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THINGS YOU WON'T FIND ON MARS

By Victoria Elizabeth

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WORD COUNT: 903

Well, I suppose we should all be "happier than a pig in a poke". Why? This year marks the first time a man-made object has landed on Mars. Let's see, at last count there were at least two charming little robots (from the Land of Stars and Stripes naturally) putzing about the surface of the "Red Planet".

And, if I'm not mistaken, Mars is also home to some space junk including two deader-than-a-doornail non-entities (hailing from somewhere that shall remain nameless). At last report, the Dudley-Do-Little-Devices crash-landed who knows where on the Red Planet.

Since we haven't located the "Lost and Found" on Mars yet, we haven't got a clue if the devices are lost or whether they're just hiding. Since no Martians turned up to greet us let alone give us the coordinates of the Lost & Found, the voyageurs from Earth have been caught between a rock and a hard place as it were. Okay, so maybe the Martians were busy the day we arrived, or possibly they lost their maps to the Lost & Found. Oh well, no matter, who cares ... onto more pressing news.

After the first televised glimpse of the Mars landscape, my mind began to ponder and then it wandered off on a very long tangent. That often happens when it's been a slow news day, a sluggish news week or sometimes even a slothful news month.

I don't know about you, but frankly I got a tad bored looking at red rocks (on the bottom of a crater floor), more rusty rocks (on the frigging flatlands) and a black void of nothingness as far as the eye could see. Let's face it... unless you're really into red rocks, there's not a whole lot going for Mars.

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So, where's the "Red Dwarf"? That's what I want to know. After all, why did man set out on this galactic adventure if he didn't have a mission to find the little fellow. (Shy you say, well I'd say he's probably just tucked away somewhere in this color-coordinated place ...you would think.)

After pondering and even more pondering (because I had nothing pressing on my "to-do" list), I began to think of things you might find on Mars. The list was incredibly short. So I came up with something better, "things you probably won't find on Mars".

Here are a few things I came up with in the ten minutes allocated to this priority task, (ranked no. 13 on my "to-do" list today). Now remember, it's neither a definitive nor an exhaustive list...but it's a good first attempt.

By the way, feel free to add to my list if you want. After all, it's not like there's someone out there with a franchise on the truth who's going to tell you, you're wrong. Trust me on this one! Just toss your togs and your thinking cap along with your blessed beliefs. Now listen up... join the other tots in the sandbox...wiggle your toes ... and let go your nightmares for pete's sake!

** Waterclosets, Loos and Tinkle-Pantries. (Since there's no H₂O here to make them work, there's not a lot of demand for them. The bad news is visitors will have to wear bloopy space suits equipped with compact wonder-waste baggies around their navels. So, suck it up all you Trekkies! Oh, and by the way, who said Mars was a five-star destination resort anyway?)

** Spinach, beans, and green garbage bags. (That means you won't find Popeye, the Jolly Green Giant or the Man from Glad. Now isn't that a relief!)

** Wal-Mart, Home-Depot, and the Golden Arches. (They're still scrapping over who gets to play "King of the Castle" back on Earth and besides, they really don't give a sweet tweet about a vertically-challenged dude named "Red Dwarf" or a bunch of red rocks for that matter.)

**Trees. (Okay, so there's no low-hanging fruit let alone a place for money to grow on. Not good news for award-winning fruitcake-makers or whackers of the world who want to chop things down and make stuff like toothpicks, chopsticks and ready-to-assemble doll-house furniture.)

**Monarchs, Misfits and Mystics. (Without throne rooms, monarchs won't have a place to sit upon; no bars or slot machines means that hustlers and lounge lizards won't have a place to meet and greet; and in the absence of live bait, mystics won't be able to win friends and influence lost souls. Sometimes life just sucks, especially if one lives on Mars!)

**Perfectly Normal Beasts. (Large, spotted, charging sort of succulent, sweet-flavored, tender hoofed animals that are safe to skewer over a barbecue; a cross between a cow, a bull and a kind of buffalo --- only hairless, you know the ones that gallump and grovel about on the back nine in the springtime and then disappear into the sunset in the fall. Don't ask me why they do that, they just do.)

** Women from Venus. (Without any men on Mars, there's not a hope in hell that any women from Venus would be dumb enough to waste a trip to a pathetic planet full of red rocks ruled by a duffus

named "Red Dwarf".)

For further information on the elusive "Red Dwarf" please check out: <http://www.reddwarf.co.uk>

For all manner of important, significant and really vital stuff you should know, please refer to the "Unconventional Guide to Life, the Universe & Everything" at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/>

Victoria Elizabeth, "Quipping Queen & Empress of Everything" lives in Victoria, B.C. Canada. Besides issuing potty proclamations from her virtual throne room at www.quippingqueen.blogspot.com, HRH adores receiving greetings at: quippingqueen@yahoo.com. When not busy with royal duties, she earns her bread and peanut butter as a "business development consultant" (whatever that means).

The future of the Human Species – Part 2:Where next?

By K.A.Cassimally

The future of the Human Species – Part 2:Where next? by K.A.Cassimally

Many scientists are currently exploring the idea of going to live on Mars. Mars is the nearest planet to Earth and scientists actually think that the red planet resembled our Earth some million years ago. Some other scientists from the NASA Ames Center have already started the creation of a 'Mars town' and many others are in fact already experimenting it. Of course, these experiments are done on Earth itself but this 'Mars town' has an environment practically alike to that of Mars. And the perfect place for the conduction of this experiment is in Texas, USA.

The astronauts working in these towns wear their space suit and also do everything they would really have to carry out if they ever go to Mars in the future.

But Mars would be, like Earth a temporary place for humans. When the Sun starts engulfing the planets, Mars will disappear barely hours after the earth. So Mars only seems to be the ideal place to spread the human species. It is also a good location to send humans if ever there is a disaster on Earth. By saying disaster, I mean asteroid collision and things like that.

If we, humans do not want to disappear when the earth or mars get swallowed up, we will have to go and live beyond the solar system. But are there any planets outside our solar system prepared to support life? Astronomers' answer is:

"If Earth can support life, why can't other planets do same too? Astronomers have already discovered a Jupiter-like planet orbiting a Sun-like star so why not an Earth-like planet orbiting a Sun-like star next?"

Astronomers clearly think that, yes, there has to be other planets alike to Earth waiting to be colonised out there. And maybe, these planets will in the future hold our species.

But in all cases, this is exactly what some astronomers have in mind: transplant the human species to

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these planets before it is too late.

Before colonising places outside our system though, it is logical to try and colonise our neighbour, Mars.

To achieve this goal though, many other problems have to be taken into consideration. How do we transform a dusty planet like Mars into one more or less alike to our Earth? How should we proceed? Before we plan to perform any of these though, we should ask ourselves whether we are really prepared to go out there where nobody has ever gone.

K.A.Cassimally is the editor in chief of Astronomy Journal and Astronomy Journal Ezine. He is also the co-founder of the RCPL Astronomy Club. K.A.Cassimally is best known for his article 'Harry Potter and the Moons of Jupiter'. He is also Senior Columnist at BackWash.com where he writes 'Not Scientific Science'. Website:

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