

Man May Have Big Question About Venus Answered Within Few Days

Pasadena, Calif.—(UPI)—Within a few days, man may begin solving a big question which has haunted his imagination since he first gazed with wonder into the heavens: Does life exist out in the universe?

A clue to this may be learned Friday, Dec. 14, when the United States expects to score a major space age triumph by giving man his first close look at a planet — Venus.

Although the Mariner 2 spacecraft will not determine whether life actually exists on the mysterious and cloud-masked planet, it can determine whether life as we know it is possible there.

This can be revealed in data on Venusian temperatures the spacecraft sends back to Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory here from across more than 36 million miles of space.

"We can tell whether or not temperatures on Venus are

mild enough to support life as we know it, or too hot," a JPL spokesman said.

Sophisticated Probe

Mariner 2, laden with scientific experiments and the most sophisticated space probe yet launched, is scheduled to make a fly-by exploration of the planet known as earth's twin, peering with an "electronic eye" beneath its perpetual shroud of strange clouds.

If all goes as planned, and space agency officials expect no trouble, the probe should gather historic data during a key half-hour period while sweeping within about 21,000 miles of the interplanetary target after a 109-day, 180.2 million mile flight.

The fly-by exploration also could herald a tremendous feat of interplanetary guidance and accuracy for this country.

"A rifleman firing a bullet at a wrist watch a mile away would have to hit its second hand to achieve the accuracy of the Venus space probe now

racing towards its planetary rendezvous," a JPL scientist said.

The accurate guidance was performed when trajectory scientists, during the earlier part of Mariner's mission, corrected its course by flashing direction changes to its "robot brain" to make its pass close to Venus.

Two Space Firsts

Mariner 2 has set two other space firsts, both in radio communication. It broke a distance record for transmitting scientific data when it got 17.7 million miles from earth. The previous record was set by the Pioneer 5 moon probe. Mariner then broke Pioneer 5's distance record for transmitting a position signal from 22.3 million miles.

By the time it passes by Venus Mariner 2 will have plunged one-third of the distance from the earth to the sun.

The Russians now have a spacecraft headed for Mars, the closest planet to earth, but it is not due to make a fly-by

photographic pass of that heavenly body until June.

The 447-pound Mariner, resembling a miniature oil derrick with flaps, is the most intricate and gifted spacecraft yet launched.

What about Venus itself?

It is the earth's brightest neighbor because its dense clouds reflect twice as much sunlight as does the earth. Of the heavenly bodies, only the sun and moon exceed the sparkling planet in brilliance.

Surface Never Seen

Yet telescopes on earth, giant instruments which have detected exploding stars trillions of miles away, have never seen her surface because of the pervading mantle of clouds.

The clouds have prevented scientists from even making a good guess at the length of

the Venusian "day" — the time the planet takes to make one revolution on its axis.

Scientists have never found a break in the clouds under which Venus hides her mysteries.

Is Venus a huge ocean, or is she a barren desert forever torn by raging winds and fierce heat? Is the surface marshy, or does it perhaps hold continents and bodies of water much like earth?

Most speculation is that Venus is extremely hot, having a surface temperature of up to 615 degrees Fahrenheit — nearly three times hotter than boiling water. This is based on the theory that the cloud layer traps in heat.

The surface of the planet is thought to be barren and its atmosphere is believed to be filled with carbon dioxide

with little or no free oxygen or water vapor.

Mariner Experiments

Experiments of Mariner 2 include:

— Microwave radiometer: Will "see" through the clouds to the previous unseen surface. It will determine whether there is water in the atmosphere and what the surface temperature is — two of the most important factors in determining the possibility of life there.

— High-energy radiation: To measure radiation particles in deep space and around Venus — considered perhaps the greatest hazard facing future spacemen.

— Solar plasma detector: To measure the flow and density of "hot" particles from the sun — the so-called "solar winds" which fill our plan-

etary system.

— Cosmic dust detector: To measure dust particles in space — another major hazard to manned flights to the moon and particularly the planets.

After its mission is accomplished, the Mariner 2 will join America's Pioneer 5 in an endless orbit around the sun.

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Present Said Good Time To Consider Purchase of House

New York—(UPI)—Pondering whether or not this is the time to buy a house?

In the opinion of Robert F. Furman, Jr., president of Previews Inc., international real estate marketing service, "There has seldom been a better time to buy a house than the present . . ."

Furman noted that many potential buyers are hesitant today because of the long and serious decline in the stock market and the Cuban crisis.

Compelling Reasons

"But, in spite of the fact that next year's business and next year's international situation seem to be clouded with doubt," he said, "there are — to my mind at least — four compelling reasons to buy a house now."

First, he cited the current buyer's market. Sellers, he said, are likely to be more receptive to offers than they have been in the past or may be in the future.

Then, too, Furman said, "there's plenty of mortgage money and it is available at a lower cost than it has been for a long time. This means that the home buyer who needs a mortgage can expect his carrying charges to be

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Modoc Lumber Bids High on Two Sales

Klamath Falls — The Modoc Lumber company was successful bidder on the purchase of two timber sales offered by the Winema National forest Dec. 6.

The Lost Creek sale on the Klamath Ranger district was purchased for a total price of \$87,856. This represented a \$35 raise from the \$87,821 appraised price. A total of 9,700,000 board feet of national forest timber was involved in the sale.

The high bids submitted were \$9.30 for pine species, \$8.65 for Douglas fir, \$6.70 for Shasta Red fir and \$4.35 for white fir and other. Ellingson Timber company was the only other qualified bidder on the sale.

The Edgewood salvage sale on the Chilcoquin district was purchased for a total price of \$4,330. Appraised advertised price was \$4,070 for the 800,000 board feet of blow-down timber. The high bids were \$7.85 for Ponderosa pine species and \$4.80 for white fir and other. Lovensness company of Malin also bid on the Edgewood salvage sale.

London Killer Smog Lifts After 4 Days

London — (UPI)—London's four-day killer smog was gone Saturday, but the giant city still felt the effects with a soaring death toll and hospitals jammed with emergency patients suffering from chest ailments.

The air ministry weather office said the smog blanket had completely lifted by mid-afternoon from most sections of the country.

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