

## Weather Summary

by Ted Wilz, Senior Meteorologist

After experiencing a mild winter last year, and in light of rising gas and oil prices, we were hoping that the fall and winter season this year would not bring us a harsh reminder. Unfortunately, we have not gotten off to a good start.

Although no new records highs or lows were set for the month, November proved to be very chilly. Temperatures were almost 4.5 degrees below the daily average. Cold, northwesterly winds, which are most common at this time of year, were even more prevalent than normal.

They occurred on 17 of 30 days last month bringing shot after shot of cold air to the area.

There were ten days during November when the low temperature reached 30 degrees or cooler. There was only one day when the high temperature reached 70 degrees. A reading of 72 degrees was recorded on November 4.

November might prove to be a brisk prelude to winter which doesn't officially begin until a few days before Christmas.

The dry trend we experienced during October continued into November. Although we received measurable precipitation on nine days, we totaled only 1.04 inches. This is 1.77 inches below normal. After receiving only .01 inch of rain in October, things are getting very dry.

So, what lies ahead for us in January, weather-wise? January brings the heart of winter to the Eastern Shore with high temperatures averaging only around 44 degrees and lows averaging 27.5 degrees. Average precipitation for the month is 3.30 inches, with measurable precipitation usually occurring on ten days of the month.

Snow also becomes a possibility, with an average of three inches occurring during January, usually on two "snow days." The record high temperature for January occurred on Jan. 27, 1974 when the mercury reached 74 degrees.

The record low was a bitterly cold 4 degree reading on Jan. 17, 1965, which incidentally is the annual record low temperature for Wallops.

With the holiday season approaching, many folks will be taking to the roads to visit family and friends. We encourage you to carefully watch the weather as hazardous driving conditions can develop quite suddenly as just recently occurred in North Carolina.

From the Wallops Weather Office, we'd like to wish everyone a joyous and safe Christmas and holiday season.



**Congratulations to  
Danny Bowden, GHG,  
"Carver of the Year"  
for the  
Eastern Shore Chapter  
of Ducks Unlimited**



## Upcoming Training

### COTR Qualification

Date: Jan. 8, 2001

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 pm

Location: (Via Pictoretel) MEC,  
Assateague Room

The training is Center funded. Call Julia Williams on x66-6703 to sign up. Employees can fax a Request for Training to x66-0302. The deadline is Dec. 18. A count of the number of participants is needed to send materials and make room accommodations.

For more information go to <http://ohr.gsfc.nasa.gov/DevGuide/Procurement/4.htm>

## Helpful Information

Welcome the holiday season with Health Unit and the Employee Assistance Program office representatives during lunchtime on Dec. 13 in Building E-2.

They will have information and valuable tips for coping with holiday stress, staying physically fit through the holidays, and caring for your overall physical and emotional health.

For further information, call the EAP on x66-4600.



**Wallops  
Christmas Party  
December 15  
Bldg. F-3  
4 p.m.**

## Cafeteria Schedule

Due to a change in plans for the cafeteria renovations, the regular menu will be served for the week prior to Christmas, December 18-22, instead of soup and sandwich as originally planned.

The Cafeteria will be closed the week of December 26-29. Normal operations will resume on Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2001.

## Zachary Barrett Takes Internship to New Heights

Zachary Barrett, a senior at Chincoteague High School, has taken internship to new heights. He wants to be a computer programmer.



Barrett (above) worked as a student intern last year with Jay Savage, Information Services and Advanced Technology Branch, and was soon working diligently on a Wallops telephone directory.

Because of his motivation and work quality, Barrett was hired by QSS, Inc. to work during the summer and after school this fall. Barrett was able to display the skills he learned by delivering a power point presentation on fiber optics and cable plant operation for the Management Operations retreat held in Virginia Beach.

Barret is currently completing another semester of internship under the direction of Karon Eichelberger, QSS, where he continues his work with the cable plant program.

Barrett has taken advantage of training in Technical Writing and plans to attend college to expand his knowledge in the field of computer programming. He hopes that his experience at Wallops will lead to employment as a full time programmer when his education is complete.

Betty Flowers, Public Affairs Office works with Accomack County School Board to place interns with Wallops mentors in areas of work specifically related to the student's studies and interests. Anyone interested serving as a mentor should call Flowers on x1584.

