



# SPACE NEWS

N° 1

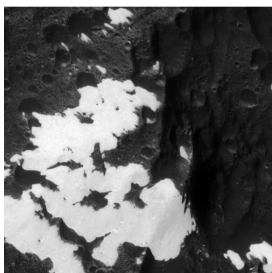
24th September 2007

## Last week in space

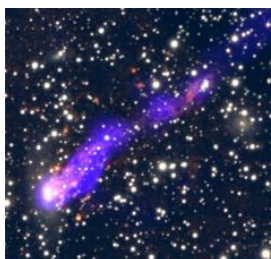
Every now and then a space rock hits the world's media – sometimes almost literally. Threatening asteroids that zoom past the Earth, fireballs in the sky seen by hundreds of people and mysterious craters which may have been caused by impacting meteorites; all make ESA's studies on the Don Quijote mission look increasingly timely. The uncertainty surrounding whether a meteorite impacted in South America recently highlights the need to know more about these pieces of natural space debris and their trajectories. For more information: [www.esa.int/esaCP/SEM8SUB1S6F\\_index\\_0.html](http://www.esa.int/esaCP/SEM8SUB1S6F_index_0.html)



The Cassini mission continues to take spectacular images of Saturn and its moons; in early September the spacecraft took this image of Iapetus during close flyby of the moon. If you would like to take look at other stunning images of Saturn, its rings and its moons then take a look here: <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/multimedia/index.cfm>



NASA is to develop a prototype lunar rover; one which can travel in the low lunar gravity, and hang on tight when it needs to drill down beneath the lunar soil. The prototype rover is called "Scarab", and it's being built by the Robotics Institute of Carnegie Mellon University's School of Computer Science. Even though it's being built to test out technologies designed for the surface of the Moon, this little rover will never make the trip. But its advances will be incorporated into future technologies for real missions. For more information, take a look at the Lunar Rover Initiative web site: <http://www.frc.ri.cmu.edu/project/lri/>



Take a look at this picture; are you looking at a comet? Nope, that's an entire galaxy. But the process is similar. In this case, an entire galaxy is plunging into a galaxy cluster. The interstellar winds are tearing away at its structure, shedding material, and trailing stars behind into a trail 200,000 light-years long. But it's actually a region of creation, not destruction, as millions of new stars are forming behind the galaxy. For more information see the associated Chandra press release: [http://chandra.harvard.edu/press/07\\_releases/press\\_092007.html](http://chandra.harvard.edu/press/07_releases/press_092007.html)

## Not to be missed next week

You can try to find five solar system objects all in the same area of the sky around Aquarius Pegasus and Capricorn. There are three asteroids; Thyra (magnitude 10.0), Pallas (magnitude 9.0) and Urania (magnitude 10.2) as well as Uranus (magnitude 5.8) and Neptune (magnitude 7.9). Uranus can be found less than 1° from phi Aquarius, a 4.4 magnitude star. Good luck!

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September: Mercury will be at its highest point in the evening sky – this week is a good opportunity to try and spot this illusive planet.