

National

Homeowners ticketed for having bathroom carpet

United Press International
LINCOLN, Neb. — A city councilman is sponsoring an ordinance that would make it legal for homeowners to carpet their bathroom floors.

proposed the ordinance when city housing code inspectors began citing homeowners for having carpeting instead of linoleum on their bathroom floors. Inspectors said they are well

within the law to hand out such citations, since the city's minimum housing code now provides that a bathroom floor should be "reasonably impervious to water."

often used to cover defects in construction of homes and apartment buildings. They also said someone using an electrical appliance while on wet carpeting could suffer an electrical shock.

Children win millions in lead poisoning suit

United Press International
TILLAMOOK, Ore. — Billie and Marlene Yoss' three children are millionaires, but the family lives on a \$622-a-month welfare check in a run-down house with peeling plaster.

The Yoss home near Tillamook has no telephone, so it took three days for them to hear the news that an Oct. 23 landmark out-of-court settlement from a Kellogg, Idaho, smelting company made the children millionaires.

The settlement from the Bunker Hill Co., the nation's largest refiner of lead, zinc and silver, came near the end of a six-week trial in Boise. It could amount to \$8.7 million in the children's lifetime.

The children, 11, 9 and 8, are millionaires on paper, but they probably will not receive any of the settlement until after they are 18 — meaning there is little hope it will allow the family to escape the poverty in which they have lived since Yoss was fired from his job with Bunker Hill.

"If we have to go on plugging along like this, we can do it," Mrs. Yoss said. "I've done it for years. But it's hard. I wish I could go to a

store and buy them brand-new clothes off the racks instead of from a secondhand store."

The lawsuit brought by the three Yoss children and six children of Edward and Janice Dennis, now of Kennewick, Wash., is the first U.S. case in which damages have been awarded to the victims of lead poisoning resulting from industrial pollution.

Depending on how long the nine Yoss and Dennis children live, the settlement will total between \$6.5 million to \$8.7 million, officials said.

Medical experts testified the children were poisoned by lead emissions and lead deposits in the soil from a smelter near their home.

The lead, which will be in the children's bones for the rest of their lives, causes brain cell damage, abdominal pains, headaches, muscular aches, urinary problems and may also cause sterility. It also can shorten their lives.

A record 35.3 metric tons a month of lead emissions were recorded in the air above Kellogg in October 1973, the year Arlene Yoss was an infant.

The next August, testing by the

U.S. Center for Disease Control showed Arlene's body measured 17.4 micrograms per liter of blood — one of the highest concentrations ever measured in a human and four times the limit scientists consider dangerous.

The level in Arlene's sister Edna, measured 12.2 micrograms, and the level in Raymond, then 3, measured 11.1.

"The doctors in Chicago said we had three walking dead babies," Mrs. Yoss said.

More than seven years after the "walking dead baby" diagnosis, the children are suffering lead head and stomach aches. Arlene and Raymond have poor bladder control, a frequent symptom of lead poisoning.

Their intelligence is in the normal range, but psychologists, doctors and scientists say the children's brains do not properly process some information they receive from their eyes and ears. They also show signs of hyperactivity and poor memory function.

Yoss, 50, said he would like to use a little of the money to buy his family a decent home and set up a small business, and he would like to teach his son a trade.

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Weather only concern at space shuttle launch

United Press International
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The space shuttle Columbia countdown proceeded smoothly Monday with the loading of extra oxygen for Wednesday's second launch. Weather was the only uncertain factor.

Kennedy Space Center shuttle manager Robert Gray said things looked quite good for an on-time blastoff at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday.

Occasional showers and 30 mph winds, which might have grounded the Columbia's five-day mission, have swept the space center the past three days. The winds continued early Monday, but forecasters expect them to die down today. Good conditions were forecast for launch day.

"I'm very optimistic that the

machine's in excellent shape and we're going to get through the count and that it will work super,"

said Gray, an engineer who started out on the pioneering Vanguard satellite launching program in the late 1950s.

The 73-hour countdown for the twice-delayed launch of astronauts Joe Engle and Richard Truly is past the halfway mark.

The two astronauts, veterans of landing tests in the prototype shuttle Enterprise, reviewed their flight plans and checklists over the weekend in Houston before flying to the spaceport for final launch preparations later Monday.

Engineers resumed work at the ocean-side launch pad at 11 p.m. Sunday after an eight-hour hold that was inserted into the countdown to give workers time to catch up if work was lagging.

When the countdown got under way again, technicians began blowing pure nitrogen through the winged spaceship as a fire safety measure before oxygen and

hydrogen were taken aboard. Nitrogen will not support combustion.

