

Jay Apt

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The most satisfying work I have done has been making other peoples' equipment and experiments ~~at the leading edge of technology function in a challenging situation while contributing to an important goal.~~ I very much enjoy working with others, and nothing would be more gratifying to me than working as part of a team making the full operational use of the near-earth space environment routinely accessible to our shuttle and space station customers.

In organizing astronomical observing trips I've learned that I enjoy making bulky equipment work under stressful circumstances (most observations are granted only 3 nights on the telescope, and the 14,000 foot elevation and dependence on your own resources ~~make disciplined trouble-shooting essential~~). ~~The habits developed in instrument flying with failed equipment are extremely valuable to me in keeping making good decisions in the most of an observing session.~~ While supporting the Pioneer VENUS mission I also found I enjoyed developing the equipment redundancy and personal discipline required to make continuous observations over a long period (56 days) at a remote site. After becoming director of JPL's observatory I spent most of my time setting the facility up for easy use by other astronomers. While the observatory was not well-adapted to my own types of research, I discovered that I got great satisfaction from increasing its productivity and making observations for scientists who could not travel to the site.