

State

Officials confident shock wave problem solved

Space shuttle ready for second flight

United Press International
HOUSTON — The men who will fly the space shuttle Columbia to orbit a second time say their week-long journey next month will build on the ship's initial success and lay the foundation for more routine flights into orbit.

"We have the advantage of using equipment that has been used before and we know it works," said pilot Richard Truly. "We know the design does not have a fatal flaw."

He and Flight Cmdr. Joe Engle, a veteran of 16 flights in the pioneering X-15 rocket plane, will concentrate on a series of detailed engineering tests after they take off Oct. 9 from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

It will be the first time a space ship has returned to orbit. The Columbia is designed to make 100 such trips.

"The important thing is to re-fly it, get some more experience so that as quickly as possible we can

get these flight test objectives out of the way and just use it," Truly said in an interview Tuesday at the Johnson Space Center.

Two more test flights are planned after the upcoming mission. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration hopes to begin using the Columbia as a true space freighter next September when it is to launch two commercial communication satellites.

Engle said he is confident one

nagging problem has been resolved. That concern centered around an ignition shock wave that jarred the ship four times more severely than anticipated during the initial launch April 15.

The pressure pulse, lasting a split second when the shuttle's twin booster rockets were ignited, was severe enough to bend two metal brackets holding a control rocket fuel tank in the Columbia's nose. That caused no problems

during the 54-hour flight, but engineers did not want to risk a repeat occurrence.

Two systems were quickly designed to reduce or eliminate the shock wave. A 70,000 gallon per minute water spray beneath the booster nozzles is expected to serve as a barrier for the air pressure wave that bounces from the base of the launchpad up along the Columbia's sides. Water-filled fabric bags strung around the

booster nozzles are expected to do the same thing.

The water spray system was to be tested Tuesday at the Kennedy Space Center.

"Either method we know would work, but in being extra cautious, we're using both approaches to attenuate the over pressure," Engle said at a news conference. "We feel totally confident that we've got a vehicle that's ready to go."

The only remaining concerns involve the new satellite unload-

ing arm installed in the Columbia for the first time, and an \$11.6 million package of scientific instruments mounted in the ship's cargo bay. Engineers are evaluating computations to make sure the shock wave would not damage their instruments.

The equipment could be removed before launch, but Engle, Truly and officials in charge of the mechanical arm and the scientific gear said they do not think that will be necessary.

Test may help retarded students avoid institutions

United Press International
LUBBOCK — Researchers at Texas Tech University have developed a survival skills test that may give retarded students a better chance to live in structured community facilities and avoid institutional care.

The non-verbal test, developed by Dr. Lawrence T. McCarron, is used to evaluate mentally handicapped young people in nine different areas of independent living skills.

McCarron and research associate Christine Clement are using the test as an assessment tool to develop a teaching curriculum for mentally handicapped students in secondary schools.

"We have made retarded people too special," Clement said. "We need to get them back into the community. The test represents a breakthrough in assessment tools needed to prepare the mentally retarded for living in structured community facilities."

The test, which does not require that students be able to read or write, measures basic concepts such as color identification, spatial relationships, the ability to identify signs with symbols or words, tool identification and use, food and clothing management, health and safety knowledge, understanding of public services, time units, money transactions and measurements of temperature, volume and length.

Clement says that in the past,

tests were given only to find out what mentally handicapped people could not do. However, the street survival skills tests will be followed up with training.

McCarron is currently developing a curriculum for such training.

"It (the curriculum) is about two-thirds developed. A group is sitting down now pounding it out. There are thousands of curriculums on the market but the main difference is that ours is based on specific designated strategies (determined from the skills test)," Clement said.

In addition to living skills, the curriculum will provide skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, since state law now requires schools to teach prevocational skills for the handicapped and provides that retarded students must remain in school until they are 21 years old.

The researchers hope to finish the curriculum in time to present it to a conference in December.

The skills test, together with some training, has already been adapted by the Lubbock State School and Texas Rehabilitation Commission counselors are being

trained to use the program.

The method has also been tested successfully in schools in New York, Ohio and Indiana and several students from a school in Brownfield, Texas, have learned enough to take on jobs.

McCarron says that about two-thirds of all mentally retarded people should be able to live in

community facilities that allow independent living — relieving taxpayers of the heavy burden of institutional care.

