Caltech scientists join Mars Science Lab team

KIMM FESENMAIER Science Writer

With the Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) well on its way to Mars, the newest members of its science team have been announced. Two Caltech professors—Kenneth Farley and Bethany Ehlmann—are among 18 researchers who have been selected as funded participating scientists on the mission. They were selected, along with a dozen international scientists, from a pool of 149 applicants based on their potential contributions to the scientific objective of the mission—to use the car-sized Mars rover, Curiosity, and its suite of scientific instruments to search for evidence of a once or presently habitable environment on Mars.

"The Participating Scientist program for MSL was extremely competitive," says John Grotzinger, the mission's project scientist and the Fletcher Jones Professor of Geology at Caltech. "It's great to have Ken and Bethany join the science team. Ken will bring his expertise to the mission. Ken will bring his expertise to the mission. Ken will bring his expertise to the mission. Ken will bring his expertise to the mission. Ken will bring his expertise to the mission. Bethany has been involved with. His work focuses on measuring noble gases in rocks, and that is precisely what he hopes to help the MSL team do on Mars.

Examine the capabilities of one of Curiosity's science instruments, Sample Analysis at Mars (SAM), which was designed to look for organic matter, Farley realized that it might be possible to detect the isotope helium-3 with SAM's spectrometer. Since helium-3 is produced by the bombardment of surface materials by incoming cosmic rays, measurements of the isotope can be used to determine how long rocks or other geologic features have been exposed on the surface of a planet. This could help scientists date features on Mars such as impact craters, but it could also come in handy in terms of target selection.

Imagine, for example, that the science team locates an impact site on Mars that seems to have been created within the last few million years. The rocks around that site would be ideal targets for closer study because any organic matter they contain would have been protected from cosmic rays until they were thrown out onto the surface. "The trouble is, it's easy to say that an impact happened a million years ago, but how would you ever really know?" Farley says. "The technique that I have is a way to say, 'Yes, this is, in fact, a very young surface.'" Farley says his involvement with MSL is a major departure from his previous work, as he has not been heavily involved in the study of the geology of Mars. "Most of what I do is technique development," he says. "So it's interesting for me to see potential application of one of those techniques in another very different setting."

In contrast, space missions are Bethany Ehlmann's bread and butter. The assistant professor of planetary science at Caltech got her first taste of rover operations when an undergraduate student working on the Mars Exploration Rovers mission. Then as a graduate student, she was a collaborator on the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter mission and used data from multiple orbiters to locate hydrated minerals on the surface of the red planet.

For MSL, Ehlmann proposed to help improve the team's ability to select rocks from a distance for more extensive study. Curiosity is equipped with a laser and a telescope known collectively as ChemCam, mounted on its mast. From a distance of about seven meters, the laser can zap a rock to create a plasma, which can be analyzed by the ChemCam spectrometer to get a sense of the chemical elements present. The science team needs to be able to use those results and their knowledge of mineralogy to quickly decide whether to spend more time and energy on a particular target or to keep Curiosity moving.

"To give them a leg up, Ehlmann is analyzing rocks from places such as Iceland as well as synthetic mixtures of minerals in the lab that are similar to the materials observed from Mars orbit at the Gale Crater landing site. The rocks can be well characterized in Earth laboratories to understand their mineralogy, the elements they are made of, and how they would appear from orbit. She is studying how they have been changed by different types of interaction with water. She plans to take those samples to Los Alamos National Laboratory, which partnered with the French national space agency to build the ChemCam, in order to test her samples with a ChemCam-like instrument."

"It's very helpful to have this beforehand understanding of what you might see or what kinds of analyses you need to run," Ehlmann says. "If you understand the processes enough that you develop quick-looking algorithms for detecting different styles of alteration, it will help in the tactical timescale when you only have a few hours to come up with a plan for the rover for the next day." In addition to Farley and Ehlmann, two researchers from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Finnos Jen and Michael Mischna, were also selected as participating scientists. The new group brings the full science team for MSL to more than 300 scientists. They are busy preparing for the spacecraft's August 5 arrival at Mars.

