

Reader 'frees' blind

Device reads print; goofs no problem

United Press International
LANSING, Mich. — It speaks in a monotone, occasionally mispronounces words and reads large numbers digit-by-digit.

But the sounds are beautiful to the young students of the Michigan School for the Blind, which recently received the \$50,000 reading machine from the U.S. Office of Education.

The school's machine, displayed for news media last week, is one of 40 produced thus far by Kurzweil Computer Products.

The reading machine should increase the selection of books available to the blind because they will not have to wait for readers, talking books or Braille versions of modern novels and texts.

The machine, with a scanning "eye," reads lines of print by recognizing the shape of letters, then verbalizes them through its robotic voice.

Various controls enable students to change the pitch and speed of their mechanical reader, repeat words and sentences, punctuate

phrases and even spell out unfamiliar words.

Kurzweil spokesman Gayle Powell, who is visually impaired said, "The reading machine is not intended to replace records and tapes. But it is valuable because it will increase the independence and privacy of the blind."

"With the machine, we can read our own bills and mail and not have to have someone read it for us."

The machine obeys the rules of English phonetics, but sometimes gets confused.

"Read," for example, always is pronounced "red." But students quickly learn to adjust to the little goofs and to the unhuman voice.

One observer at the demonstration said getting the hang of the machine is something like listening to a British movie. "For the first few minutes it might as well be speaking Chinese, but pretty soon, it sounds normal."

The machine's photo eye can read just about any print that is put before it and Powell said it is hoped future models will be able to read handwriting as well.

Alabama pilot lands his biplane between cars on Interstate 20

United Press International
PELL CITY, Ala. — Le Grand "Bud" Dawes of Birmingham joined the eastbound traffic on Interstate 20 Saturday, which was not unusual in itself — except Dawes was in an airplane.

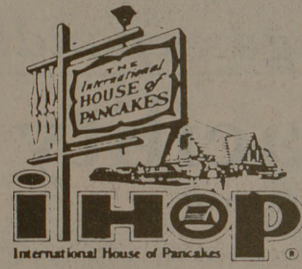
Dawes was flying his homebuilt biplane from Birmingham to Talladega when the spinner on the propeller flew off, knocking 18 inches off one propeller blade.

Dawes landed his plane between two eastbound cars about three

miles west of Pell City. No one was injured and the disabled aircraft made the rest of the trip to Talladega behind a wrecker.

"I have been flying for about 30 years as a hobby," Dawes said. "It is the seventh airplane that I have built."

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Begin expected to shun latest Sadat proposal

United Press International
Prime Minister Menachem Begin pledged to respond Monday to President Anwar Sadat's latest peace demands, but Israeli government sources said the response would be a flat refusal.

The sources told UPI that Begin has decided to turn down Sadat's demands for establishing a timetable by which residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip would receive political autonomy.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd delivered a letter from Sadat to Begin Friday, that sources described as conciliatory, but which did not indicate any change in the Egyptian position.

But Israeli national television said the renewed direct personal contact between Begin and Sadat may be the only real progress that was achieved in the exchange.

Begin promised a reply to the newest Egyptian initiative within 24 hours and Khalil, who was scheduled to leave Washington Saturday, extended his stay until Monday to await the response.

The negotiations, which opened Oct. 12, bogged down three weeks ago because of Israel's opposition to the Egyptian demand for "linkage" to a settlement of the Palestinian problem.

Khalil met with President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and conferred Sunday by long-distance telephone with Sadat in Cairo.

Egypt is believed to favor the American compromise proposal to hold elections for an autonomous administrative council in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip by December 1979.

Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat in an interview televised Sunday criticized Carter for a "complete retreat" from his position in favor of a Palestinian "homeland."

But Arafat predicted that no Middle East peace could last without the involvement of the Soviet Union. "Without the second superpower, you cannot have a complete peace in this area," he said.

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