



## **BRAVE NEW WORLDS: U OF T ASTRONOMY & SPACE EXPLORATION SOCIETY HOSTS ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM**

Featured Speakers include Peter Schultz (NASA LCROSS Mission), Sara Seager (MIT), Firouz Naderi (NASA JPL) and Narendra Bhandari (Indian Space Research Org.)

**January 18, 2010** – The Astronomy & Space Exploration Society (ASX) at the University of Toronto is pleased to announce its **7th annual “Expanding Canada’s Frontiers” Symposium**. This year’s symposium features a prominent line-up of speakers and world leaders in the fields of astronomy and space. The event will take place on **Friday, January 29, 2010 at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto** (31 King’s College Cir), Toronto, Ontario, Canada. **Doors open at 5:30 PM; event starts at 6:30 PM; reception is at 10:00 PM.**

ASX’s 7<sup>th</sup> annual Symposium highlights recent advancements related to the search for earth-like planets and the possibility of life on worlds other than our own. The recent discovery of water on the Moon as well as the launch of the Kepler mission and its search for extrasolar planets have piqued great interest within the general public. “With these discoveries in mind”, said Farnaz Ghadaki, President of ASX, “we are pleased to present an inspiring and distinguished panel of award-winning speakers who are at the forefront of these fields”. This year’s Symposium, entitled “Brave New Worlds,” focuses on the theme of planets and moons whether right here in our solar system, or in far off stellar systems, that may possibly support life. The speakers include Professor Peter Schultz, a member of NASA’s LCROSS Mission; Professor Sara Seager, a Canadian-born planetary scientist and astrophysicist from MIT; Dr. Firouz Naderi, Associate Director of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL); and Dr. Narendra Bhandari of the Indian Space Research Organisation.

Dr. Peter H. Schultz is Professor of Geological Sciences at Brown University, and co-investigator of NASA’s LCROSS (Lunar CRater Observing and Sensing Satellite) mission that recently found water below the surface of the Moon. He specializes in the study of planetary geology, and impact cratering on the Earth and other objects in the solar system. Dr. Schultz’s talk, titled “Water on the Moon”, will involve his analysis from this mission and the impact that finding water on the Moon will have on space science and exploration.

Professor Sara Seager is the Ellen Swallow Richards Associate Professor of Planetary Science and Associate Professor of Physics at MIT. She was part of a team that co-discovered the first detection of light emitted from an exoplanet and the first spectrum of an exoplanet. Professor Seager has been recognized in the media by Popular Science Magazine’s Fifth Annual Brilliant Ten in 2006 and Discover Magazine’s “Best 20 under 40” in 2008. Her talk, titled “Extrasolar Planets”, will highlight her research on theoretical models of atmospheres and interiors of exoplanets.

Dr. Firouz Naderi is the Associate Director of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) responsible for Project Formulation and Strategy. Dr. Naderi has overseen the successful launch of Mars Odyssey, landing of the Mars

Exploration Rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, and the development of the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. Dr. Naderi's career at JPL has also spanned areas of systems engineering, technology development, and program and project management for satellite communications systems, Earth remote sensing observatories, astrophysical observatories and planetary systems. Dr. Naderi's talk, titled "Robotic Exploration", will focus on the role of robotics in space exploration and what is in store for its future.

Dr. Narendra Bhandari is a physicist who has been working on India's Chandrayaan Mission to the moon. His current research deals with cosmic ray interactions with matter, applications of radionuclides on earth and planetary sciences, meteorites and the moon. He has also worked on studies of lunar samples brought by Apollo missions and the Soviet Luna missions. Dr. Bhandari's talk, titled "India in Space", will focus on what has been learned from the Chandrayaan-1 Mission as well as India's role in present and future space exploration.

Admission is free for students (with ID), and \$20 for the public. To obtain tickets and reserve seats, see: <http://asx.sa.utoronto.ca/>. To receive automatic news about this and other ASX events, send an email to [space.society@utoronto.ca](mailto:space.society@utoronto.ca) with the subject line "Newsletter Sign-Up."

Sponsors of ASX's 2010 Symposium include: TD Insurance, University of Toronto's Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Dunlap Institute for Astronomy and Astrophysics, University of Toronto's Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, University of Toronto's Geology Department, MDA, University of Toronto's Physics Department, Com-Dev, Harbord Street BIA, University of Toronto's SKULE™ Engineering Society, Efston Science, and UTIAS.

### **About ASX**

The Astronomy & Space Exploration Society (ASX) is a non-profit organization run by the University of Toronto space community, in Ontario, Canada. ASX's purpose is to educate, excite, and inspire students, professionals, and the general public about astronomy and space. Since its inception in 2003, ASX has rapidly grown to over 1800 members, and has organized and hosted 10 or more events per year, attracting 1500-2000 event attendees each year. ASX's signature event is the annual 'Expanding Canada's Frontiers' Symposium, which has attracted an audience of up to 1400 people in a single event. Other events include the "Faces of Space" Lecture Series, Panel Discussions, Space Exploration Showcase, and Observing Nights. Topics of discussion have covered various facets of space, such as 'Mars and Beyond', 'The Search for Life', 'Cosmology from the Stratosphere', and 'Space Business'.

### **Important information for the media:**

Speaker interviews may be granted for January 29, 2010, from 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM.  
For inquiries and to set up an appointment, please contact:

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