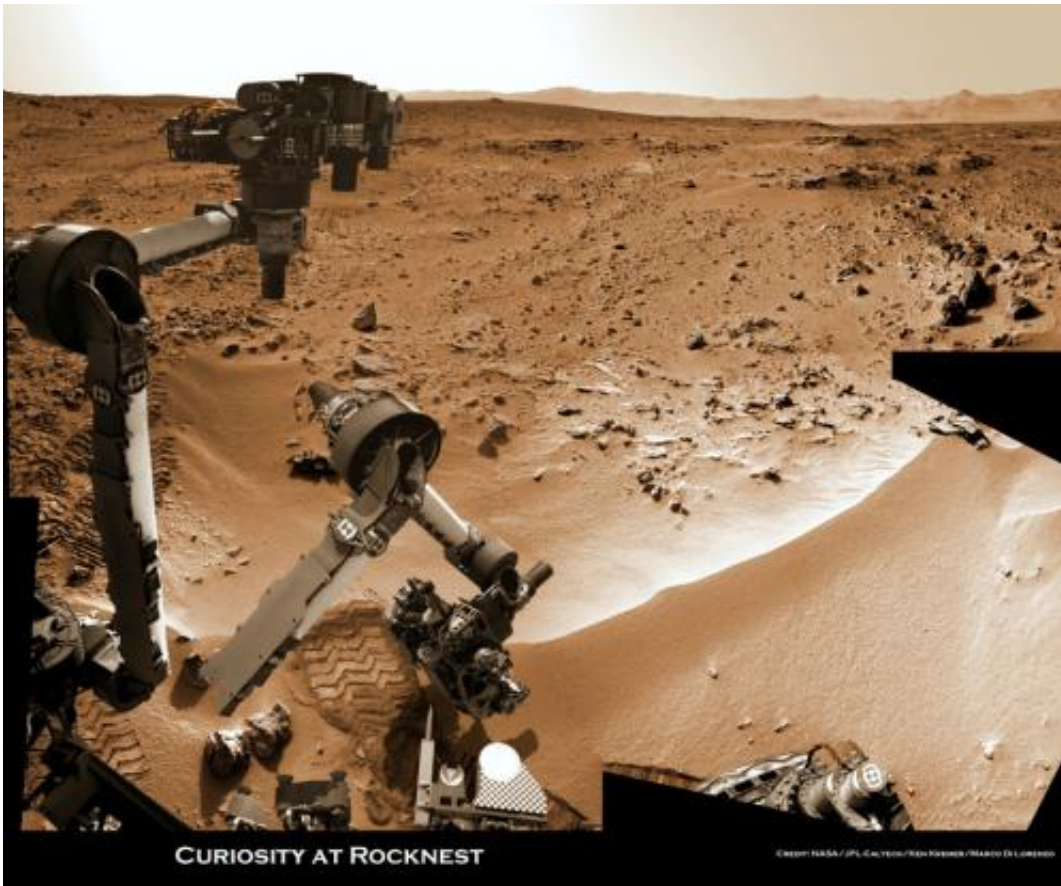


Everybody chill, NASA says: No Martian organics found

November 30 2012, by Nancy Atkinson



Curiosity maneuvering her robotic arm and conducting a close-up examination of windblown 'Rocknest' sand dune. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Ken Kremer/Marco Di Lorenzo

Relax everyone. There are no little green men or even a hint of organics

on Mars... not yet, anyway.

"Everybody, chill," [Tweeted the Curiosity rover today](#). "After careful analysis, there are no Martian organics in recent samples."

Update: And also, the Curiosity rover did not find plastic Mardi Gras beads on Mars either. More about that below.

[Rumor and speculation](#) abounded (and yes, we admit being part of that) after an interview with Mars Science Laboratory scientist John Grotzinger indicated something "earth-shaking" could be announced soon. "This data is gonna be one for the history books. It's looking really good," Grotzinger was quoted by [NPR](#).

Over a week later, NASA finally issued a statement that "speculation that there are major new findings from the mission at this early stage are incorrect," and said that a news conference from the Fall Meeting of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) on Monday, December 3 will be an update about first use of the rover's full array of analytical instruments to investigate a drift of sandy soil.

"One class of substances Curiosity is checking for is organic compounds—carbon-containing chemicals that can be ingredients for life. At this point in the mission, the instruments on the rover have not detected any definitive evidence of Martian [organics](#)," the [press release](#) said.

