

# Astronomical budget on Mars plan

## Price tag on Mars, too high with Earth in current shape

## Larger space program would greatly further science, society



**Ben Maras**  
OPINION EDITOR

Have we now concluded that the Moon has massive oil reserves? Are the Martians now buying Uranium from the Neptunians?

What other possible reason could Dubya have to want to set up a lunar base and send people to Mars? Maybe he's just a closet trekkie and is still harboring secret hopes to meet up with some hot Vulcan babe. Whatever his reasons, the idea sure seems pretty half-baked to me.

Sending people to Mars and back to the Moon (assuming we went there to begin with) would benefit science, but how much and at what cost? What benefit could we possibly get that would outweigh the gross misuse of funding? If anyone can think of something, please let me know.

Sure, the idea in itself isn't bad, but seriously, the space race is over, why are our heads so far in the clouds we can't see what's happening here on Earth? The economy is in one of the worst slumps in recorded history and the two wars we're fighting in the Middle East are doing more than their fair share of draining funds.

Let's focus on the current economy, because far too much could be said on the

"War on Terror" to fit on one page. At the present time, the national debt is \$7,020,435,594,767.28. By publication time, it will be much higher, considering the debt has been growing at average rate of \$2 billion per day since September of 2003.

This means that the average American's share of debt is approximately \$23,970.26. For a continuous clock showing the growth of the debt, visit [http://www.brillig.com/debt\\_clock](http://www.brillig.com/debt_clock).

So the country is \$7 trillion in the hole. Conversely, at the end of Clinton's term was the first budget surplus of a generation, as well as a 30-year low in unemployment. Yet since Bush took office in 2000, more than 3.2 million people are unemployed.

How much will his space fetish cost? While experts have said it is too early to tell for sure, NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe has said that it will cost hundreds of billions of dollars to get the plan off the ground. That's money that right now, the country cannot afford to spend. Before we invest in other planets, maybe we should invest in our own. Put the money towards creating new jobs... and keep the jobs here, instead of letting the WTO ship jobs overseas.

No matter how hot Bush finds women with pointy ears and no emotions, he needs to set his priorities straight, and fix a country he's screwed up before he starts planning how to screw up another planet.



**Isaiah Creel**  
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Since the first Neanderthal stared at the sky and grunted, mankind has been infatuated with the idea of what dwells in the heavens.

Recently, it seems that the Neanderthal-in-Chief has also been looking to the sky and grunting, and while I don't agree with the majority of Bush's proposals, I believe that going to Mars has been a long time in coming.

Some would consider this multi-million dollar endeavor to be a ridiculous waste of funds that could be better spent on education or perhaps healthcare, but the reality is that the last time America was interested in space, there were numerous technological advances in both the educational and health fields. Just take the microwave oven or the pacemaker for example, neither may have been invented without the aid of the space program.

Granted, the goal of putting a human on Mars is quite lofty and the person responsible for such a great idea is, for lack of a better word, an "ape." There is also no realistic way to acquire the truckloads of cash it will take to fund this project, but it's a good idea nonetheless.

The real question shouldn't be why are we going, but how are we going to pay for this endeavor? As Homer Simpson would agree, the only way to accomplish a crazy scheme is with an even crazier scheme.

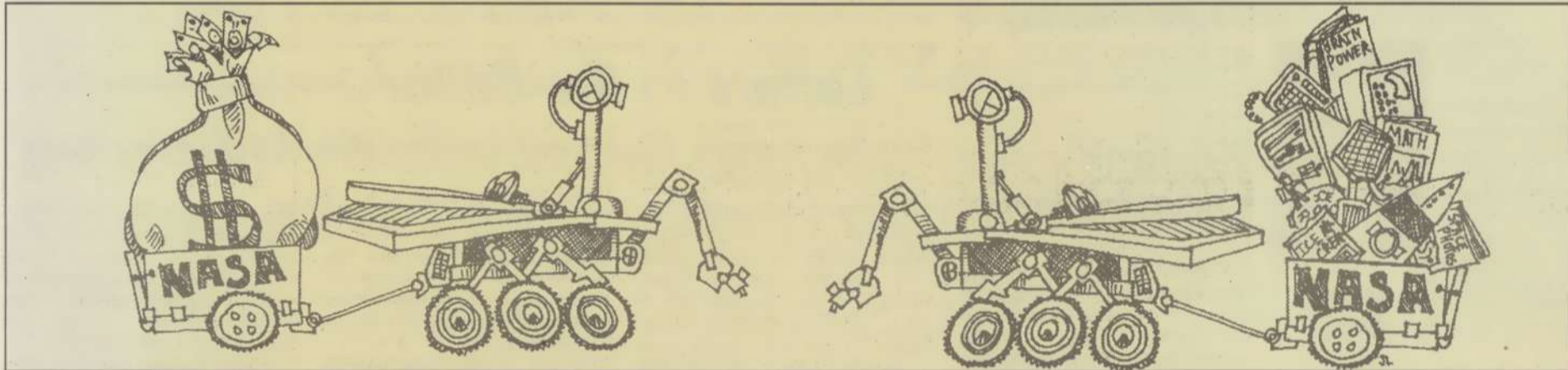
Look at it this way. The military is what made it possible for the president to run amuck in the Middle East, a project which has yet to improve the state of America's national debt.

