

Battalion Classifieds

Twice-delayed tests of 'Columbia' begin

United Press International
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Scientists began a twice-delayed 20-hour test of the nation's first reusable rocket ship early Tuesday, simulating key maneuvers and experiments the shuttle Columbia is expected to perform on its second mission next fall.

Meanwhile, technicians for Space Services Inc., planned to test-fire their 55-foot Percheron rocket at Matagorda Island Tuesday in preparation for its scheduled maiden flight next month — the first private commercial space venture in history.

Eventually, SSI hopes to put communication satellites in orbit on a fee basis.

In Florida, shuttle test director Charles Henschel blamed a few crossed wires for delaying the Columbia test, which was to begin at midnight Friday, but was postponed until Monday morning and again until Tuesday.

Mark Hess, a spokesman for the National Aeronautics and Space

Administration, said the testing of the Columbia began as scheduled at midnight.

Air Force Col. Joe Engle and Navy Capt. Richard Truly — the crew for the Columbia's scheduled second launch Sept. 30 — were expected to take their places in the cockpit for testing at midmorning.

The backup crew of Thomas Mattingly and Henry Hartsfield also was expected to take turns at the controls.

The testing schedule called for the astronauts to rehearse launching, re-entry and orbital maneuvers, as well as to verify that seven experiments to be carried out in Columbia's first working assignment are properly coordinated with the shuttle's on-board computers.

The Orbiter Integrated Test is devised to fool the orbital computers into thinking they are in space, so astronauts and ground teams can use the equipment as they would during the mission," said Rocky Raab, another NASA spokesman.

"The tests are being conducted so there are no unpleasant surprises from non-functioning equipment later on," he added.

Testing was pushed back a night after short circuits were found in the wiring of the crane that will jettison the shuttle's folded back into place.

The 50-foot-long main arm, which also is being simulated, simulates the movement of the main arm and folds into the hold. If the arm failed to hold its cradle, the shuttle's hold would not close and the astronauts would be stranded during re-entry.

The Canadian-built arm used for the first time on the shuttle's second flight. The missions, the remote manipulators will be used to shift cargo out of the shuttle's hold and to place satellites in orbit and retrieve them.

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Armadillos may aid in research

Scientists battle leprosy

United Press International
FORT COLLINS, Colo. — In the fight against leprosy, modern science now turns to the armadillo.

Actually, armadillo livers and footpads. Scientists at Colorado State University are using them in research aimed at developing a vaccine for use against the ancient skin disease.

"Leprosy is certainly one of the

most serious and interesting of all diseases," said Dr. Patrick Brennan, a CSU microbiology professor. "Typical symptoms include the degradation of outer organs, mucous membranes and extremities like the fingers. The cartilage in the nose often is affected because of its lower temperatures."

Brennan said the disease is virtually impossible to cure, but can be controlled with drugs.

There are about 50 million cases worldwide, 2,000 of them in the United States. In its most extreme form, he said, the disease depresses the victim's entire immune system, preventing antibodies from fighting disease entering the body.

The organism that causes leprosy, *Mycobacterium leprae*, cannot be grown in culture — only on living tissue. Researchers are giving it on the footpads of mice and armadillos. Brennan's research is coordinated with the National Jewish Hospital in Denver.

Livers of armadillos infected in colonies in Florida and Louisiana

are frozen and sent to laboratories at CSU. Brennan said that contagious organisms are being grown in gamma rays and isolated in liver cells.

"One has to be careful of using this organism," Brennan said. "We don't want to get it out."

Once the disease is cultured, they are saved for use by CSU and supplied to other universities. Brennan said the organism for research is one of the major steps in developing a vaccine.

Among the recipients is Kenrad Nelson of the University of Illinois Medical School. Other scientists around the world have begun tests to see if the organism can provide protection against leprosy.

"We're also trying to determine if the organism from his brother causes tuberculosis," Brennan said. "We want to know if the bacterium's ability to tolerate exposure to leprosy"

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