

National

Flat Earth Society calls shuttle orbit runaround

United Press International  
LANCASTER, Calif. — Charles Johnson, president of the Flat Earth Society, says he has it all figured out — the space shuttle Columbia didn't really orbit Earth.

Johnson Sunday called the U.S. space program "a continuing giant ripoff of the taxpayers of America."

The Columbia lifted off all right, Johnson says. "But it didn't orbit the earth." He said. "It can't be done. The earth is flat.

"Are they hanging by their

feet in Australia? No they aren't."

Johnson said the Columbia took off from Cape Canaveral and landed at sea a few minutes later.

Landed at sea? "Of course," he said. "Those big tanks keep it from sinking."

The films purportedly taken from space were done in a studio, Johnson said. It was done just like in "Buck Rogers," he explained.

He said Saturday's spectacular landing was accomplished by hauling the shuttle aloft and dropping it over the desert air

base near Lancaster where he lives.

He isn't sure how it got from the Atlantic Ocean to Edwards. "We don't know all the details," he said. "Magicians saw ladies in half."

Johnson said the space program is run by professional criminals. "You know how Florida is — riddled with crime," he said.

Johnson said the round earth myth is an old superstition. Intelligent people know it is flat, but reactionaries don't believe it, he said.

NAACP leader wants more blacks in U.S. space program

United Press International  
BALTIMORE — The president of the regional NAACP says he's tired of seeing whites "gain all the glory" from the U.S. space program and he wants to see a black astronaut in space sometime soon.

Following the landing of the

space shuttle Columbia, Emmett Burns said, "I'm sick and tired of seeing the great white fathers gain all the glory and see my people with nothing gained."

Burns emphasized he is not accusing the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of

racism, but said: "I can certainly charge delay and neglect as to blacks in space."

Burns, in a recent letter to NASA administrator James Beggs, asked: "Must black Americans wait another 25 years in the history of the program before they lift off?"

Surgery removing fetus considered breakthrough

United Press International  
SAN FRANCISCO — Surgeons operated on a fetus and returned the unborn baby to the mother's womb where it survived to full term, the University of California Medical Center has disclosed.

The operation was performed on an unidentified San Francisco Bay area woman four to five months ago in San Francisco by Drs. Michael Harrison, Mitchell S. Golbus and Roy A. Filly. It took place in the 21st week of the pregnancy.

The baby died after birth because of undeveloped lungs — a complication not directly related

to the operation, which corrected a severe urinary tract blockage that would have killed the fetus early in the pregnancy.

The procedure is considered a breakthrough because the pregnancy continued for the full term.

A hospital spokesman said Sunday that doctors have been instructed not to talk to reporters in lieu of publication of the official surgical report in an unnamed medical journal.

Confirming only that the surgery had taken place, the spokesman said hospital officials were concerned the report might not be published in an accredited

journal because unauthorized sources had leaked it to the press.

Earlier attempts at operating on a fetus to correct defects have been unsuccessful because of the threat of miscarriage. Surgery stimulates the uterus to go into labor and the fetus is pushed out.

New drugs and ultrasound techniques to view the fetus and prevent contractions enabled the recent successful operation.

The 1½-hour procedure necessitated cutting into the mother's uterine wall, withdrawing the lower half of the fetus and returning it after about 30 minutes, a medical source familiar with the operation said.

Police give hand to 'thieves'

Fake burglaries are ignored

United Press International  
NEW YORK — Students faked car burglaries to see if New Yorkers would intervene, but unlike people in San Francisco and Phoenix, only a few challenged the "thieves."

A study showed that only 12 out of about 8,000 people who passed by the 250 "break-ins" into parked cars in New York tried to stop and apprehend the "thieves."

Professor Harold Takooshian, a

social psychologist at Fordham University, conducted the New York study, which was published in this week's New York magazine. Students pretended to burglarize their cars and then surveyed passersby for their reactions.

The daytime car break-ins were staged in midtown Manhattan from October 1977 to September 1980 with student volunteers using coat hangers to break into the vehicles in most cases.

To test the possibility that the

passersby feared being harmed for intervening, Takooshian placed a uniformed police officer 50 feet from some of the cars broken into, the magazine said.

The study said that 40 passersby offered to help the "thieves" and five witnesses to the break-ins demanded part of the loot for their assistance.

The survey said most of those who offered to help the "criminals," including several police officers, were "naive samaritans" who did not know a theft was in progress.

The rest of the passersby simply did not notice or ignored the break-ins.

Consumers' big buying may stop

United Press International  
IANN ARBOR, Mich. — Researchers predict that consumers will avoid going into debt by not purchasing such large assets as cars and houses and by putting their money in savings from now until early 1982.

A study by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research said consumer worries about high interest rates, unemployment and depleting savings are contributing to the trend toward saving money.

"Growth in consumer sales during the balance of 1981 and early 1982 will continue to be slow

and uneven," said Richard T. Curtin, director of the survey on consumer attitudes.

"Large discretionary purchases will continue to be responsive to trends in interest rates, but more favorable employment and real income trends are needed before sustained growth in housing and vehicle sales can be expected," he said.

During July and September of 1981, the research institute conducted its 156th survey of consumer attitudes which targeted 2,000 respondents. The results were compiled to measure consumer buying attitudes.

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