“Here's some of the stories trending This Week at NASA!”

A new NASA mission to investigate the habitability of Jupiter's ocean moon Europa has moved from the concept phase to the development phase known as formulation, after successfully completing its first major review by the agency.

Europa is considered to be one of the best places in the solar system to search for signs of present-day life beyond Earth.

Plans for the mission call for a spacecraft to be launched to the Jupiter system sometime in the 2020s.

During a June 16 briefing at the 2015 Astrobiology Science Conference in Chicago, NASA and university scientists discussed astrobiology research and technology being used to advance our search for other habitable worlds in our solar system and beyond.

Mars, Europa, Saturn's moon Enceladus and various exoplanets were discussed.
Astrobiology is the study of the origin, evolution, distribution, and future of life in the universe.

Progression on NASA's journey to Mars and exploration of the Red Planet now includes newly signed agreements between NASA and two European partners.

Under one agreement, CNES, the French space agency will provide the structural support for the SuperCam on NASA's Mars 2020 rover.

The other agreement will extend cooperation by Spain on the Mars Curiosity rover, NASA's InSight mission to Mars that will launch next year, and the Mars 2020 rover.

NASA Administrator Charlie Bolden signed the agreements during meetings at the Paris Air Show.

NASA's Asteroid Grand Challenge and the robotic systems being developed for future asteroid exploration missions were the focus of a June 16 event at Goddard Space Flight Center.
Agency officials gave a status update on the Asteroid Grand Challenge, which was started two years ago as a way to focus on finding all asteroid threats to human populations and knowing what to do about them.

They also discussed progress on the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission or (ARRM).

Representatives from Goddard’s Satellite Servicing Capabilities Office (SSCO) also discussed the development of robotic systems for the ARRM and other NASA missions using space robotics.

Deputy Administrator Dava Newman visited with employees at Langley Research Center on June 18.

While there, Newman also toured a Boeing ecoDemonstrator 757 aircraft.

An ecoDemonstrator has been used for three NASA research projects conducted in partnership with Boeing to test several innovative green aviation technologies, as part of NASA’s Environmentally
Responsible Aviation Project to reduce aircraft fuel consumption and emissions.

NASA’s Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission or (TRMM) spacecraft re-entered Earth’s atmosphere on June 15 at 11:55 p.m. EDT, over the South Indian Ocean, according to the U.S. Strategic Command’s Joint Functional Component Command for Space through the Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC).

TRMM was a joint mission between NASA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) to study rainfall for weather and climate research.

The spacecraft’s descent had been closely monitored since the mission was ended in April.

NASA awarded $100,000 in prize money to a team from West Virginia University for successfully completing Level 2 of the Sample Return Robot Challenge at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts.

The purpose of the challenge was to demonstrate how an autonomous robot could locate samples.
and return them to the starting zone.

This was the fourth year of the event, which is part NASA's Centennial Challenges Program to encourage innovations in autonomous navigation and robotics technologies.

And that's what's up this week @NASA ...

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