The discussion on Twitter is that NASA perhaps didn't do enough last week to quell the onslaught of conjecture and speculation. But most people in the US were scurrying off for the Thanksgiving holiday and perhaps didn't notice a Tweet from the Curiosity Rover:

"What did I discover on Mars? That rumors spread fast online. My team

considers this whole mission 'one for the history books'."

JPL's press spokesperson Guy Webster told Universe Today's Ken Kremer as much last week, saying "As for history books, the whole mission is for the history books. John was delighted about the quality and range of information coming in from SAM during the day a reporter happened to be sitting in John's office last week. He has been similarly delighted by results at other points during the mission so far."

So, while it won't be "big" news, you may want to tune into the press conference anyway at 9 a.m. PST Monday, Dec. 3. Audio and visuals from the briefing also will be streamed online at:

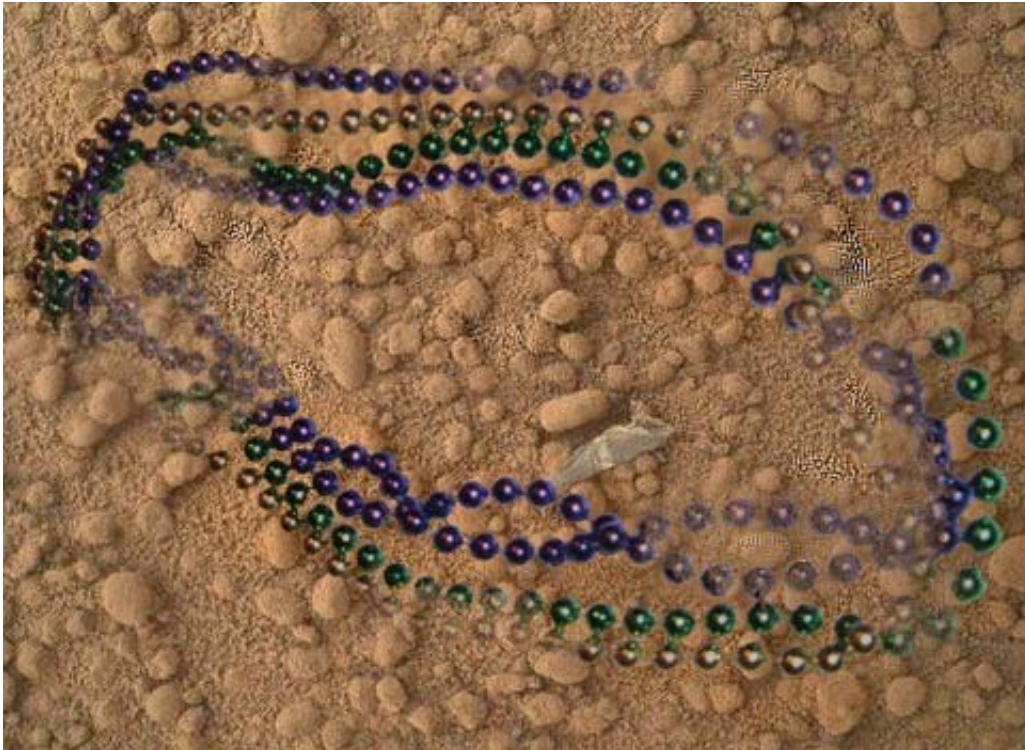
www.ustream.tv/nasajpl .

Bummed? NASA stressed today that Curiosity is less than four months into a two-year prime mission to investigate whether conditions in Mars' Gale Crater may have been favorable for microbial life. While Curiosity is exceeding all expectations, and has already has found an ancient riverbed, there's no earth-shaking news to report at this time.

But don't be surprised if there are some remarkable discoveries still to come.

And about those plastic beads...

As a prank, someone put up a very [convincing-looking JPL knock-off webpage](#) saying the rover had found plastic beads on Mars, and a la The Onion, supposedly quoted real scientists. One look at the picture, however and it becomes obvious this is a fake, plus the writer puts Curiosity at Endeavour Crater, where the Opportunity rover is located. Phil Plait does his normal great job of explaining it all, [so check out his post at his new home at Slate](#).



Fake beads on Mars. Credit: Xevier Jenks

In the meantime, the [Curiosity rover](#) shared this cute video that also speculates a bit about what could be found on Mars:

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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