

COLORADO

# CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE

TUESDAY 18 APRIL 2006

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.

## **–PLUTO AND BEYOND–**

*New Horizons will tell us about the ends of the Solar System*

**Fran Bagenal, Professor of Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences,  
Laboratory of Atmospheric and Space Physics, University of Colorado at Boulder**

On 19 January 2006, **New Horizons**, a probe to Pluto, its moon Charon, and the Kuiper Belt had a picture-perfect launch. The package is first headed to Jupiter where, in February 2007, it will get a slingshot boost and be off to Pluto, arriving in 2015. A great deal of this mission was built in Colorado, from rockets to the Student Dust Counter made by CU students. Other instruments are Ralph, Alice, REX, LORRI, PEPSSI, and SWAP, which gives you an idea of how cool this is. Fran Bagenal, whose wonderful planetarium talks many have heard at Fiske Planetarium, heads the plasma investigation on the science team. Pluto and Charon are really a binary planet with the centre of gravity between them. They are covered with some kind of ice and are bleeding their atmospheres into space as Earth once did. The Kuiper Belt is a salad of smaller bodies, something like the asteroid belt. Pluto is so small (it would fit between Washington and Denver) that its gravity is too weak for New Horizons to be captured into orbit. So it will fly by, rapidly gobble as much data as possible, and then whiz on out of the solar system, perhaps catching further adventures at Kuiper Belt objects along the way.

***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 food and drinks. It will be first come, first seated, and **seating is limited** so that everyone who wants to can be part of the discussion.

The Colorado Café Scientifique is organized by an informal group of President's Teaching Scholars and 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@UCHSC.edu](mailto:John.Cohen@UCHSC.edu)

**Essential information on our Web site at  
<http://CafeSciColorado.org>**