News briefs from around the globe

Helping readers burst out of the Caltech bubble

Need to know

< 100 words about the world this week – topics sorted from good to bad

by Sam Barnett – links to full stories available at barnett.caltech.edu/news

Alzheimer's in mice

72 hours after taking a skin cancer drug, memory improved radically

Prop 8 overturned

3 judge panel ruled that ban of same-sex marriage is unconstitutional

Euro makes small gains

0.3% after Greece passed plan – still major concerns about stability

Gas prices in America

$3.51 per gallon average – up 12 cents nationwide since late January

Greece austerity plan

150,000 public jobs to be cut by 2015 – wages lowered 22%

European overfishing

5.2 billion ($4.2 billion) lost annually – ruinous to environment

Violent riots in Athens

10 buildings set on fire – over 100,000 protesters – dozens injured
Food with Mannion!

Do you like eating food?
How about free food at nice restaurants?
Ever want to tell the world exactly what you think of said food?
The Tech will be beginning a new column to chronicle the foodie experiences of new writers every other week...The Catch: They’ll be going head-to-head with Tom Mannion who will be reviewing the same restaurant. If you have ever thought you were more of a gourmand than our resident master chef, now’s your chance to prove it!
Email us for a spot on the list at tech@caltech.edu

ASCIT Minutes
1/29/2012
Officer’s present: Chris Hallacy, Margaret Chiu, Laura Conwill, Diego Caporale, Mario Zubia, Michelle Tang, Laura Santos
Guests: Kathy Garcia

President’s Report
1. PFW: Probably won’t do midnight donuts again because the mob scares pre-frosh. Thinking of new ideas for the carnival.
2. Big I: May bring it back next year if there’s enough interest.
4. Athletics: Betsy Mitchell will be meeting with the athletics faculty board. Wondering what the Student Athletic Advising Committee (SAAC) is doing.

Officer’s Reports
1. ARC (Margaret)
   a. Option requirements: Option heads are meeting with Melanie Hunt to discuss changes they might make to their major requirements in response to a change in core.
   b. course feedback: working on Omsbuds, trying to get qualitative input by midterms.
   c. Option fair: Working on getting professors and students to hold booths.
   d. Prof of the month: Warren Brown (humanities) is the January prof of the month.
2. IHC (LC)
   a. New Fleming President: Is now Alan Menezes.
   b. Admissions: Trying to get more house information available to people who are admitted, both about the housing system and housing personalities.
   c. Bechtel Committee: student appointments are being made, up in the air right now.
   d. Alcohol Cabinets: Are officially going to be made for each of the houses, though no deadlines for building have been set yet.
3. Director of Operations (Diego)
   a. Paintballs in SAC 15: has started moving them to a better location. They are now on rolling chairs.
4. Treasurer (Mario)
   a. Club funding: If clubs run out of money before the end of this year, they can come to ASCIT with proposals for more.
5. Social Representative (Michelle)
   a. Ice event: Went well! Though music stopped early because of too many noise complaints.
   b. Pong marathon?: Thinking about doing a massive water pong and ping pong tournament.
6. Secretary (Laura)
   a. Big T Editor: New editors in chief are Nikita Sinha and Melissa Xu.
   b. SFC committees: Scheduling meetings with them.

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get paid up to $30

The California Tech

News
2
February 13, 2012

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Looking to make some extra cash? Beckman and Ramo Auditoriums are hiring Ticket Takers, Late Ushers, and Regular Ushers. Students get to choose when they want to work, no experience needed, no hard labor involved, and they can work 2 hr. shifts, 3 hr. shifts, or 4 hr. shifts at $15 per hour.

*Requirements are a good attitude and a welcoming smile.

