work out – he couldn't turn every mathematical trick into a mission; but it wasn't from a lack of understanding. We had some real fun at JPL. That is when C.B. Boff began to show up at nights after Chauncey left (or more accurately in the morning before he arrived) with creative inventions of new ways to get to the planets.

Chauncey was a member of the Advanced Projects Group when I was its leader at JPL. Another leader of our group, Ken Atkins pointed out, "He was truly a "character" and fit in perfectly with the raucous group of Advanced Project miscreants that we were.° His technical skills were matched to the motto "Any body, Any time!" that we held as the esprit theme for exploration."

This is not the time to bring up any faults – but I have to admit that he could drive me crazy with some of his intellectual nit-picking. He was a demon about historical credit. Many times I would argue with him saying that if he just agreed it all was derived by Laplace then we could stop worrying about who said what to who first. We also did not have overlapping views about dealing with the system. He wasn't real good about compromising principles just to get along. But no one ever knew a better team player and better collaborator with whom to work. I like this statement made by another colleague of ours, John Junkins, about Chauncey: "Due to his rugged individualism and outspoken nature, he was never a great organization person, but it was always honest, fun and highly productive." To that I will add, he helped – a lot of people, a lot of organizations, and, maybe most notably, a lot of ideas.

John Carrico said "Being a friend of Chauncey was like being in a secret society.° You meet someone new, you talk trajectories, a debate follows... but at the mention of the secret code word "Chauncey", then you know this person is a brother, and you can trust them.° (The divine hand even gave him a unique name to make this simple.)° At the dawn of a new age Chauncey links the small guild on this planet

which first navigates our paths to the stars.” He called him “a living resource - a fresh well at the base of the mountain, from which we drank”

Bernie Kaufman, another mutual friend of ours, said of Chauncey, “[He] said what he believed and was passionate about many things, but his beliefs never stepped on anyone else's and he was ready to defend others in their beliefs.° He was always ready to listen to the other side.° That appears to be a rare trait today.”

Steve Schlaifer called Chauncey ”a brilliant mind with an impish spirit.” One example that he used to drive me crazy with is writing Russian names using look-alike Cyrillic letters but pronouncing them in English. Our friend Sasha became Cawa. Cawa (whose last name is Sukhanov) wrote me about Chauncey, “A gifted and warm and bright guy has left us, a good piece of our life has gone, and this life has got much poorer. He was an attracting center of a mini-world like a sun joining together many “planets,” “asteroids,” “comets” of different kinds and nations.

Another colleague was really a disciple of Chauncey’s – in a group called “the Hounds.” Mike Louckes described it like this, “There was a group of us who became fans of Chauncey, and we continued to attend his seminar (on Orbit Mechanics) for the next couple of years, even though we had seen it before, because with Chauncey the classes were never the same.° He always had something to add, some new story to tell, some new perspective to give.” Giving new perspective is not a bad thing to be remembered for..

Drew Couch, another of the Colorado disciples has a really nice comment about Chauncey, “A swashbuckling orbit mechanic, mission designer, space visionary and all around genuine human being..”

Just as I was finishing this a note showed up on my desk, from C.B. Boff – who although we never met him, became very close to us during our JPL years. I received Dr. Boff's message via an ethereal connection. Boff urged that, in memory of Chauncey, we all should run East at 1 am on 2000 January 2, local mean solar time, the time when the Earth's motion about the Sun is greatest and the time when the rotation of the Earth on its axis causes the speed of a human affixed to the surface of the planet to be nearly maximum.

I have talked about Chauncey as a colleague, but my wife, Connie, reminds me he was also, and more than that, a friend. We’ve shared a lot since that day when we asked him his phone number in Sierra Madre and he replied, “Elk Snot” (he was right – look it up in an old phone book). We were particularly happy to share that friendship with Linda, who meant so much to him.

**Like all of us, Chauncey had some ups and downs in his personal life. But, wow, did he pull it all together with Linda and they had a great thing going among the two of them and with their children Christina and Ryan. To them, and to his other daughters Karinda and Vandy, we give our heartfelt sympathy and best wishes.**

**To sum up, we all have terrific associations and memories we will take from Chauncey. He was a teacher, he was a joyful spirit, he was smart, he was fun, but, perhaps, most importantly for us to remember, he was a really decent guy. Whatever side of the argument he was on, his rationale and basis were always with highest motives and with a real search for truth. We are all going to miss that.**