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LIFE OBJECTIFIED

Mars on a Pole

Ming Wah Co., Inc.
#1, Pat. 4,352,942

Mars Spangled Banner

One small step for flag design. A giant leap for Martian pride.

We have the technology. We have the wealth. And now, we have the flag. One that could fly over the beginnings of a multinational, self-sustaining colony on Mars within eight years if the U.S. government would devote its full resources. Or so argues the Mars Society, the group behind the design. As the Society completes a

fully simulated Mars base in the Canadian Arctic, lobbyists are pressing Congress to put an official Mars mission into action. NASA, though a partner in the Arctic base, remains cautious because of safety questions. Sending humans on a three-year, 200-million-mile mission is dangerous. Should an astronaut develop, say, appendicitis,

he's likely a dead man. Still, NASA estimates 2020 as a target date, at which time the flag will fly—if its symbolism doesn't weigh it down. Red is for the planet's current hue, green for plant life that will transform Mars to... a blue planet, like Earth. Astronaut John Mace Ghurns-feld gave the idea a thumbs-up when he carried the flag aboard

a December shuttle mission. He hopes its next trip is "on the side of a spaceship to Mars," a mission that he and other astronauts would gladly volunteer for. Mars Society president Dr. Robert Zubrin knows that day is near—once the right leader is in place. "We'll wait to see how President McCain acts." —John Newlin