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Go to http://events.caltech.edu/index.html for more info on public events at Caltech.

To apply, email Adam Jacobo (ajacobo@caltech.edu) or call (626)395-5907.

http://gocaltech.com/
Caltech Couture: A tribute to Alexander McQueen

ALEX LANGERFIELD
Columnist

Two years ago from last Saturday, a great man died. Alexander McQueen was a brilliant British fashion designer and icon. His passing shocked the world. McQueen was a master of the dramatic shows and controversial pieces. He introduced the low-cut “bouster” pants which raised eyebrows but became very famous and popular. He used Aimee Mullins, a Paralympic sprinter, as his muse on the runway as she walked down wooden legs. He staged one of his fashion shows as a shipwreck and used special effects like fire, blood smears, and wolves in others. Together with John Galliano, he also did dramatic shows and controversial collections. Alexander McQueen first entered the public eye on his graduation from the renowned Central St. Martin’s College of Art and Design in London. Isabella McQueen’s trademarks began showing through early in his career. Eventually, McQueen became a master of six different cutting techniques and acquired the trademark exquisite sharp-edged tailoring of his subsequent designs. Alexander McQueen’s trademarks began showing through early in his career. Eventually, McQueen became a master of six different cutting techniques and acquired the trademark exquisite sharp-edged tailoring of his subsequent designs. The designer has also done numerous collaborations, including Puma and MAC. McQueen has been awarded numerous international fashion design prizes and in 2003 he received the CFDA Award as International Designer of the Year. He was also named the Commander of the Order of the British Empire. His death saddened many and the label lives on as well as a legacy of brilliant provocation shaped by razor sharp tailoring. His death was officially declared a suicide.

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Tech Walk n’ Talk

Thursday, February 16 at 12:00
join Director of Athletics Betsy Mitchell for a relaxing walk around campus. We will meet in front of the red door, and the first 35 participants will be given pedometers. A light lunch reception at the MOSH’s house will follow.

Tech Walk n’ Talk has been designed to foster connection and community among Caltech students, faculty and staff and to promote a healthy lifestyle. The program utilizes community walks around campus to promote wellness and provides a causal environment for students to interact with the many faces of Caltech. It is an opportunity for faculty and staff to talk about their research, share personal stories and their contributions to the history of this institution. Students will benefit from exercise, learning and strengthening their connection to the Caltech community.
S2S connects students

SUE JIANG
Contributing Writer

There are many formal support systems in place at Caltech, such as the Counseling Center, UCCs, and Diversity Center. The Student-to-Student (S2S) Mentoring Program serves as a unique option for students seeking support or wishing to offer support to another student. First started in 2009, the S2S program is different from traditional mentoring programs in that it is almost entirely student-run, where student mentors specify the life situations they are experienced in, and are willing to discuss. This way, students looking for a mentor can easily find one who has faced the same challenge.

S2S is a resource that allows students to talk with someone who is willing to listen, and to be reassured that they are not alone. Someone else at Caltech went through the same difficulty, and overcame it. Students interested in becoming mentors go through an orientation process that teaches the value of student-to-student support, ways to be an effective mentor, and the importance of respecting a mentee’s privacy. Because there are times when a mentee’s concerns go beyond what a mentor can provide, mentors are trained to understand the limits of their role, and how to get a student professional help when necessary.

One student who was mentored said, “I just wanted to talk to someone who went through the same experience I did, but is still making it through Caltech.” A current mentor, reflecting on her experience, said, “The students I mentored did not seem to want me to fix their problem or even offer advice, they simply wanted to be reassured that they will make it through their difficult situation.” Another mentor joined the program because he believes that students can solve many of those issues most effectively with each other. The premise of S2S mentoring was to expand the Caltech Safety Net, while adding a new, lower-threshold rung on the hierarchy to give access to students who hadn’t considered seeking counseling before.

