



The Starry Messenger

THE BIGGEST & BEST IN THE METROPLEX!

August \$2 Movie Schedule



Summer might be almost over, but the fun at the Planetarium isn't! More great movies await you this month. Make sure to come back each week to enjoy all the fun and all the savings! All seats are just \$2 and the movies play every Wednesday and Friday at 5:30 p.m. and Saturday at 2:30 p.m.

Rango - August 3rd, 5th and 6th

Tron Legacy - August 10th, 12th and 13th

Mars Needs Moms - August 17th, 19th and 20th

Source Code - August 24th, 26th and 27th

Hubble Discovers Fourth Moon of Pluto



Astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope discovered a fourth moon orbiting the icy dwarf planet Pluto. The tiny, new satellite – temporarily designated P4 -- was uncovered in a Hubble survey searching for rings around the dwarf planet.

The new moon is the smallest discovered around Pluto. It has an estimated diameter of 8 to 21 miles. By comparison, Charon, Pluto's largest

First Glimpse of the Perseid Meteor Shower



On the night of July 26 in Huntsville, Alabama, allsky cameras of the NASA fireball network detected three Perseid meteors in the skies above Tennessee and Alabama. The first seen by the cameras this year, these meteors are the "advance guard" of the Perseid meteor shower, which will peak on the night of August 12.

To see it best from DFW, you will have to travel to a dark location, preferably 50 or 60 miles outside of the Metroplex. Can't make that trip? Watch it live on Ustream with astronomer Bill Cooke. More information and videos can be found [here](#).

Curiosity Takes Flight at the Planetarium



The car-sized Mars Science Laboratory, or Curiosity, is scheduled to launch late this year and land in August 2012. The target crater, Gale, spans 96 miles in diameter and holds a mountain rising higher from the crater floor than Mount Rainier rises above Seattle. Gale is about the combined area of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Layering in the mound suggests it is the surviving remnant of an extensive sequence of deposits.

moon, is 648 miles across, and the other moons, Nix and Hydra, are in the range of 20 to 70 miles in diameter.

"I find it remarkable that Hubble's cameras enabled us to see such a tiny object so clearly from a distance of more than 3 billion miles," said Mark Showalter of the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California, who led this observing program with Hubble.

The finding is a result of ongoing work to support NASA's New Horizons mission, scheduled to fly through the Pluto system in 2015. The mission is designed to provide new insights about worlds at the edge of our solar system.

Read more about this discovery and the New Horizons mission [here](#).

Testing Begins on the Next Deep Space Vehicle



Testing has begun on the Orion Multi Purpose Crew Vehicle at NASA Langley's Landing and Impact Research Facility.

Swinging at nearly 50 mph, the 22,000 pound Apollo-shaped landing vehicle was dropped into a large swimming pool to test its safety in water landings.

Said test engineer Robin Hardy, "I felt myself straining to hear our test operator say that the data systems were triggered. Anything could happen, but seeing the test article hit the mark, come to rest right side up inside the pool for this high energy drop -- the relief was palpable. You can't help but cheer and hoot and clap and know that in the end it was all worth it."

Watch a [video of the test](#) and see the [high-resolution images](#) here.

"Mars is firmly in our sights," said NASA Administrator Charles Bolden. "Curiosity not only will return a wealth of important science data, but it will serve as a precursor mission for human exploration to the Red Planet."

During a prime mission lasting one Martian year -- nearly two Earth years -- researchers will use the rover's tools to study whether the landing region had favorable environmental conditions for supporting microbial life and for preserving clues about whether life ever existed.

Learn more about this NASA mission [here](#), or visit the Planetarium where a short documentary about Curiosity plays before the start of your show!

NASA Gets WISE to Trojan Asteroids



Astronomers studying observations taken by NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE) mission have discovered the first

known "Trojan" asteroid orbiting the sun along with Earth.

Trojans are asteroids that share an orbit with a planet near stable points in front of or behind the planet. Because they constantly lead or follow in the same orbit as the planet, they never can collide with it. In our solar system, Trojans also share orbits with Neptune, Mars and Jupiter. Two of Saturn's moons share orbits with Trojans.

Scientists had predicted Earth should have Trojans, but they have been difficult to find because they are relatively small and appear near the sun from Earth's point of view.

Read more about this new discovery at [NASA's website](#).

