

Newspaper article published in the Medford Mail Tribune in the summer of 1997 on the occasion of the Crater High Class of 1957 40th class reunion.

Crater grad sees things differently

Max Frederick has been spending a lot of time lately juggling cosmic snowballs in his mind.

While most of us have been staring numbly at NASA images of Mars rocks named Barnacle Bill and Scooby Doo, the retired scientist has been wondering where the water went on the fourth rock from the sun.

Never mind about the Mars Pathfinder rover. Ignore Boo Boo, Yogi and the rest of the martian rocks with the cartoon names.

"There appears to be a hydrologic cycle in our solar system that accounts for it," he concludes. "There is a water cycle in outer space inside our solar system. You have what amounts to a snow storm in outer space. And you have a solar wind whose action is analogous to the evaporating process found here on earth."

The huh?

Perhaps we'd better go back to Sams Valley school, back when Frederick was a youngster.

"By the time I was in the third grade, I realized I wanted to be a scientist," he recalls.

Not that there weren't a few setbacks along the way. Halfway through the fourth grade, the teacher decided to put him back into third grade. Frederick said he didn't have far to go: The two classes in the Sams Valley school were in the same room.

But the 1957 graduate of Crater High School doesn't have any complaints about local schools. He and his wife, Betty, who currently reside in Portland but own several properties in the Rogue Valley, attended his 40th reunion last night.

One of his favorite teachers at Crater was a Mr. Cannon, an aging fellow who taught high school science.

"He was getting on in years," Frederick recalls. "He would get ahead of himself and lose his place in the lecture. I would sit in the front row so I'd give him the next word and off he would go."

But the teacher encouraged his students to think for themselves, he says.

"One time they had me go down to the bank in Central Point to set up a proximity detector," he says. "That was before they had motion detectors."

But he swears it was another student, whose name shall be withheld to protect the guilty, who mixed a batch of chemicals that erupted into fireworks at school.

"We would put a little of this chemical mixture on the end of our finger, let it dry, then snap our fingers and get a small explosion like a cap gun going off," Frederick says. "It was very unstable stuff."

Unfortunately, the day he reached into the container to put a dab on his finger was extremely dry. Explosively dry.

"The whole thing blew up on me," he says, laughing. "It didn't hurt me but there was red iodine all over my hand."

Then there was the incident in which his fuzzy senior mustache was burned off. Again, we're protecting the guilty.

But they were all experiences to whet the appetite of Frederick's scientific mind.

After earning a degree in geology from San Jose State, Frederick, an Army veteran, would spend 30 years working for the defense industry, working on general science issues.

Most of that time was spent with a company called TRW in California. And most of it he can't talk about.

"It was all intelligence stuff — we helped win the Cold War," he says, noting that one fellow he worked with was named William Perry. That's right, the man who would become secretary of defense.

What Frederick can talk about is out of this world. Physically and figuratively.

"Scientists haven't discovered some things yet because they are too obvious," he says. "It's a case of not seeing the forest for the trees."

Unless you've been on Mars, you probably recall the scientific splash made this spring when a research team led by space physicist Louis A. Frank of the University of Iowa announced it had evidence that the earth is bathed in cosmic rain. The team found that snowballs the size of two-story houses regularly swirl into earth's outer atmosphere, disintegrate and mist down as rain.

When Frank first suggested the theory in 1986, it was rejected as wacky. Now it is gaining credibility in the science camp.

After reading Frank's paper on the subject, Frederick took it a step further. He has written a complex paper explaining how the cycle removes water from Mars, leaving only the frozen stuff at the poles.

Because he doesn't have the right credentials, he figures his theory doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell of being accepted right now.

"The theory is too radically different," he says. "But it seems obvious to me."

Like Barnacle Bill is to the Mars rover and the rest of us.

For NASA confirmation over twenty years later see <https://www.nasa.gov/specials/ocean-worlds/> and https://scienceandthebible.net/20191031_Ancient_Technical_Knowledge_on_Source_of_Ocean_Water.pdf