

# HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

July 2017



## NASA to Discuss *Mars and Beyond*

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Did you know the planet Mars was named after the Roman god of war? Did you know its orbit is 142 million miles from the sun and a Mars year is about 687 Earth days? Did you know the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has an educational outreach program which serves as a way for NASA to share their mission and vision with the public?

On July 13, at 6:00 pm, the Barberton Public Library will host Robert Lasalivia from the Glenn Research Center in Cleveland to present *NASA: The Journey to Mars and Beyond*. The program will focus on our current knowledge of Mars, the research being done to enable NASA to reach Mars by the 2030s, and the mission plans for traveling to and living on Mars.

NASA has been sending robotic missions to Mars for decades taking photos and recording data to be analyzed. NASA is studying the atmosphere, the surface of the planet, potential habitability, soil samples, surface rocks, climate history, and atmospheric radiation. They are also conducting searches for liquid water, microbes, and other hints to the planet's past. Each new mission provides additional information about the red planet.

In order to develop a safe mission plan, NASA is studying many individual aspects of the trip, as well as the necessary safety precautions for humans to live in space. One of the concerns being investigated is space fires in *Project Saffire*. It is understandable that a fire on a ship or in a simulated atmosphere could be deadly, so studying methods of reducing the chances of fire and minimizing the damage a fire does, could save lives. On June 4, 2017, NASA intentionally started a large fire inside an Earth-orbiting cargo spacecraft filled with trash from the International Space Station. The purpose of the experiments is to develop fire-fighting and fire-prevention practices for the Mars crew. The next phase will continue to explore flammability, as well as investigate methods of fire detection and post-fire cleanup.

Future studies will include improving transportation capabilities, developing communications networks to work in deep space, improving health care for those on long-term missions, and studying new technologies.



NASA's Mars 2020 Rover Artist's Concept.

