

Mars is bright in the Sisters sky

By Jim Anderson
Correspondent

Mars appears brighter in Sisters' night sky — but only for about a month. It appears as a large aircraft navigation light, but not moving across the night sky like an airliner.

Let's take a look at our neighbor planet. It's very cold there' with an average temperature of -80 degrees Fahrenheit. Do you remember the winter of 1958 in Central Oregon when it went down to 36 below at night? Now imagine 80 below.

Then there's the dust storms. They can cover the entire planet at the same time. There are also rocky, deep canyons, volcanoes and craters all over the planet. It has clouds and wind, just like earth, but volcanic dust is in the air constantly.

Mars has about one-third the gravity of Earth. That means a rock dropped on Mars would fall slower than a rock dropped on Earth, and stuff on Mars weighs less than stuff here. A paerson in a diet living on Mars could think they were successful in the efforts to lose weight. If you weighed 100 pounds here, you'd only weigh 37 pounds on Mars.

Mars is our second-closest neighbor. Fiction about Mars has been part of the culture for over a century. "War of the Worlds" is probably one of the best-known books about the Red Planet. It documents the destruction of England by Martians in 1910. But even before that in 1890, "Urania," written by Camille Flammarion, told of two lovers killed in a ballooning accident being reincarnated in new bodies on Mars.

"Gulliver of Mars," by Edwin L. Arnold must have inspired some of NASA's great Mars adventures: A space adventurer by the name of Gulliver Jones got there from Earth on a flying/magic carpet and interacted with natives, Hithers and Thithers.

And there's the huge science fiction hoax of Mars in our age that took place in the year 2016 when a story got started that Mars was going to appear in the night sky as large as the Moon during the opposition that year. Obviously, those who witnessed the Red Planet's close approach to Earth last week saw it as the little red orb in the sky it is.

Earth and Mars both travel around the Sun on wobbly, elliptical orbits, which causes their relationship to each other in space to change. However, every few years their orbits align. When this takes place, Mars is said to

be at opposition, because the Red Planet and the Sun are located on opposite sides of Earth.

For we residents of Earth, that means when the Sun sets in the west, Mars appears to rise in the east. That's why the Red Planet appears to be brighter and brighter each night as the planet makes its closest approach to Earth. It will come within a mere 35.8 millions miles, but as you read this, it's moving away from Earth and will dim to it's usual radiance by the end of August.

But we have an opportunity at the end of this month: Mars will appear in the southeastern horizon at about sundown to join Saturn in the night sky. If you set up for a long visit with Mars and Saturn with binoculars or telescope, around midnight both planets will be quite visible; Saturn's customary golden color, and Mars its usual red, caused by the rust in the volcanic soils.

NASA has used both spacecraft and roaming robots

to help us learn more about Mars. In 1965, "Mariner 4" was flown close to Mars to help us get a closer look at the Red Planet. Then, in 1976, Viking 1 and Viking 2 were the first spacecraft to land on the surface of Mars. The photos they provided us gave us our first up-close look at our neighbor.

In 2004 we really took some very close looks at what Mars is all about, even discovering evidence of water. Recently, NASA confirmed evidence that liquid water flows beneath Mars' surface.

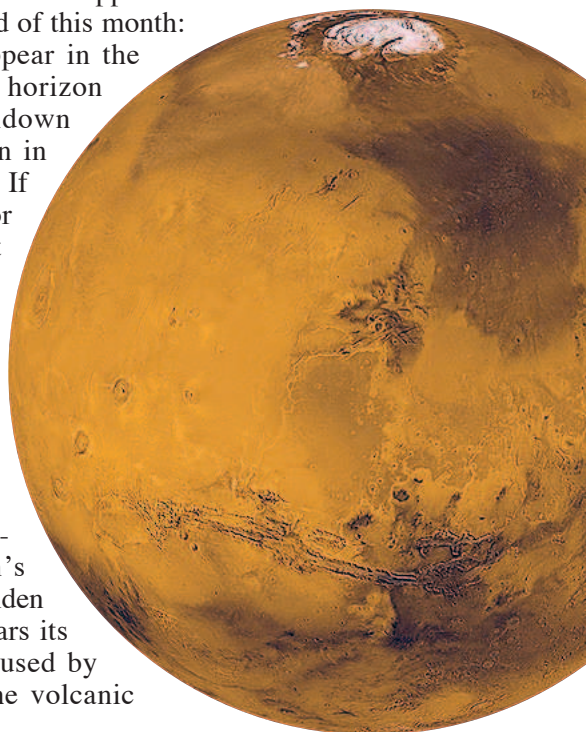


PHOTO COURTESY NASA
Mars, the Red Planet.

OSU Extension offers skin nourishment tips

Living on Oregon's High Desert brings special challenges for maintaining healthy skin. Learn how you can nourish your skin at an interactive public workshop at the Oregon State University Extension Service office in Redmond. The session will be held Wednesday, August 8, from 1 to 4 p.m. Cost is \$10.

Participants will enjoy hands-on activities and discussions, recipe preparation and sampling. The lesson includes handouts and healthful recipes to take home. Additionally, these classes meet the Health Engagement Model (HEM) health education requirement for some insurance companies.

This lesson will help people 50 and older develop strategies to help maintain their skin in healthy aging. Any adult can benefit from the information. It is part of the "Nourishing Boomers and Beyond" series.

The program may also help you to:

- Relieve stress.
- Learn ways to stretch your food dollars and still serve tasty, nutritious meals.
- Get reliable, research-based information to help you sort out fact from fiction when you're looking for health information.

• Learn more about prescription and nonprescription medications and how food can interact with them.

"Our goal is to provide nutrition and overall wellness education with optional, online support to help adults sustain a healthy lifestyle," said Glenda Hyde, OSU Extension faculty.

Call the OSU Extension office in Deschutes County by Monday, August 6 at 541-548-6088 to register. Class size is limited. For more information, contact Glenda Hyde at oregonstate.edu.

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