

MARS SCIENCE LABORATORY "CURIOSITY" with ASHWIN VASAVADA

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2012, 7:00 P.M.
ADMISSION IS \$5

As NASA's latest Mars rover, Curiosity, speeds towards Mars, Deputy Project Scientist Ashwin Vasavada, son of local Sea Ranchers RC and Tina Vasavada, will talk about what NASA hopes to accomplish on this mission to the Red Planet in his talk on Thursday, April 26 at the Gualala Arts Center.

The successful earlier missions to Mars, the remarkable discoveries by space probes sent to other planets and moons, and the discovery of liquids on the moons of both Saturn and Jupiter have propelled planetary science from relative obscurity to the forefront of scientific exploration. The search for life beyond Earth is a central question for these missions and the Curiosity rover.

In his talk, Vasavada will describe the car-sized rover and its scientific instruments, and how the mission builds upon the previous exploration of Mars. In the time since his 2009 lecture, the rover has been built and launched, and a landing site has been selected. He will describe how the study of Gale Crater on Mars will help determine whether Mars ever was a habitable planet, capable of supporting microbial life. The rover will arrive at Mars on August 5, 2012 and have a mission of at least two years.

Vasavada is a planetary scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California and a

lead scientist on the Curiosity mission. His professional interests include the climate history of Mars, the weather patterns on Jupiter and Saturn, and the search for ice on the Moon. Besides his work on missions to Mars he has participated in several other spacecraft missions including the Galileo mission to Jupiter and the Cassini mission to Saturn.

After his formal presentation he will be glad to answer questions from the audience.

