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SUMMER OF MARS AT CHABOT SPACE & SCIENCE CENTER

The Red Planet Makes its Closest Approach to Earth in Over 15,000 Years

23 June 2003 -- OAKLAND, CA: — Want to add a spark to your summer evenings? This summer, **Mars** takes center stage at Chabot Space & Science Center in Oakland, as it makes its closest approach to Earth in over 15,000 years! Mars rises earlier and earlier as the summer passes, becoming high in the night sky by late August, and will appear to grow larger as the summer nights go by as it approaches Earth in its orbit. Chabot salutes the Red Planet all summer with a new exhibit, films, planetarium show, hands-on activities, lectures, and special events.

“Mars holds a unique place in the human imagination,” says Chabot Executive Director Alex Barnett. “In ancient times, stargazers from many cultures observed the strange movement of a glowing red dot in the night sky. Ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Chinese regarded this red beacon with fear and suspicion, and our fascination with Mars, both in science and fantasy, continues to this day.”

MARS ENCOUNTER EXHIBIT OPENS IN OUR GALLERIES ON JULY 4

Mars Encounter invites visitors to explore Mars’ place in our culture, investigate the accomplishments of past missions to Mars, follow the progress of current missions to Mars, and consider future Mars exploration, when human astronauts will experience the Red Planet first-hand. *Mars Encounter* features a four-foot tactile Mars globe, complete with craters and volcanoes; a Martian meteorite; a Martian Sci-fi theater; a Mars Mission Control where visitors can obtain data on current and past missions; videos of Rover missions; a wall-size mural embedded with quiz games; a vacation to Mars planning station, and a play area for the younger crowd that includes a photo-op with a Martian!

The exhibit will be continually updated and changed as additional Mars research and exploration takes place. Chabot is a member of the Mars Visualization Alliance, part of the NASA "Mars Exploration Program (MER) Engagement Plan," which sends members Mars mission data in near real-time as it becomes available from the rovers. The new exhibit was developed by Chabot in collaboration with West Office Exhibition Design of Oakland, and funded through a grant from NASA.

THE MARS SHOW - NEW PLANETARIUM SHOW OPENS JULY 4

Travel on a journey in time as you learn how our understanding of the “Red Planet” has changed throughout history. From Percival Lowell's Martian-built canals and the Carl Sagan Memorial station of Pathfinder to the future MER and Mars Express missions, *The Mars Show* probes the questions: "Why explore Mars?" "Could life exist there?" "What would such life look like?" The show includes a live presentation that will teach visitors how to find Mars in the current night sky; features the latest images from telescopes, orbiters, and rovers; includes breaking news from the NASA missions, and presents audiences with a timeline for Mars exploration.

MARTIANS STAR IN SCI-FI ADVENTURE FILM SERIES

Chabot Space & Science Center continues its screenings of space-related, sci-fi and adventure films, projected on the huge dome of the Tien MegaDome Theater. *War of the Worlds* (1953, Rated G), Orson Welles' classic story of a Martian invasion of the eastern U.S., screens every Friday and Saturday evening in July (except July 4) at 7:30 pm. The invasion continues on Friday and Saturday, August 1 and 2, with screenings at 7:30 pm of *Mars Attacks* (1996, Rated PG-13).

Tickets for films in the Sci-Fi Adventure Film Series are \$5. For tickets or information: (510) 336-7300 or www.chabotspace.org

SUMMER OF MARS LECTURE SERIES

Hear the latest in Mars exploration, discoveries, and myths in lectures this summer in the Tien MegaDome Theater.

Tickets for the lectures are \$7, available through the Chabot box office, (510) 336-7373 or ticketweb.com. Seating is limited and advance ticket purchase is recommended. Speakers and topics will include:

“**Martians Invade Hollywood**” —Thurs., June 26, 7:30 pm — Dr. Seth Shostak of SETI

“**Water and the Martian Landscape**” — Thurs., July 10, 7:30 pm — Taylor Perron of U.C. Berkeley

“**Mars Exploration Rovers**” — Thurs., July 24, 7:30 pm — Nathalie Cabrol, Principle Scientist with NASA

“**Mars: The Search for Life on the Red Planet**” — Sat., August 9, 7:30 pm — Dr. Chris McKay of NASA

