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Newsclippings: Space & Astronomy [10 items]

From: "Ric Carter" <ric@sonic.net>
Date: Tue, 20 Jan 1998 10:11:10 -0800

*** Cosmic bulge around star may be young planet

A cosmic bulge in the dusty blanket surrounding the star Beta Pictoris may be a young planet with the potential for primitive life, scientists reported Thursday. New images made by the Hubble Space Telescope add weight to the theory that planets could likely develop outside our solar system, but some scientists contend that the bulge is not caused by a hidden planet but by the pull from a passing star. For years, astronomers have looked to Beta Pictoris, a comparatively close sun-like star some 63 light years from Earth, as a possible site for the development of a planetary system. See <http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6843409-787>

*** Latest space fear: asteroid-spawned tsunamis

First they killed the dinosaurs. Now this. An astrophysicist at Los Alamos National Laboratory predicted Wednesday that falling asteroids - the same phenomena thought to have led to the extinction of the dinosaurs - could cause monumental tsunamis far worse than those caused by earthquakes. No such impact has ever been confirmed, but researcher Jack Hills said there is still a 2% to 3% chance that this could happen within the span of an average human life. If an asteroid with a diameter of 600 feet or more splashed down in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, it would set off a tsunami, a huge sea wave, he said. See <http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6827206-53e>

[Actually, traces of 1000-ft tsunami waves HAVE been found in Hawaii and Peru, but these haven't been definitely linked to asteroids. --rc]

*** Probe heads for moon

A low-cost robot explorer hurtled toward the moon Wednesday on a yearlong mission to probe the lunar surface for minerals and frozen water. Lunar Prospector, NASA's first moonshot since men last set foot on the moon in 1972, took off at 9:28 p.m. ET Tuesday from Florida. The spacecraft was on "a voyage to rediscover the moon," a NASA commentator said on liftoff. After some early delays, controllers successfully deployed three 8-foot booms holding the probe's scientific instruments and the craft was performing "extremely well," officials said. See

<http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6825856-1aa>

*** Massive black hole pinpointed at heart of Milky Way

A black hole with the mass of nearly 2.6 million Suns lies at the heart of our Milky Way galaxy with a seductive force that sends stars close to it speeding by at 600 mph, astronomers reported Wednesday. Elsewhere in the galaxy, the astronomers told of a kind of "Old Faithful" black hole that siphons off matter from a nearby companion star, then periodically erupts in a blast of plasma. Scientists even made an audio recording of these rhythmic eruptions. The question of black holes' existence has never been settled absolutely, but the scientists said they had the first conclusive evidence that there is a so-called supermassive black hole at the center of the Milky Way, about 26,000 light years from our Sun. See

<http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6824905-flc>

*** Gamma-Ray Bursts may have caused mass extinctions

Considering the known neutron stars inside our own galaxy, a case can be made that evolutionary disjunctions in Earth's past may have been caused not only by asteroid impacts, but also by gamma-ray bursts from merging neutron stars a few thousand light years distant in our galaxy. See the 9 Jan.98 Science News report:

The SW complete weekly news reports are available free via Email. To subscribe, send SUB SW to <prismx@scienceweek.com>.

[Just another damn thing to worry about, eh? --rc]

*** Space probe swings into lunar orbit

The space probe Lunar Prospector successfully executed the first of three engine bursts Sunday designed to swing it gently into orbit around the moon, officials said. The small robot explorer, NASA's first moonshot since the Apollo 17 astronauts walked on the lunar surface in 1972, completed its "orbital insertion" burn by 4:15 a.m. PT (7:15 a.m. ET), said Betsy Carter, a spokeswoman for mission control at NASA's Ames Research Center. Lunar Prospector was launched Tuesday on a one-year mission to scan the moon for minerals and possible water ice which could one day be used by human settlers. See

<http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6892294-5a1>

U.K. military satellite launched from Fla., see

<http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6867087-8a6>

*** Feb. solar eclipse draws astronomers to Caribbean

Some of the world's leading astronomers gave a message to the public on Saturday about the Feb. 26 eclipse of Sun: go ahead and look, but bring a CD with you. Or an old X-ray. Or some exposed black-and-white film. The Moon will pass between the Earth and the Sun on that day, blocking much of the Sun's light. The total eclipse will extend in a 93-mile-wide band from the Galapagos Islands, northeastward over parts of northern South America and across the Caribbean Sea. A partial eclipse will be visible in a much wider area including the southeastern United States and central South America. This is the last solar eclipse visible in the Western Hemisphere until the year 2017. See

<http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6877573-500>

*** Russia, Boeing present first international space module

The first module of a future international space station is complete and ready to be moved from Moscow's Khrunichev space center to a launch site in Kazakhstan to blast off in June, officials said Saturday. The U.S.-funded and Russian-built FGB module will serve as a construction pad, powerhouse and will keep the station, due to start operating in 2000, correctly oriented towards the sun. Boeing has invested nearly \$190 million in the module. The international space station has brought together the U.S., the European Space Agency, Russia, Canada, Italy and Japan. It will replace Russia's ageing Mir space station which has been in orbit since 1985. See

<http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6996211-d9c>

*** FIRST MODULE OF SPACE STATION READY FOR LAUNCH

The first module of an international space station has been completed and is ready for shipment to the launch pad. "This is an important day in the history of the international station's creation," the head of Russia's space agency

told reporters. The module will be taken to Russia's Baikonur cosmodrome next Wednesday in preparation for a planned June 30 launch, according to representatives of Russia's Khrunichev Scientific Production Center.

-->Russia makes strides again in space

..... <http://cnn.com/TECH/9801/18/russia.space.ap/index.html>

*** CIVILIANS NOW HAVE 'EYE IN SKY' WITH SATELLITE LAUNCH

The launching of the world's first commercial spy satellite has ended the monopoly of the world's most advanced military and intelligence services on gathering high-resolution pictures from space. EarlyBird 1, launched Wednesday from a military base in eastern Russia, is designed to pick out features on the ground as small as 10 feet across. Buy photos via the Web: <http://cnn.com/TECH/9712/25/satellite.reut/index.html>

+ Edited by moderator

UFOMIND MAILING LIST - Supporting the Ufomind/PsiSpy Website

<http://www.ufomind.com/misc/> - Glenn Campbell, Moderator

Submissions to: ufomind@lists.best.com

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RELEVANCE OF THIS MESSAGE: space exploration

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PO Box 30303, Las Vegas, NV 89173 Glenn Campbell, Webmaster & Moderator

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