

calibration images. Parks has also now repeated the same type of analysis on spots from Frank's visible-light imager and has reported finding the same noise-like behaviour, leading to the conclusion that the spots are internal to the camera.

Frank, not to be out-manoeuvred, has responded that Parks has analysed the wrong spots, insisting that all but the largest dark spots are instrument noise.<sup>2</sup> If the spots are clouds of water from small disintegrating comets, then he reasons that the motion of these clouds across the field of view should add a third spot to the two created by wobble motion of the spacecraft. He found that five of the candidate atmospheric 'holes' in Parks' UVI images had three spots in the triangular

orientation predicted from Polar's wobble. Frank also found that 80 per cent of the large dark spots that he believes are real 'holes' shrank and disappeared around altitudes of 25,000-41,000 km, as expected due to Polar's eccentric orbit.

Parks, among many others, remains unconvinced. He has counter-arguments to all of Frank's evidences. Thomas Donahue of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, who has leaned toward accepting the atmospheric 'holes' as real, doesn't think the San Francisco confrontation has changed many minds.<sup>2</sup> The real test is going to come if NASA, as expected, funds more analyses of the data this year, and if Frank releases all his Polar data on CD-ROMs as planned so that other

space scientists can check it all out for themselves.

We won't hold our breaths waiting, particularly as resolution in Frank's favour would boost creationists' arguments for a young Earth.

#### REFERENCES

1. Snelling, A. A., 1997. Cosmic snowballs bombard the Earth? **CEN Tech. J.**, 11(3):255-256.
2. Kerr, R. A., 1998. Geophysicists ponder hints of otherworldly water. **Science**, 279:30-31.
3. Kerr, R. A., 1997. Tiny comets' spots called artifacts. **Science**, 278:1217-1218.
4. Anonymous, 1997. Abominable snowballs. **New Scientist**, 156(2110):29.

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#### QUOTABLE QUOTE: The Gospel and Evolutionary Naturalism

*The story of salvation by the cross makes no sense against a background of evolutionary naturalism. The evolutionary story is a story of humanity's climb from animal beginnings to rationality, not a story of a fall from perfection. It is a story about recognizing gods as illusions, not a story about recognizing God as the ultimate reality we are always trying to escape. It is a story about learning to rely entirely on human intelligence, not a story of the helplessness of that intelligence in the face of the inescapable fact of sin.*

*There is no satisfactory way to bring two such fundamentally different stories together, although various bogus intellectual systems offer a superficial compromise to those who are willing to overlook a logical contradiction or two. A clear thinker simply has to go one way or another*

Johnson, Phillip E., 1997. **Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds**, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, p. 111.

#### QUOTABLE QUOTE: Cosmology

*'Cosmology is unique in science in that it is a very large intellectual edifice based on very few acts. The strong tendency is to replace a need for more facts by conformity . . .'*

Arp, H. C. *et al.*, 1990. The extragalactic Universe: an alternative view. **Nature**, 346:812.