Early Monday, in a key countdown step, the oxygen began flowing into three insulated spherical tanks located mid-way back in the lower part of the fuselage.

Oxygen is mixed with nitrogen to pressurize the flight cabin with an air-like breathing mixture. It also is combined with hydrogen power the ship's three fuel cell electrical generators.

The Columbia carried only two sets of oxygen and hydrogen tanks for the 54-hour flight of Young and Robert Crippen in April, but a third set was installed for the upcoming mission so Engle and Truly would be able to stay aloft five days, and a sixth if necessary.

The shuttle is the first spacecraft to be prepared for a second flight and a key objective of the mission is to demonstrate that America's new space transport is capable of repeat flights to orbit with minimal refurbishment between missions.

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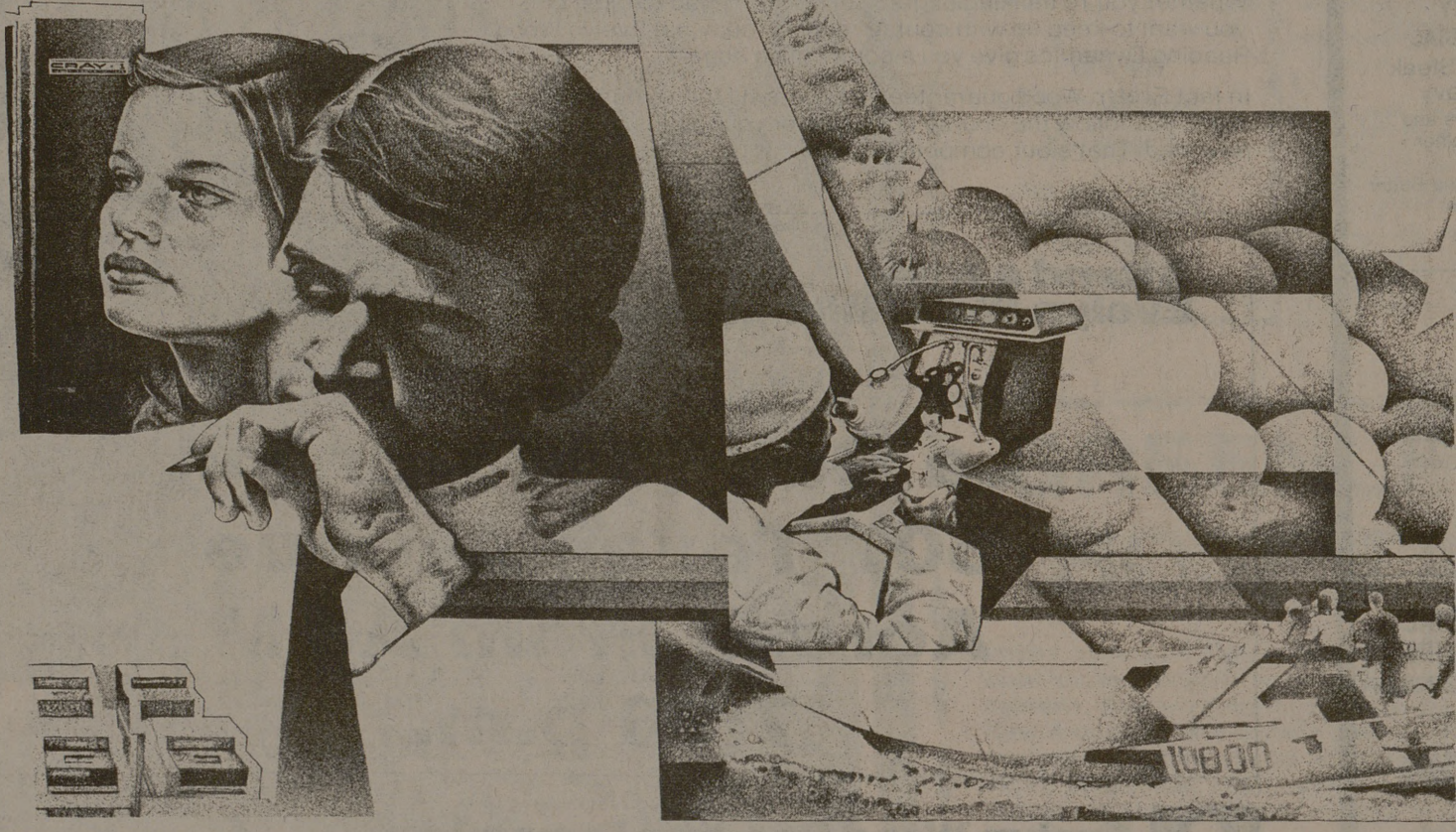
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