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## Jupiter moon may possess essential elements for life

WASHINGTON (AP) — The discovery of organic compounds on two of Jupiter's moons increases the possibility that all of the elements for life are present on another of the planet's moons, Europa.

The finding, from instruments on the Galileo spacecraft orbiting Jupiter, suggests that Europa may have all three of the ingredients scientists consider essential for life: an energy source, liquid water and organic molecules, said planetary scientist Thomas McCord of the University of Hawaii.

"This doesn't mean there is life on Europa," said McCord, lead author of a study to be published today in the journal Science. "The exciting thing now is the evidence that Europa may have all three of the ingredients."

Europa is already known to have water and internal heat sources.

Dale Cruikshank, a research scientist at NASA's Ames Research Center, said the work of McCord and his team should sharpen the research concentration on Europa, which already "is the subject of very special interest."

"This finding increases the plausibility for life on Europa," Cruikshank said. "It also supports the idea that there were organic molecules streaming throughout the solar system."

The study of Jupiter's moons is part of a growing effort by astronomers and planetary experts to find evidence of life within the solar system, particularly on Mars.

A major goal of NASA's Mars exploration, for example, is to search for the fingerprints of life on the Red Planet. Researchers have determined that Mars once had vast pools of water, and there is speculation this

could have led to the evolution of life. Some believe there may be evidence of life in frozen underground water.

NASA researchers also have found what some believe may be the fossilized remains of microbes in an asteroid that fell to Earth from Mars. The interpretation of that finding, however, is controversial.

In the case of Jupiter's moons, instruments on Galileo detected the complex organic molecules on the surfaces of the moons Callisto and Ganymede, suggesting that such organics are also present on Jupiter's other two large moons, Europa and Io.

"What we have on Callisto and Ganymede are some of the kinds of organic molecules that could be the basis for life," McCord said. "These are the basic ingredients."

And if Callisto and Ganymede have these compounds, said McCord, then it is highly likely that they also exist on Europa.

Water and an energy source, said McCord are "two angles on the triangle of life." Now, by finding organics present on two other Jovian moons, there is a strong suggestion that the third angle of the triangle may be present on Europa, he said.

Life on Callisto, Io and Ganymede is considered unlikely because they are dry.

No organic chemicals have been detected on Europa, but researchers have speculated that there may be a rich organic soup below the moon's ice cap and that this could be a warm, liquid place for the evolution of life.

None of the research so far has proven that life exists or has ever existed on any of Jupiter's moons, McCord said.

## Touted student drug tests disappoint Omaha officials

OMAHA, (AP) — The first round of a much ballyhooed drug test in an Omaha-area school has borne disappointing results as less than half of the students selected took the test.

Parents of several of the students said they couldn't bring their children into the health clinic due to scheduling problems.

"It's a worry," said Ken Bird, superintendent of District 66.

The random test, which can only be administered with the parent's approval, was implemented for the first time last month when the names of 22 students were selected.

However, only 12 of the selected took the test. Of those, 11 were negative and the results for the 12th were not back yet, Bird said Thursday.

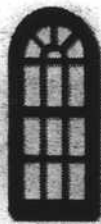
Bird said that if some students refused to be tested because they are using drugs, he hopes the refusal prompts a discussion between parents and child.

The only other Nebraska school doing parent-approved drug tests is in Norfolk, where only 75 of the district's 1,200 eligible students signed up for testing.

Names of four to six Norfolk students have been drawn at random weekly since the program began in late August. All the students cooperated with the testing and all tested negative, said Superintendent Randy Nelson.

In District 66, about 16 percent — or 360 — of the 2,300 eligible students have been signed up for testing by their parents.

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