So if the military is sucking up all the funding for our country's precious schools, why not just eliminate the military? Is the President perhaps afraid that America is seen as a bully and without a military would be vulnerable to the abundance of enemies the U.S. has accumulated?

After all, the Cold War is over and the need for ridiculous amounts of destructive devices is somewhat lessened. The hundreds of billions of dollars spent on the military would easily support a trip, or two, to Mars. We could even use all of those military vehicles as scrap metal to build rockets and space buggies.

The reality of the situation is that going to Mars is an expensive project, but the constant expense that is the military is far more costly.

Go ahead and debate the worth of not having a military. The fact remains that the space program produces things that help; the military, however, produces things that have no other purpose but to harm.



## Chiefs' Corner:

### What guys should know about what women want



**Cyndee Mady**  
CO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Valentine's Day is perhaps just another hyped-up holiday where the presence of a date is essential and the dateless seem to disappear into the quixotic shadows of the moonlit night.

Even people who have a date this V-day, may still be in need of a little help with their approach.

First-dates can be a nerve-racking experience for just about anyone. However, when keeping in mind a few simple rules, men can hurdle the first-date blunders and possibly even reach the finish line a winner.

Let's start at the beginning—a man needs to take charge.

The scenario of "What do you want to do?" followed by "I don't know; what do you want to do?" gets really old, really fast. A woman may not want to continue dating a man who doesn't have enough creativity to plan a

first date, let alone a second or third.

My suggestion: plan a date that is fun and imaginative, but also breaks the ice. There is nothing worse than those awkward pauses that occur in the calm of a romantic setting, serving only to instigate the annoying ritual of 20 questions.

Secondly, flowers on the first date is just so cliché.

It is a nice thought in theory, but many women frown upon this gesture because all it really signifies is that a guy is sucking up and hoping to score—points, that is.

My suggestion: Wait until the third or fourth date when it is unexpected; this way, the man initially saves some money while determining whether or not the woman is worthy of subsequent dates. The woman, on the other hand, feels more deserving of the flowers—hence more grateful.

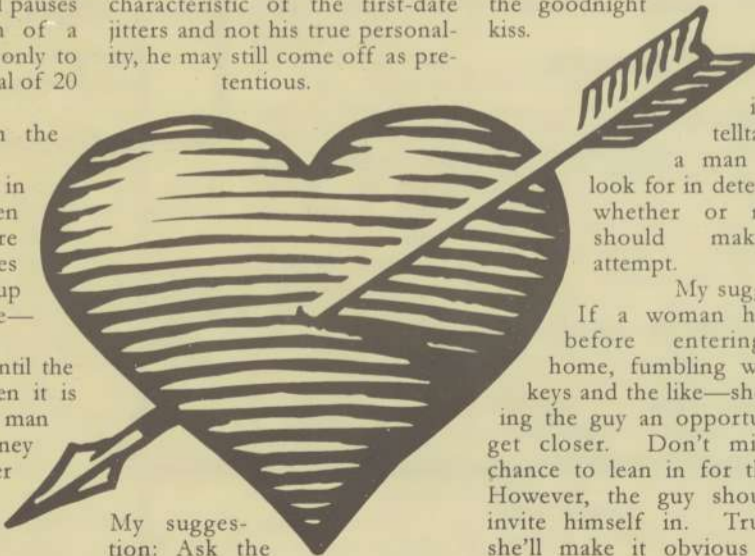
A third quandary is the conver-

sation.

In an effort to impress the woman and suppress anxiety, a man often talks about himself too much. Though this may be characteristic of the first-date jitters and not his true personality, he may still come off as pre-tentious.

A fourth rule of thumb concerns the good night ritual.

At the end of the date, a man might have difficulty discerning a woman's desires when it comes to the goodnight kiss.



My suggestion: Ask the woman a few questions and try to find a common bond to talk about. Avoid swapping life stories on the first date.

There is one telltale sign a man should look for in determining whether or not he should make an attempt.

My suggestion: If a woman hesitates before entering her home, fumbling with her keys and the like—she is giving the guy an opportunity to get closer. Don't miss this chance to lean in for the kiss. However, the guy should not invite himself in. Trust me; she'll make it obvious if she wants to take it a step further.

Finally, don't play games, but at the same time, avoid coming on too strong, too fast.

It is perfectly acceptable to call in the next day or two to let a date know it was a good time and mention the possibility of a second date, but don't call three times that day or ask her to go out again the very next night.

My suggestion: Keep the conversation short and sweet, giving the woman something to look forward to. I've had guys call me the next morning, tell me they'd call later and call again to tell me goodnight. We had one date yesterday—give me a break! Men do not have the patent on heading for the hills when stalker-type tendencies creep in to play.

So if you're one of the lucky ones who have a date this Valentine's Day, I hope this advice will help get your desired result.

If however, you are one of the poor dateless slobs who are stuck home watching animal planet after dark, you can still take solace in the fact that on February 15—all of those annoying heart shaped boxes of candy are 50 percent off!

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