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KSC COUNTDOWN

Work behind the scenes aids GP-B spacecraft preparations for launch

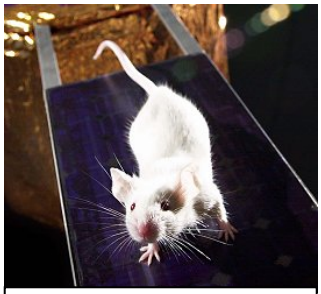
NASA highlights work by Space Station crew

▲ **ELV Update:** The **Gravity Probe B** spacecraft is awaiting the return of the reworked Experiment Control Unit (ECU). The ECU was returned to Palo Alto, Calif., in December and is in Lockheed Martin facilities there. The state-of-battery charge is monitored on a constant basis. The temperature of the dewar's main tank is 1.864 K and has warmed from 1.648 K since the solar arrays were installed over the cryogenic access ports, after the last helium servicing. The temperature is targeted to be no warmer than 1.880 K at launch. However, since the solar arrays have been removed because of the stand-down, another cryogenic serving of liquid helium is planned in mid-February. The reworking of the circuit board is complete and has been undergoing thermal vacuum testing. The circuit board will be returned for installation into the GP-B spacecraft the week of Feb. 10.

▲ **ISS Update:** NASA astronaut Michael Foale and Russian cosmonaut Alexander Kaleri are nearing the halfway mark of their six-month mission to the International Space Station. NASA officials will discuss the crew's activities during a media briefing this week from NASA's Johnson Space Center, Houston. The panel will take questions from reporters at participating NASA centers. The briefing will be broadcast live on NASA TV.

◆ **Federally Employed Women Annual Training Program:** The Space Coast Chapter of Federally Employed Women (FEW) is presenting another exciting conference filled with career-boosting insights and knowledge for all attendees. This year the Space Coast Chapter would like to invite employees to attend its 25th Annual Training Program to be held March 3 and repeated March 4 at the Cocoa Beach Holiday Inn. The cost for this one-day Seminar, titled "Training and Networking - Tools for the Future," is $79 per participant. Parking is free and FEW is providing a complimentary continental breakfast and lunch. Please contact Courtney Borowski at 321-867-5091 (or e-mail *Courtney.A.Borowski@nasa.gov)* or Gloria Vigilante at 321-431-5043 for a registration package. All registration forms and payment or purchase orders are due by Feb. 23. Additionally, if you would like to participate as an exhibitor for this event, please contact Karen Jansma at 321-867-2309 or e-mail *Karen.S.Jansma@nasa.gov*. Watch for future articles and don't miss out on this exciting training opportunity.

◆ **NASA Science News –** In 2006 a group of mice-astronauts will orbit Earth inside a spinning spacecraft. Their mission: to learn what it's like to live on Mars. The mice will be exposed to Mars-gravity for about five weeks. Go to the web site **http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2004/20jan_marsmice.htm** for the full story.



A mouse-astronaut candidate poses atop a model solar panel. Credit: Mars-Gravity.org

◆ **Did You Know?** Astronaut Leland Melvin is being featured on HBO Sports' *Inside the NFL Profile*. A 6-minute profile on Leland will air nationally at 10 p.m. EST Wednesday, Jan. 28. The broadcast will include Leland talking about his NFL and astronaut careers, his work on the NASA Educator Astronaut Program and the loss of his friends on Columbia STS-107. The show will repeat three times later that week, leading up to Super Bowl XXXVIII Feb. 1.

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