

Getting help about campus

For those unfamiliar with the Texas A&M campus, finding classrooms and buildings can be a challenge. Jim Neal, working at the information desk in Rudder Tower, where those having trouble finding their way around can get assistance, directs Susan Neal, a freshman marketing major.

Battalion photo by Clay Cockrill

Space shuttle tiles may need gluing

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The first space shuttle will be covered with heat insulation tiles to enable the rocket plane Columbia to withstand the enormous heat of re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

But the loss of even one tile might mean catastrophic heat. So scientists and officials of the Johnson Space Center in Houston now are considering equipping the astronauts with a spray can and caulk gun for space-walk repairs in case one or more tiles are damaged during launch.

The square, silica tiles — a novel feature of the revolutionary rocket plane — are designed to make sure the winged ship can repeatedly withstand the 2,000-degree-plus heat of re-entry from orbit.

Minor damage to the tiles occurred last winter when the Columbia was ferried atop a 747 jet from California to Cape Canaveral, Fla.

That trip was in preparation for launch, now expected next spring or summer. The damage caused concern that, during launch, ice breaking off the shuttle's external fuel tank might damage the Columbia's underside, or that severe aerodynamic stress during the climb to orbit might hurt the tiles. Two weeks ago officials at the Na-

tional Aeronautics and Space Administration headquarters directed Houston to examine options for solving the problem, in case ongoing tests indicate the tiles are vulnerable.

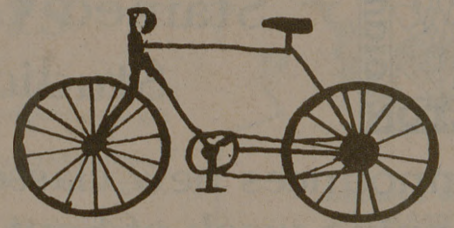
"A lot of people are working very diligently to understand the characteristics of the tile and to relieve any concern that we presently have about the possibility of either tile damage or tiles coming off during the ascent phase," said Reginald Machell, manager of the engineering team studying the inspection and repair possibilities.

He said in a telephone interview that an inspection and repair system may not be necessary, "but if you don't start doing the work now, you close out the option by default." Machell said decisions will be made in the next few weeks.

He said one problem — how to inspect the outside of the shuttle in orbit — might be solved by rigging a television camera to an extendable boom attached to the shuttle's remote-controlled manipulator arm.

A second option is to provide astronauts John Young and Robert Crippen with a device that would let an astronaut fly around the shuttle.

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Low mortgages draw a crowd

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United Press International
The Museum of Modern Art in New York City displayed Henri Matisse's "Le Bateau" in 1961 — and it took 47 days before "the experts" discovered it was hung upside down.

United Press International
METAIRIE, La. — Sunning in the broiling heat or playing poker and Monopoly under the shade of beach umbrellas, members of "tent cities" outside Jefferson Parish mortgage companies held community Labor Day picnics to await a shot at low-interest home loans.

Mortgage companies and homesteads will begin taking applications Wednesday for \$86 million available for home loans at a low 7.6 percent interest.

The low-interest money, which will be split among four income level groups, was made available by the sale of government-backed bonds. Most of the "tent city" residents said they would be unable to afford a house without the low-interest money.

"When you consider each day we're out there we're saving \$7,000 on a 30-year note, it's absolutely thrilling, and a damn good bargain," said Don Crist. "Everybody's having a ball and making lots of new friends. It's like Carnival (Mardi Gras) out there."

Potential buyers, armed with beach chairs and shade umbrellas, began lining up outside the offices last week. Leaders emerged among the groups at most offices and became impromptu organizers.

"We were being told about big crowds and the very serious possibility of lines and property damage," said Burnett Tappel, chairman of the authority. "I really was under the impression there'd be a murder if it were allowed to continue."

Instead, families sitting in lines reported an instant sense of community, with strangers sharing birthday parties, organizing marathon Monopoly games and sharing babysitting duties.

Despite the 90-degree heat, afternoon monsoon-like rains and nightly attacks of mosquitos, sheriff's deputies have reported no trouble among those taking up temporary residence outside the mortgage offices.

More than 100 applicants at the Carruth Mortgage Corp. named their line "Carruthville" and a couple outside a Canal Street office wore T-shirts emblazoned with "We're Sixth in Line at Riverside Financial."

Congress graded

49% on conservation

United Press International
WASHINGTON — An average member of Congress had a 49 percent "correct" voting record on conservation issues according to a group concerned with the environment.

But regional differences ranged from an average 69 percent for New England to 18 percent for the Southwest.

The League of Conservation Voters reported Sunday that northeasterners generally had a much better voting record than southeasterners on environmental issues ranging from parks, dams and pollution to nuclear power.

House Democrats averaged 58 percent, Republicans 32 percent. By states, Vermont was rated highest with an average 84 percent, while Alaska and New Mexico tied for the lowest score, 8 percent.

No House member received a perfect score of 100 in 1978, but Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore., had the highest score with 99 percent.

Five members scored zero — Reps. Robert Badham, R-Calif., Bob Stump, D-Ariz., and former Democratic Reps. John Flynt Jr. of Georgia, Dale Milford of Texas and Joe Waggoner of Louisiana.

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