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# Inside Wallops

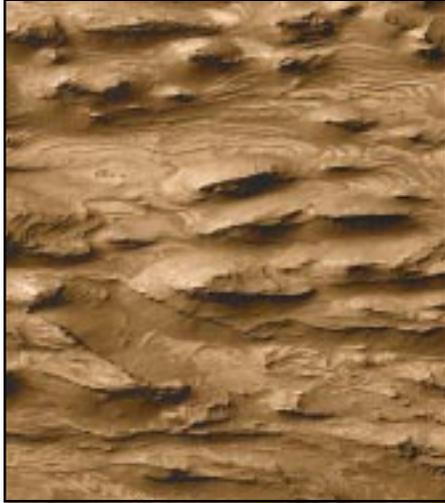
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## *Evidence of Martian Land of Lakes Discovered*

In what ultimately may be their most significant discovery yet, Mars scientists say high-resolution pictures showing layers of sedimentary rock paint a portrait of an ancient Mars that long ago may have featured numerous lakes and shallow seas.



*W Candor Chasma* MSSS Image

“We see distinct, thick layers of rock within craters (above) and other depressions for which a number of lines of evidence indicate that they may have formed in lakes or shallow seas. We have never before had this type of irrefutable evidence that sedimentary rocks are widespread on Mars,” said Dr. Michael Malin, principal investigator for the Mars Orbiter Camera on NASA’s Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft at Malin Space Science Systems (MSSS), San Diego, CA.

The regions of sedimentary layers on Mars are spread out and scattered around the planet. They are most common within impact craters of Western Arabia Terra, the inter-crater plains of northern Terra Meridiani, the chasms of the Valles Marineris and parts of the northeastern Hellas Basin rim.

The scientists compare the rock layers on Mars to features seen in the American Southwest, such as the Grand Canyon and the Painted Desert of Arizona.

“We caution that the Mars images tell us that the story is actually quite complicated and yet the implications are tremendous. Mars has preserved for us, in its sedimentary rocks, a record of events unlike any that occur on the planet today,” said Dr. Ken Edgett, staff scientist at MSSS. “This is changing the way we think about the early history of Mars — a time perhaps more than 3.5 billion years ago.”

“On Earth, sedimentary rocks preserve the surface history of our planet, and within that history, the fossil record of life. It is reasonable to look for evidence of past life on Mars in these remarkably similar sedimentary layers,” said Malin.

“What is new in our work is that Mars has shown us that there are many more places in which to look, and that these materials may date back to the earliest times of Martian history.” Malin added.

“I have not previously been a vocal advocate of the theory that Mars was wet and warm in its early history. But my earlier view of Mars was really shaken when I saw our first high-resolution pictures of Candor Chasma. The nearly identically thick layers would be almost impossible to create without water.”

As an alternative to lakes, Malin and Edgett suggest that a denser atmosphere on early Mars could have allowed greater amounts of windborne dust to settle out on the surface in ways that would have created the sedimentary rock.

“We have only solved one little piece of a tremendous puzzle,” Malin said. “There is no illustration on the box to show us what it is supposed to look like when it is completed and we are sure most of the pieces are missing.”

“These latest findings from the Mars Global Surveyor tell us that more study both from orbit and at the surface is needed to decipher the tantalizing history of water on Mars,” said Dr. Jim Garvin, Mars Exploration Program Scientist at NASA Headquarters.

“This finding just might be the key to solving some of the biggest mysteries on Mars, and it also tells us that our new Mars exploration program needs the flexibility to follow up in a carefully thought-out manner.”

“The finding of layered sedimentary deposits is something that biologists have been hoping for,” said Dr. Ken Nealson, director of the Center for Life Detection at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

More information on the Mars Global Surveyor is available at: <http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/mgs>

## *Wallops Awards Ceremony*

Center Deputy Director William F. Townsend will be the key speaker at the annual Awards Ceremony which will be on Friday, Dec. 15, 2000, at 2:30 p.m., in Building D10 (Gym). Townsend will discuss “The Year in Review and a Look Forward”.

Preceded by his talk, Townsend will be joined by other Center management officials to recognize Wallops civil service employees who have completed 25 or more years of service.

Civil services and contractor employees who received NASA Honor, Goddard Annual and Quarterly Honor, and Goddard Quality management Symposium Awards in 2000 will be recognized. Also, civil service and contractor employees who were recipients of the Space Flight Awareness Launch Honoree event will be recognized.

All employees not involved in essential operations are encouraged to attend. Time should be charged to your regular job order number.

The Wallops Open House, sponsored by the Wallops Employee Morale Association (WEMA) and Morale Activities Committee (MAC), will be held in Building F-3, following the Awards Ceremony.

## *Wallops Shorts..... On the Road*

Scott Webb and Jay Savage, Information Services and Advanced Technology, participated in a Career Fair at Northampton Middle School on Dec. 5.

## *Career Day Request*

Stephen Decatur Middle School will hold a Career Day event on Thursday, Jan. 18, 2001 for approximately 650 7th and 8th grade students. There are two sessions, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. A catered breakfast and lunch will be served to all participating professionals. Employees that are interested in participating should contact the Wallops Public Affairs Office, x1584 or x1579.

