



When we were assigned to STS-101, I told the crew that STS-101 was the "pay-off flight." With a rendezvous and docking, two space walks, robot arm operations, and supplying, retrofitting and maintenance inside the new space station, this mission challenges every aspect of our skills and training. We all feel very lucky to be part of the beginning of the construction of the International Space Station.

Preparation for every space flight becomes an exercise in time management, an exercise that invariably takes us away from our families. With our training in both Russia and America this has been especially true for STS-101. On behalf of the crew, let me express our sincere thanks to our families for taking up the slack while we've been missing in action. Your love and understanding have made all the difference.

We hope you are enjoying being a part of this space adventure as much as we are!

Sincerely,  
Jim