



PRESS RELEASE

TAKE A JOURNEY TO MARS FROM THE BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE APRIL 10

**Cornell University graduate student, Melissa Rice, will share her experiences
working with NASA's Mars Exploration Rover mission**

Buffalo, NY (March 28, 2011) – To some, Mars is a planet millions of light years away that they will likely never visit. To others, like Melissa Rice, graduate student in Astronomy at Cornell University, Mars is a daily part of life. Rice will share her experiences as a member of the Mars Exploration Rover mission with guests at the Buffalo Museum of Science on Sunday, April 10 at 11:00am.



The Spirit and Opportunity rovers have reshaped our vision of Mars with their stunning images and fascinating discoveries. Amazingly the rovers - which were designed to operate for three months - have now been exploring the surface of the Red Planet for over seven years.

Join Rice for a behind-the-scenes look at the images, science and human creativity that have made the mission such a success. Using remarkable photos taken by the "Pancam" instrument, she'll share the inside story of the mission - from the launches right up to the latest pictures returned from the Martian surface. She'll also give a sneak peak at what's to come in Mars exploration, providing updates from NASA's Curiosity rover that will launch in November 2011.

Presented by the Buffalo Astronomical Association, Rice's presentation will take place in the museum's 3rd floor Connections Gallery from 11am to noon. Admission to the lecture is included with general museum admission and free for Museum Members.

General museum admission is \$8 adults 18-61, \$7 seniors 62+ and \$6 children 2-17. Children under 2 and Museum Members are free. Admission to the museum's current travelling exhibit, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Exhibition*, may be purchased for an additional \$2 per person. Narnia admission is timed and subject to availability.

More information can be found on the museum's website at www.sciencebuff.org.

ABOUT MELISSA RICE

Melissa Rice is a graduate student in astronomy at Cornell University, where she has been working with NASA's Mars Exploration Rover mission for the past 5 years. As a Payload Downlink Lead for the imaging team, she is sometimes the first person on Earth to see new vistas of Mars. In her research, she uses "Pancam" images from the Spirit rover to study the history of water at Gusev Crater. She is also studying Eberswalde Crater, which is a candidate landing site for NASA's next rover, Mars Science Laboratory (aka Curiosity). At Cornell, she works under the guidance of Dr. Jim Bell, who is the Principle Investigator of the Mars Exploration Rover Pancam instruments.

Rice will also be the guest speaker at the Buffalo Astronomical Association's 2011 Annual Dinner Banquet, which will take place on Saturday, April 9 at the Banchetti



Melissa Rice

Banquet Hall (550 North French Road, Amherst, NY). For more information on the dinner or to purchase tickets call 716-639-0866 or email info@buffaloastronomy.com.

Learn more about Melissa Rice and her work at www.astro.cornell.edu/~mrice/.

ABOUT THE BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

The Buffalo Museum of Science is a non-profit educational institution dedicated to the study and interpretation of the natural and physical sciences. Its extensive collections of over 700,000 specimens and artifacts represent all facets of the natural world with an emphasis on Western New York as well as man-made objects spanning the globe. Based at 1020 Humboldt Parkway and anchoring Buffalo's East Side in Olmsted-designed Martin Luther King, Jr. Park since 1929, the Museum presents a wide variety of programs and services for children, teachers, families, adults, and community organizations throughout each year. The Museum also operates Tiff Nature Preserve in South Buffalo, a 264-acre urban wetland preserve on reclaimed former industrial land.

For further information on the Museum and its upcoming activities, call 716-896-5200 or visit www.sciencebuff.org.

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