

KidsPost



TODAY'S NEWS

She Sells Signs and Shields For Seagulls by the Seashore

It's a situation every seaside resort shares: What to do about pesky seagulls? Officials in Atlantic City, New Jersey, wanted to string strands of fishing wire over their famous Boardwalk to keep hungry gulls away from diners. But animal lovers said that the shield might hurt the birds and probably wouldn't work anyway. The city's new plan includes posting "Don't Feed the Seagulls" signs and fining people who do. A hotel tried to use pretend owls to scare gulls, but the gulls just sat on them.



Seagulls are a bother at almost every beach.

Hold the Ketchup

You want a diploma with that? British officials have given McDonald's and two other companies permission to give academic credit to employees who

complete on-the-job training programs. The idea is to improve skills among young people and give dropouts the opportunity to finish high school.

A Real Nowhere Man

Once you've been declared dead in Poland, it's not easy to convince officials that you're alive and well. Piotr Kucy, 38, was listed as having drowned last summer. When he learned of the mistake, Kucy notified government officials. But he is still listed as dead in government files, which prevents him from working and having health insurance. "This citizen does not exist," a Polish official said of Kucy. On the bright side, he doesn't have to pay taxes.

WEATHER



TODAY: Cloudy and windy; chance of rain.

HIGH 44 LOW 26

TOMORROW: Sunny; evening rain. High 46, Low 33.

NEWSY NUMBER

28,000

That's how many Swiss Army knives are made each day — many of which are assembled by hand. The popular tools have been around since the 1890s. The knives are supplied to more than a dozen armies around the world — it's not just a Swiss thing.



Greetings From Mars



A postcard photo from Mars taken in January 2004 by the panoramic camera on the rover Spirit. Gas stations and fast-food restaurants are not expected for at least 30 years.

Astronaut Buzz Aldrin Is Shooting for the Moon . . . and Beyond

Highs And Lows
On the warmest days, Mars's temperature can reach 68.



The United States launched its first satellite on Jan. 31, 1958, entering the space age by racing the Soviet Union to get to the moon. Fifty years later, our lasting presence in space could depend on the moon.

Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, an Apollo 11 astronaut who in 1969 became the second man to walk on the moon, described his vision for America's future in space to KidsPost's Brenna Maloney. It is a bold plan that begins with building a moon base and eventually having a human settlement on Mars.



Buzz Aldrin reached the moon aboard Apollo 11 in 1969.

Why Would We Go There Again?
Not for "an increase in science and knowledge about the surface of the moon," Aldrin admits. And not because of "a growing awareness of potential life support [on] Mars." Instead, he and some other scientists think a good reason to return to the moon — one that would interest others — is to tap a new energy source. By the year 2050, Earth will have about 10

billion people, according to some estimates. The population will need five times as much power as what is now available. The moon receives a lot of energy from the sun. Building a station there to harness that solar power and beam it to Earth would create a new non-polluting energy source, scientists say. That energy could be sold to make money for space exploration.

Scouting people to Mars will take more than money. Natural resources also are necessary, but they don't all have to come from Earth, Aldrin says.

"We do expect that we will find water on the moon that can be converted into oxygen and hydrogen," he says. Oxygen and hydrogen are key elements in making rocket fuel. Having a source of fuel on the moon "is very significant to support future operations in space," Aldrin says.

So, with that solar power heading to Earth and making money to build spacecraft, and with a lunar "gas station" in place, we'd be ready to go.

Why Mars?

Scientists have been eyeing the Red Planet for a long time. "To our knowledge, there isn't anything that comes even close to the attractive habitability that Mars has," Aldrin says. But landing astronauts there is still perhaps 30 years away.

How Would People Get There?

Aldrin imagines a reusable spacecraft that would go back and forth like a Metro train between two stops. The trip to Mars would take about five months. Getting back would take longer, about eight months, in part because the planets move at different speeds around the sun. Anyone who signs up to go to Mars should expect to spend at least three years away from Earth, Aldrin says.

In fact, he thinks that people will want to spend long stretches on Mars. "It's not the way people think right now, but certainly there are people who would be willing to change their careers working here on Earth to working on Mars."

Is Aldrin ready to sign up? "Is it advisable at my age?" the 78-year-old asked, laughing.



Aldrin today.

What We Know About Mars

Mars is the fourth planet from the sun. The Romans named it after their god of war. The rocks and soil on Mars have lots of iron, which has rusted and turned everything red. Even the sky looks pinkish from rusty dust that gets kicked up. That is why Mars is often called the Red Planet.



Mars has permanent ice caps at both poles. They are made of water ice and solid carbon dioxide, or dry ice. The carbon dioxide forms a snow cover in winter that melts in the spring.



Olympus Mons is one of the largest volcanoes in the solar system. As seen from above by the Viking 1 orbiter in 1976, the volcano covers an area about the size of Arizona. It is three times as high as Mount Everest, Earth's highest mountain above sea level.



Valles Marineris is a system of canyons that extends about 2,500 miles and covers about one-fifth the circumference of Mars. Some parts of the canyon run as deep as 4 miles and as wide as 125 miles. (The Grand Canyon on Earth is 277 miles long, 18 miles wide and 1 mile deep.)

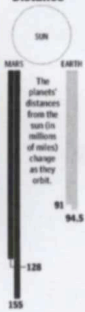
Water On Mars?

Sol
A Martian day is about 24 hours 39 minutes. A Martian year is about 687.97 sols (687 Earth days).



Mars has two small moons, Phobos and Deimos. The names are Greek for "fear" and "panic." The atmosphere on Mars is thin and consists mostly of carbon dioxide, so it is not breathable. Like Earth, Mars has four seasons. During spring and summer in the southern hemisphere, large dust storms cover much of the planet.

Going the Distance



Studying The Red Planet



Mars 1965
Returned 21 pictures.



Viking 1
1976
First successful landing on Mars.



Mars Pathfinder
1997
Deployed rover Sojourner.



Rover Spirit
2004
Studied rocks, looked for water.