

Balloonists 'lucky to be alive'

United Press International
COLUMBUS, Ohio — The crew of the "Super Chicken," forced by severe weather to leap from the balloon they hoped would take them on the first flight across the United States, said Tuesday they are lucky to be alive.

The unmanned silver balloon landed Tuesday near Waynesburg, in western Pennsylvania. State police said they received a call from an arm family reporting the balloon had landed in power lines on their property.

John Shoecraft, 35, and Ron Ripps, 37, tried to bring their storm-buffed craft down in a field southwest of Columbus late Monday after weather officials warned them to abort the cross-country flight because of worsening thunderstorms.

When an emergency landing attempt failed, Shoecraft leaped over the side of the gondola onto a golf course parking lot. The balloon, lightened, shot up to an altitude of 2,000 feet where Ripps parachuted to safety. Both men were treated at a local hospital and released.

"We owe our lives to the Indianapolis weather service," Shoecraft said. "We went through two major thunder cells earlier in the day and we were not in the mood for another major storm. We were making an

attempt to cross America without being foolhardy."

The two men had lifted off from Oceanside, Calif., early Saturday in the balloon, which was dubbed "Super Chicken" because of the occupants' trepidation at making the flight, spokeswoman Eileen Bailey said.

Sgt. Paul Bryant, the pilot of a Columbus police helicopter that followed the balloon before the men abandoned it, picked up Ripps and returned him to the golf course parking lot where he was reunited with Shoecraft.

"You never saw two guys so happy," Bryant said. "When they were reunited at the golf course they acted like they hadn't seen each other in 15 years. They hugged and kissed each other in their excitement."

Trouble for the balloonists began Monday when storms overtook them about 70 miles east of Columbus. The balloon was traveling at about 23,000 feet.

Heading the weather service warning to abandon the trip, they attempted an emergency landing, but it failed due to a malfunction in the helium venting system that made it impossible for the balloon to stay on the ground.

In its descent, the balloon struck some trees but continued dragging along the ground. It then gained altitude and the crewmen were unable to bring it closer to the ground again.

As the balloon blew across the parking lot of a golf course a few feet from the ground, Shoecraft jumped out.

"I looked up and my buddy was still in there," he said.

Ripps then jumped, with a parachute, after the loss of Shoecraft's weight allowed the craft to ascend again.

The balloonists had hoped to reach the East Coast by Tuesday or today.

United Press International
COCOA, Fla. — Alice Marsteller died of what her friends insist was a broken heart — her will to live shattered by housing officials who forced the 77-year-old woman to give up her beloved terrier Sparky.

Officials at the School Street senior housing project, where Mrs. Marsteller lived, told her this summer to give up Sparky or find another place to live. With little income and nowhere else to go, she reluctantly took Sparky to the Humane Society in July.

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Aged lady loses dog, will

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Mrs. Marsteller died Sunday at the Sunny Pines Convalescent Center in Rockledge, where her nieces from Virginia had taken her last Thursday to recuperate from a broken hip. A funeral was held Monday at nearby Frontenac, Fla.

"When she gave that dog away she just gave up," said Mary Junker, 70, a friend of Mrs. Marsteller's from the senior center. She broke into sobs when she heard her friend died and bitterly denounced housing authority officials for their uncaring attitude.

"They showed us they could win. I

hope they're satisfied now," said Junker.

"As soon as they took that dog from her she just let go," said another neighbor, Margaret Seiff.

Frank Chavers, executive director of the housing authority, said he doesn't believe the old woman's death can be linked to the anti-pet policy.

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Gandhi's ordinance criticized

United Press International
NEW DELHI, India — Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has once again assumed emergency-type powers to deal with domestic unrest, empowering the government to imprison suspected subversives without trial for up to 12 months.

The National Security Ordinance, proclaimed Monday by Gandhi, is aimed at curbing the religious and ethnic disputes, black marketeering, hoarding and other problems currently afflicting India, the government said.

Opposition leaders immediately attacked the law, which they said was "draconian" and comparable to the emergency regulations proclaimed in 1975 that led to Gandhi's defeat at the polls two years later. She swept back into power in elections earlier this year.

Subramanian Swamy, secretary-general of the opposition Janata Party, said, "It is unnecessary and is an admission of complete failure of the government to deal with the country's problems under the normal laws."

Before it goes into effect the ordinance must be ratified by Parliament when it meets in the second week of November. However, approval is expected to be a rubber-stamp affair since Gandhi's ruling Congress-I Party commands a two-thirds majority in the house.

Although the trial can be put off for 12 months, anyone arrested under the law is guaranteed the right to be informed of the charges against him, the right to appeal and a review of the charges by a three-judge panel every third month. He also will be provided with a lawyer.

The new law allows federal or local governments to order the detention of suspected subversives if authorities are satisfied the "arrest is necessary for the security and defense of India" or to keep public order.

The regulations drawn up in 1975 allowed those arrested for security reasons to be held for six months without trial. However, appeal of the charges was not allowed, and the government had the option to reimpose the detention as many times as it wished. Gandhi's emergency measures included a clampdown on opposition through heavy press censorship and arrests of opposition politicians.

In a statement accompanying the proclamation, the government said, "secessionist activities and also regional movements have reared their ugly heads in some parts of the country."

There has been violent Hindu-Muslim unrest in India for the past two months and a recent upsurge of independence movements in the northern states of Assam, Nagaland and Tripura.

Duck deaths said caused by botulism

United Press International
GALVESTON — Investigators say test results are pending, but 30 ducks found dead on Offats Bayou apparently died of botulism rather than water pollution.

The ducks died last week and washed up on the shore of the Offats Bayou around 81st Street and Teichman Point near the Galveston end of the John F. Kennedy Causeway.

Galveston County Extension Agent Joe Doby said test results were pending at Texas A&M University, but the ducks showed symptoms of botulism.

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