Thursday, Jan. 8, 2004 **Vol. 9 – No. 2**

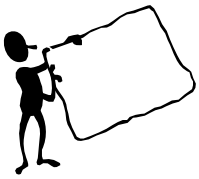
KSC COUNTDOWN

Columbia crew memorialized on Mars

May ELV launch to study Mercury

▲ **Mars Update:** NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe has announced plans to name the landing site of the Mars Spirit Rover in honor of the STS-107 Space Shuttle Columbia crew who died Feb. 1, 2003. The area in the vast flatland of the Gusev Crater where Spirit landed this weekend will be called the Columbia Memorial Station. Among the historic images being returned from the red planet is an image of a memorial plaque to Columbia's astronauts and the STS-107 mission that was mounted on the back of Spirit's high-gain antenna, a disc-shaped tool used for communicating directly with Earth. The plaque is aluminum and approximately six inches in diameter. The memorial plaque was attached March 28, 2003, at the KSC Payload Hazardous Servicing Facility.

▲ **ELV Update :** MESSENGER is scheduled for launch May 11 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. MESSENGER is a scientific investigation – by spacecraft – of the planet Mercury. The name comes from "MErcury Surface, Space ENvironment, GEochemistry, and Ranging," highlighting the project's broad range of scientific goals. Mercury is the smallest planet, the densest, the one with the oldest surface, the one with the largest daily variations in surface temperature – and the least explored. Understanding this "end member" among the terrestrial planets is crucial to developing a better understanding of how our own Earth formed, how it evolved and how it interacts with the Sun. To develop this understanding, the MESSENGER mission, spacecraft and science instruments are focused on answering six of the key outstanding questions that will allow us to understand Mercury as a planet: Why is Mercury so dense? What is the geologic history of Mercury? What is the structure of Mercury's core? What is the nature of Mercury's magnetic field? What are the unusual materials at Mercury's poles? What volatiles are important at Mercury?



◆ **EEAW 2004 Poster Contest –** Get involved with Earth Day activities! Show your Environmentality! Commemorate the day by participating in the EEAW 2004 poster contest. Design your poster around the winning slogan, *"Today's Conservation Defines Tomorrow's Future."* The contest, which runs through Feb. 26, is open to all KSC civil service and contractor employees. You can use Photoshop, PowerPoint, Word, and/or hand sketches. Size requirement: 8-1/2" x 11". Only one entry per person is permitted: put your name, mail code and phone number on your entry. The winner will be notified in February. The concept will be implemented with the overall 30" x 40" poster design produced by Graphics. Submit your hard copy to TA-C3/Gail McLean.

◆ **National Space Club - Florida Committee –** Capt. Winston Scott, executive director of the Florida Space Authority and former astronaut, is keynote speaker at the Jan.13 luncheon meeting at the Doubletree Oceanfront Hotel and Conference Center, Cocoa Beach . Luncheon check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. To pre-register, please contact: Sandy Andre at 867-1571 or 917-9192 after 2 p.m., or e-mail *sandy@nscfl.com* or *www.nscfl.com* by Friday, Jan. 9. Cost: $17/person; corporate tables (seats 8) $200. Cancellations must be received 48 hours prior to event – payment may be made at the door (Visa, MasterCard and Discover accepted).

◆ **Did You Know?** Massage therapy is available at KSC. Did you know that the "feel good" aspect is due to several factors: Massage benefits the circulatory, digestive, nervous, respiratory, lymph, skeletal and integumentary (skin) systems . For more information or an appointment, call 543-1047.

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E-mail news to Anita Barrett at *Anita.Barrett-1@ksc.nasa.gov* . For questions or information, e-mail or call 321-867-2815
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