



**Meetings:**

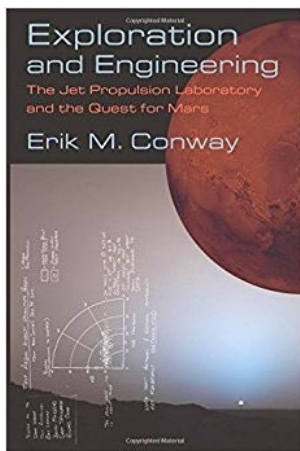
**General Meeting:** Thursday, April 13th; at the Wanda Kirk Library, 3611 Rosamond Blvd., Rosamond, CA, at 5 pm.

**Board Meeting:** no meeting until Thursday, May 25; at the Sladek Ranch, 5 pm.



**Looking Ahead:**

May Meeting: Installation of New Officers



Cover of Erik M Conway's latest book.

**April General Meeting: Caltech and the Origin of Rocketry in Southern California**

We are pleased to have **Erik Conway**, a JPL historian, as our guest speaker this Thursday, April 13. As he explains his topic: The California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratory is often known as a center of planetary exploration by the United States, but it was originally founded to develop rocket technology in the late 1930s. Far less well known is the reality that Caltech had a second rocket project operated by its Physics Department during World War II. That effort ultimately spun off what is now the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Center. In this talk, I'll tell the story of these two rocket projects, and suggest why they've taken such very different paths.

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Erik Conway is a historian of science and technology residing in Pasadena, CA. He is currently employed by the California Institute of Technology. He studies and documents the history of space exploration, and examines the intersections of space science, Earth science, and technological change. He most recently received the 2009 NASA History award for "pathbreaking contributions to space history ranging from aeronautics to Earth and space sciences," and the 2009 AIAA History Manuscript Award for his fourth book, "Atmospheric Science at NASA: A History."

Conway has been, at various junctures in his life, a nuclear field electronics technician in the U.S. Navy, a student of geomechanics, and a naval officer. He served as damage control assistant, and briefly acting chief engineer, of a tank landing ship and as an operations planner for a Pacific Fleet amphibious squadron. He had small roles in planning the US withdrawal from Somalia in 1994 as well as the noncombatant evacuation operation from Rwanda. He's a devout fan of Stephen J. Gould's writing on natural history and considers it Gould's fault that he's now a historian of science and technology.

He is the author of four other books. His latest work is *Exploration and Engineering: JPL and the Quest for Mars*, published in 2015.



You've probably heard of China Lake and JPL and our speaker will certainly bring a lot of new information to us. But here are some trivia questions that might not be covered. See if you can guess the answers.

1. Do you know what area contains more than 50,000 documented **petroglyphs**, the highest concentration of **rock art** in the Northern Hemisphere?
2. Who eats "good luck **peanuts**" before critical missions like orbital insertions or landings?
3. What is the JPL's main purpose?
4. How did China Lake get it's name?
5. Where can you find feral horses, feral burros, and **Big Horn Sheep** among other animals?
6. JPL was started on a rocky flood plain just outside of what city limits?



1. *The Coso Rock Art District at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake; personnel recognize these treasures should be shared with the public and Little Petroglyph Canyon is open to the public for tours.*
2. *JPL staff: following a number of failures, the first successful Ranger mission to impact the Moon occurred after a JPL staff member had decided to pass out peanuts to relieve tension and the lucky peanut thing became a tradition.*
3. *The construction and operation of planetary robotic spacecraft like the Curiosity rover, etc.*
4. *The borax on the lake bed was harvested by Chinese men and the operation was called "The Little Chinese Borax Works".*
5. *At NAWS China Lake, there are over 340 kinds of wildlife on the mostly undeveloped land.*
6. *Pasadena and today is is officially located in LaCanada Flintridge.*



**Election of Officers: to be held at the general meeting Thursday, April 13th.**

**Nominees:**

Officers:

- President - Gretchen Winfrey
- Vice President - Delores Julian
- Secretary - Janet Winters
- Treasurer - Brenda Yardeen

Directors At-Large:

- George Fisher
- Chavonne Sladek
- Kathy Smith

Officers will be installed at the May meeting and the terms of office begin June 1.

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Treasurer: Brenda Yardeen	ebyardeen@gmail.com

### Directors At-Large:

George Fischer  
Chavonne Sladek  
Kathy Smith

### General Meetings:

5:00-7:00 pm  
Second Thursday of the Month  
Held at Wanda Kirk County Library  
3611 Rosamond Blvd.  
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### Memberships:

\$5 - Student & Military; \$15 - Individual; \$20 - Husband & Wife;  
\$30 - Family; \$35 - Businesses

The Kern Antelope Historical Society was established in 1959 for the purpose of learning and preserving the history of California, especially the Antelope Valley, which includes parts of Los Angeles and Kern counties. Speakers are invited to talk at our monthly meetings about aspects of our various cultures. Subjects range from Indians of the past to the Space Age. The Society offers field trips for members to significant locations in and around the valley throughout the year. Come join us to learn more about the wonders of this area we live in and also meet some new people.

## KERN ANTELOPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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