“**Mars, Astrobiology and Planetary Protection**” — Thurs., August 21, 7:30 pm — Dr. Margaret Race of SETI

“**Martian Meteorites: What They Tell Us About Mars & Life**” — Thurs., August 28, 7:30 pm — Dr. Tim McCoy
and Dr. Cari Corrigan, Smithsonian Institution

“**Travelers Guide to Mars**” — Sat., August 30, 6:30 pm — William Hartmann, astronomer and artist

MARS HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS FOR KIDS AND ADULTS

Mars Spotlight Activities

With all the telescopes pointed at Mars this summer, we will take a closer look at the Red Planet with hands-on activities, slide shows, rover races and more! Programs continue daily from 11:30 am – 4:30 pm and are FREE with General Admission.

Family Science Workshops

Mars—Just For Kids — Saturday, July 19, 10 am – 11:30 am (for ages 8 and up)

A morning full of Mars-related activities — create your own mission to Mars, weigh yourself on Mars, build a paper model of a Mars spacecraft, help design a spacecraft by connecting the dots, and navigate your way through a maze.

Make a Candy Mars Rover — Saturday, August 9, 7 pm – 8:30 pm (for ages 5 and up)

See a short video on NASA's Mars rovers, operate a Mars rover yourself, then build a candy Mars rover you can take home and enjoy—until you decide to eat it! You'll also take home some NASA pictures and postcards of Mars.

Mars—Just For Adults — Friday, August 22, 7 pm – 8:30 pm (for Teens and older)

Visit various web sites available to the public for exploring Mars. We'll examine the "best" sites available, participate in some Mars web activities, and learn about Mars surface features and current missions to that planet.

Build a Mars Rover — Saturday, August 30, 10 am – 12 noon (for ages 10 and older)

Get ideas for building your own Mars rover by watching a short NASA Mars Rover video, and by operating a Mars rover simulator. You'll receive a kit for building a battery-operated chassis, which will be the "core" of your Mars Rover. Take your chassis home, finish your Rover, and bring it back to Chabot for public display!

MARS IN THE SKY THIS SUMMER

Mars begins to take center stage in the night sky this summer in June. Rising near midnight by the end of the month the Red Planet grows considerably in appearance, and with medium-sized telescopes, its grey and green surface markings can be seen. During July, Mars begins to brighten considerably, almost doubling its red-orange glow as it rises earlier and earlier as the month progresses, appearing at 10 pm by month's end. August is the month of Mars, which rises brightly in the east/southeast sky earlier and earlier throughout the month. Nothing in the sky (not even the Full Moon-marred Perseid Meteor Shower on the evening of Tuesday, August 12) will come close to its dazzling display as the Red Planet moves toward Opposition — its closest approach to Earth in over 15,000 years — on August 28. Using the Center's large telescopes — including Nellie, the new 36-inch Cassegrain reflector telescope that opened on June 21 — you can take a closer look at Mars surface features like its bright white polar ice cap, and the darker areas of the Valles Marineres and the V-shaped Syrtis Major.

MARS VIEWING PARTY ON AUGUST 26

Get up close and personal on a date with the Red Planet at Chabot's **Mars Viewing Party**, on the evening of August 26 from 9 pm – 1:30 am. A ticket are \$11.00 Adult and \$8.00 for Youth and seniors, and includes a planetarium show, hands-on activities, telescope viewing and more!

CHABOT SPACE & SCIENCE CENTER FACTS

Chabot Space & Science Center is located at 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland, in Joaquin Miller Park in the Oakland Hills. Chabot summer hours are: Tuesdays–Thursdays, 10 am–5 pm; Fridays–Saturdays, 10 am–7:30 pm; Sundays 12 noon – 5 pm (Closed Mondays). Additional evening hours for the Planetarium and Theater are Fridays and Saturdays, 7:30 pm – 9 pm, with free telescope viewing on Fridays and Saturdays from dusk – 10:30 pm, weather permitting. Tickets may be purchased at the door, or by calling (510) 336-7373. Advance tickets are also available on-line at www.ticketweb.com.

For more information, call (510) 336-7300 or visit the Chabot website at www.chabotpace.org

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