
Mercury: Past, Present, Future

Bio of Mark 'Indy' Kochte:

Born and raised in northeast Ohio, Mark Indy Kochte received a degree in astronomy from the Ohio State University in 1987. In 1988 he joined the Hubble Space Telescope project at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, doing the acquisition, processing, and archiving of Hubble data. During his tenure on the mission he was afforded the opportunity to do some research in the studies of extrasolar planets, and helped define the evidence of an atmosphere around a planet in the star system HD 209458b. He also was heavily involved in the grassroots project UMBRAS, a spacecraft design that would enable space telescopes to actually visually detect extrasolar planets the size of Jupiter or Saturn. After 17 years with Hubble he moved on to the Far Ultraviolet Spectroscopic Explorer project (FUSE) as a Mission Planner, taking on the immense challenges of how to deal with a satellite that has only one remaining reaction wheel. In the fall of 2006 he was offered the opportunity to join the MESSENGER team at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab as a Payload Operations Specialist. After supporting two successful flybys of Venus and three exciting flybys of Mercury, he and the rest of the team are feverishly preparing for Mercury Orbital Operations. Throughout all this he has published a half a dozen papers on space mission design and mission operations, as well as co-authored a half a dozen additional papers on space mission design and science analysis results.

Not being an all-work/no-play kinda guy, in his spare time when not staring at the stars, Indy can be found out exploring the world we live in. In addition to having authored the rock climbing guidebook "Climb Maryland!", he is often out scaling cliffs from Maryland to Thailand, mapping cave systems in West Virginia, mountain climbing in Colorado and Washington, and diving for fossilized Megalodon shark teeth in the Atlantic. No moss gathers under his feet!