

Colorado

# CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE

Tuesday 17 January 2012

at the Wynkoop Brewing Company

<http://www.wynkoop.com/>

Corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Wynkoop in LoDo, Denver

About a block from Light Rail. Thirteen minutes by foot from Auraria.

## Mars: Are We Alone?

**Brian Hynek, PhD**

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At 10:02 on 26 November an Atlas V launch vehicle took off from Cape Canaveral carrying the **Mars Science Laboratory** with its enormous rover, **Curiosity**. If all goes well (and so far it has) the payload will arrive at its destination in about 8 months (August 2012), Mars being 240 million kilometers away. Curiosity will carry the most advanced payload of scientific gear ever used on Mars' surface, a payload more than 10 times as massive as those of earlier Mars rovers. Its assignment: Investigate whether conditions have been favorable for microbial life and for preserving clues in the rocks about possible past life. Although there's hardly any water on the surface of Mars at this time, the geologic evidence from many satellites and visiting rovers indicates beyond a doubt that there once was enough to form canyons and sedimentary layers, very similar to those on Earth. Were there lifeforms in that water? Are any still there that we can recognize? And maybe the most exciting question since our existence: *Is anything there still alive?*

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME.** The discussion starts at 6:30 in the Mercantile Room (no food service there). Come before 6 PM to leave yourself time to get something to eat, or stay and eat afterwards. We end around 8 PM.

There's no charge. The Wynkoop is generously providing the facility; we buy our own drinks. It is first come, first seated, and **seating is limited** so that everyone can take part in the discussion.

The Colorado Café Scientifique is organized by an informal group of faculty from CU and institutions up and down the Front Range, as well as science fans from industry, government and elsewhere. We welcome your input, including ideas for speakers and topics. Bring them with you to the next Café, or e-mail them and any questions to [John.Cohen@UCDenver.edu](mailto:John.Cohen@UCDenver.edu)

**Essential information about the topic and the event on our Web site at:  
<http://CafeSciColorado.org>**