Caltech is often the source of our problems, but it can also be the answer. It is easy to emphasize differences between students, but S2S helps us see that we are not so different after all. We all have the ability to provide support for those in need, even if it means simply lending an ear. If you are interested in learning more about the course catalogue carefully, we will be held on Saturday, February 25 at 1:00 pm in Winnett. RSVP to sjiang@caltech.edu.

YASHNA PEERTHUM
Contributing Writer

Joseph (Joe) L. Kirschvink is the Nico and Marilyn Van Wingen Professor of Geobiology. He graduated from Caltech with a B.S. and an M.S and went on to acquire an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Princeton. He has been teaching at Caltech since 1981.

Yashna Peerthum: How has your view of Caltech changed over the time you’ve been here? Do you feel that Caltech itself has changed a lot?

Professor Kirschvink: I immensely enjoyed being an undergraduate. Something just clicked and I knew it was right for me.

The thing about Caltech is that you have to realize that a good portion of the class is more intelligent than you are.

Teaching here is a very stimulating challenge and it requires the professors to be constantly on their toes. I was an undergrad here from 1971 to 1975 and I majored in biology. The most useful classes that I had had here as an undergrad were mat1, physics1 and chem1, and the core reviews they have every six years have ensured that, over the last thirty four years, the most important parts have been changed.

YP: What made you decide to come back to teach at Caltech?

PK: I was given the job here and it was a job offer I couldn’t refuse. It’s an honor and a pleasure to be here.

YP: As a geobiologist, you’ve traveled all over the world. Can you recall a trip or an experience which stands out? In a good or bad way?

PK: The year I spent in Australia as a Thomas J. Watson fellow. This was right after I graduated from Caltech from 1975 to 1976. It was the best experience I ever had. The foundations still has fellowships available for students. It was one solid year to focus only on research and that was absolutely fantastic.

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YP: What would you say was the most significant moment of your life? One which had the most impact on you?

YP: Hang in there. There is a good bright light at the end of the tunnel and it’s not always red. I would say: look, find something that’s the most interesting thing you’ve ever seen. For me it was the teeth of a mollusk a professor, Heinz Lowenstam, showed me.

When I realized they could be moved by a magnet, I was fascinated and that was when I got into paleomagnetism.

“Mental acuity is increased for 4-10 hours after exercise. Empower your day.”
Odd Future Wolf Gang kills all of the competition

CLEMENT LACROUTE
Staff Writer

Parental advisory: the groups referred to in this article tend to use very, very explicit lyrics (like, so explicit).

In the early 90s in New York City, a Clan was formed that would leave a W-shaped mark on the face of hip-hop—forever. While West Coast and East Coast were literally at war, only stopping with the tragic deaths of Tupac Shakur and the Notorious B.I.G., the RZA seemed to be prepared. This is not the only one around. Producer/singer Frank Ocean worked on the Watch the Throne album by Kanye West and Jay-Z, the duo MellowHype, composed of rapper Hodgy Beats and producer Left Brain, have a new album coming soon. The Internet, soul/R&B duo Syd tha Kid and Matt Martians, just released an album, and so on and so forth.

The collective seems to be constantly working, judging from the number of mixtapes that keep pouring out. They are also to release a new Odd Future album on March 20th, Tape Vol. 2. Amongst this wide cast of characters, you might well find one you like. And just as with the Wu-Tang Clan, the exciting thing now is to pick favorites.

You may even try and bet on who will actually stand out from OFWGKTA, 10 or 20 years from now, as major rappers.

But the thing is, they're actually talented. Their slow, stomping, worrying productions combined with the low voice of Tyler are hypnotic, and you can't help but listen to the stories he's telling. And even though Tyler gets the most media coverage, he's not the only one around. Producer/singer Frank Ocean worked on the Watch the Throne album by Kanye West and Jay-Z, the duo MellowHype, composed of rapper Hodgy Beats and producer Left Brain, have a new album coming soon. The Internet, soul/R&B duo Syd tha Kid and Matt Martians, just released an album, and so on and so forth.

