



SPACE NEWS

N° 2

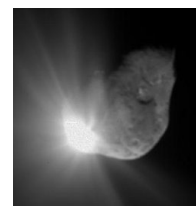
1st October 2007

Last week in space

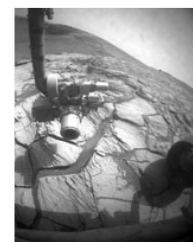
Two comet mission space crafts are being given a new lease of life. Deep Impact, famous for dropping its probe onto comet Temple 1, will fly by Comet Boethin in December 2008 for a close-up investigation of the comet's nucleus and Stardust, famous for its encounter with comet Swift 2, will revisit comet Temple 1 to carry out further investigations. For more information, take a look here : http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2007/26sep_next.htm



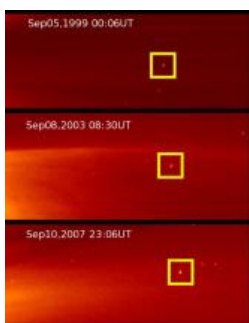
Two new missions were launched last week. Thursday saw the launch by NASA of Dawn (photo to left), a mission to explore the asteroids Vesta and Ceres and on Friday it was the turn of the Japanese to launch "Kaguya" (photo to right), a satellite that will study the moon. For more information on these two new missions take a look at their respective sites: Dawn http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/dawn/main/index.html and Kaguya http://www.jaxa.jp/projects/sat/selene/index_e.html



NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity has reached its science team's first destination for the rover inside Victoria Crater, information received from Mars late Tuesday confirms. Opportunity has descended the inner slope of the 800-meter-wide crater (half a mile wide) to a band of relatively bright bedrock exposed partway down. The rover is in position to touch a selected slab of rock with tools at the end of its robotic arm, after safety checks being commanded because the rover is at a 25-degree tilt. Researchers intend to begin examining the rock with those tools later this week.



The most successful comet hunter is not some dedicated amateur who sacrifices night after night searching for icy bodies from the outer Solar System. It's not a robotic telescope surveying the heavens. Nope, it's SOHO - a space telescope staring at the Sun; and it discovers comets as a happy side benefit. But recently it turned up something new, one of Halley's cousins; a periodic comet. For more information see the ESA press release here: www.esa.int/esaCP/SEMAU2C1S6F_index_0.html



Not to be missed next week

Mars will spend this week travelling from west to east about 1° south of M35 in the constellation of Gemini (The Twins), on Monday the planet will pass extremely close to 1 Gem, a 4.3 magnitude star.

This week sees the start of two meteor showers; the Taurids on Monday and the Orionids on Tuesday. Both showers will increase in activity through to the end of the month.