"No where near that many are living in community settings now," Clements said. "The main point is this: these folks need jobs and something to do with their lives."

Judge denies gag request in state fair skyride suit

United Press International
DALLAS — A judge rejected a request from a defendant in a \$11.6 million suit against the State Fair of Texas and Steck and Staff Attractions, Inc. that case lawyers be prohibited from talking with reporters.

Steck and Staff operators of the Texas Skyride, filed a motion asking U.S. District Judge Barrett Sanders to impose a gag order against lawyers in the suit brought by Cindi Holden and her estranged husband, Dennis.

Sanders rejected the request Tuesday.

Mrs. Holden was paralyzed below the shoulders because of the October 1979 crash at the state fair that killed one person and injured 17 others.

Sanders also denied a motion by the firm's attorneys to move the trial to Amarillo, because of pre-trial publicity in Dallas.

In testimony Tuesday, a consulting engineer hired by the fair said his comment to fair officials stating that the ride "was all right" was a personal opinion and not a professional judgement.

"I rode the ride, made sure it

was operating and that the gondola was gripping the cable," said William Cobb, a structural engineer.

"We looked at the roller battery, the deropement switch and made sure there was no excess vibration," Cobb said.

Mrs. Holden's lawyer contends that when the accident occurred, the cable carrying the gondolas dropped off one of the towers on which it was suspended. Two of the four dangling cars then crashed to the ground.

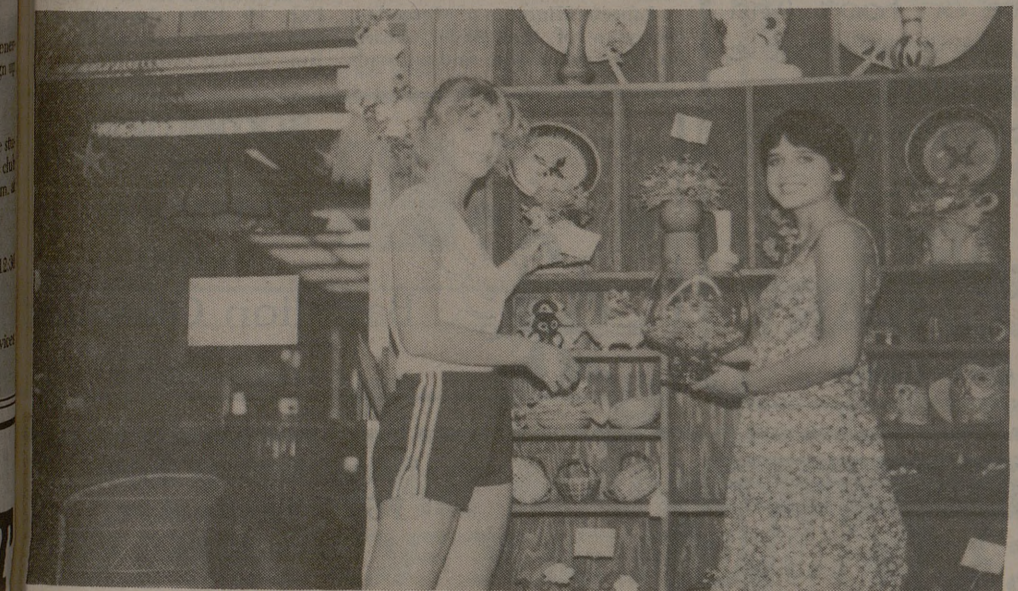
Today's Almanac

United Press International
Today is Thursday, Sept. 17, the 260th day of 1981 with 105 to follow.
The moon is moving toward its apogee.
The morning star is Mars.
The evening stars are Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn.
Those born on this date are under the sign of Virgo.
American actress Anne Ban-

croft was born on this date in 1931.
On this date in history:
In 1787, the United States Constitution, completed in Philadelphia, was signed.
In 1796, President George Washington delivered his farewell address, warning the American people to avoid foreign alliances.
In 1939, Russia invaded Poland in World War II — 16 days after Nazi Germany had moved into the

country.
In 1978, the Camp David summit ended with Egypt and Israel signing agreements setting the framework for a Mideast settlement and pledging to sign a peace treaty in three months.
A thought for the day: President George Washington advised, "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire — conscience."

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