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Caltech women’s basketball team finishes home slate, celebrates seniors

from gocaltech.com

PASADENA, Calif. – In the final home game of the season for the Caltech women’s basketball team, Cal Lutheran posted a 77-34 win over the Beavers. It was the final home game for a trio of Caltech seniors as Teri Juarez, Shannon Mohler and Krissy Dahl participated in their last game.

The two sides played the opening minutes of the game tightly as neither team held a lead larger than nine points. With Cal Lutheran (16-7, 9-3 SCIAC) holding a 20-15 lead with 10:24 on the clock, the game’s momentum swung heavily into the visitors favor. The Regals closed the half with 22 unanswered points in taking a 42-15 lead into the locker room.

Cal Lutheran concluded those first 20 minutes by shooting 53.3 percent (16-for-30) from the field in building their lead. Their post players played a big role as well as they posted a plus-13 rebounding edge while outscoring Caltech 20-4 in the paint.

The visitors continued to put the pressure on in the second half as they built their lead by forcing Caltech (0-23, 0-12 SCIAC) into 15 turnovers while continuing their post pressure in taking the win.

Juarez continued her solid stretch during her senior campaign by recording team highs in points (10) and rebounds (12). Marlyn Moore pitched in a nine-point effort for the Beavers.

Starla Wright led all scorers with a 17-point evening in 20 minutes. She also grabbed a team best eight rebounds. Keeley Anderson came off the bench to contribute 10 points.

The Caltech women’s basketball team played their last home game of the season on Saturday and celebrated their graduating seniors, pictured above.

- gocaltech.com

Women’s match:

LA MIRADA, Calif. -- The Caltech women’s tennis team posted their second straight win with a perfect score against Biola on Saturday afternoon. The Beavers 9-0 comes one week after the squad top the Master’s College 7-2.

Caltech took five of the six singles matches in straight sets led by Rebekah Kintis double-bagel win at No. 1 singles. Stephanie Kwan won the first set in a tiebreaker before cruising in the second set for her win at the second singles position. It was a similar story for Jessica Yu in the third singles slot. Wishing 1e pulled out a three-set win at No.4 while Michelle Lee and Zeke Millikan completed the perfect singles match for the Beavers at the fifth and sixth singles positions.

Caltech was never threatened during doubles play as the won 8-4 at the No. 1 and No. 3 slots while posting an 8-2 win in the second doubles position.

Men’s match:

PASADENA, Calif. -- The Biola men’s tennis team posted a 7-2 win over Caltech on Friday afternoon at the Braun Tennis Courts. The No. 1 doubles duo of Devashish Joshi and Luka Mernik pulled out a tough 8-6 win for Caltech top open the match.

Leading 2-1 heading into singles play the Eagles took four the six match in straight set in posting the win.

Caltech got a marathon match win at the No. 6 singles spot as Ryan Batterman won 6-0, 5-7, (10-3). Winning match scores (from men’s match):

6 singles, Ryan Batterman (CALTECH) def. Chris Evans (BIOLA) 6-0, 5-7, 10-3
1 doubles, Devashish Joshi/Luka Mernik (CALTECH) def. Thomas Cobion/David Mossman (BIOLA) 8-6

Sports Editor’s note: Ryan Batterman’s match truly was a marathon. In the freshman’s first intercollegiate win, Batterman played two incredibly long sets and won in a ridiculously long tiebreaker. For the second week in a row, he was the last Beaver remaining on the court. I believe this means Coach Gamble owes him a steak dinner...
Career Fairs

by Slai

Acquired Taste

Hm... I'm hungry. Better head over to the C store.

Meanwhile, inside

Oh no! Someone's coming! Where's that sign?

For more photos, videos, and archives of previous issues, check out the Tech website!

tech.caltech.edu