

Second try set for Sept. 8

Private rocket to launch

United Press International
HOUSTON—Investors have ignored the slim chances of making a profit, and put up \$2.5 million for the Sept. 8 suborbital launch of a commercial satellite from the same south Texas barrier island where the first rocket blew up a year ago.

Space Services Inc. expects the solid fuel used in the new test rocket, which will carry a dummy payload 250 miles over the Gulf of Mexico, will make it more reliable than the liquid fuel rocket that blew up on a launch pad Aug. 4 during a static test.

SSI Chairman David Hannah Jr. said the initial failure not only did not scare away any investors, but it also attracted 20 more for a total of 40. He said 30 of them put up \$2.5 million for the Sept. 8 launch.

Hannah—a developer, Rice University graduate, elder emeritus in the First Presbyterian Church, bank board member and hospital trustee—appa-

rently had no trouble attracting the money despite no promise of a profit.

Recently acquired investors in SSI are Houston developer Walter Mischer, Houston builder Lester Prokof, Midland oilmen Paul Davis and Bob Wood, and Tyler investor Mrs. Willman Richardson.

Richardson, like many of the original investors, is a trustee of Austin College in Sherman—a school supported by the First Presbyterian Church.

Hannah said the group has begun meeting at the Dallas offices of American Liberty Insurance Co., whose chairman,

Toddie Lee Wynne, is a major investor in SSI. Wynne owns the Matagorda Island land that houses the launch pad.

"All we're telling them as investors is that we're going to get the chance to go back on the island and learn the technology that will allow us to move on to the next step and get out an orbiting vehicle," Hannah Saturday. "We're still shooting to make an inexpensive launch vehicle that can take advantage of lower earth orbit."

"Despite the blowup last summer, we figure that what we have done in two years is remarkable. We've made an inroad into the industry. I think we've viewed as being a factor in the industry now."

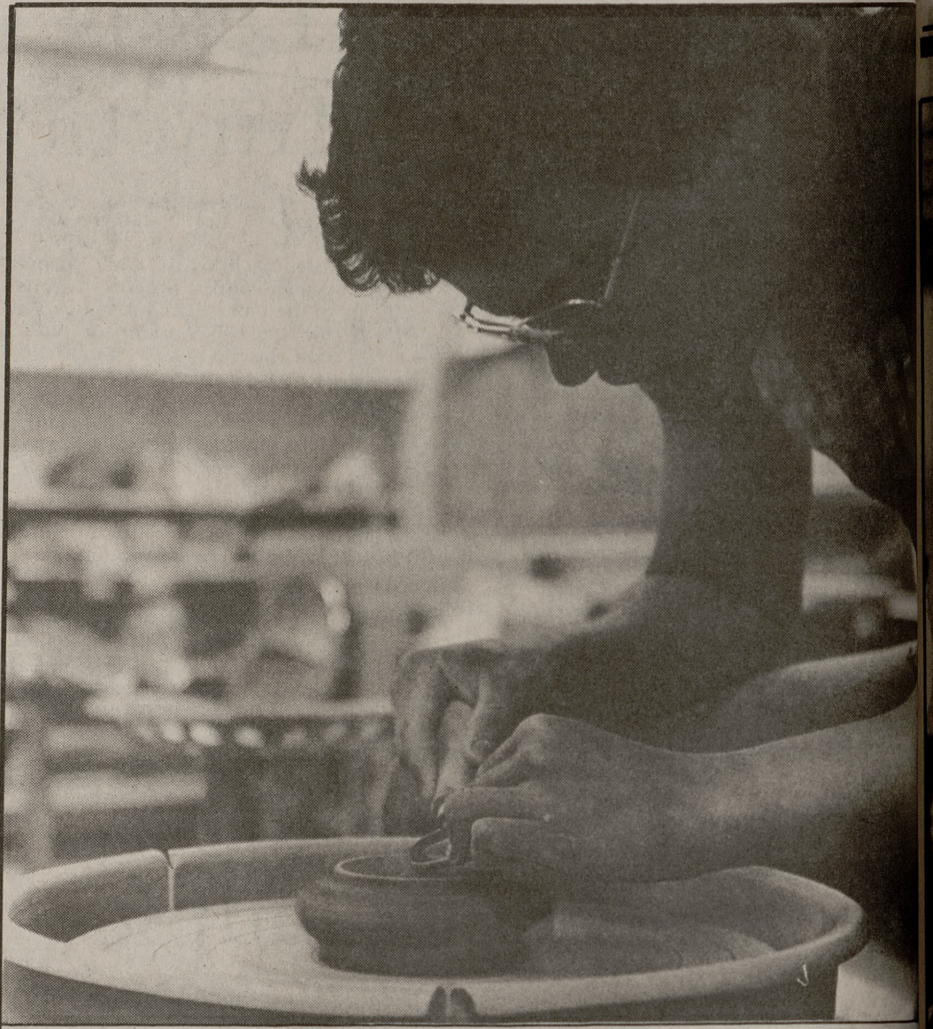
Hannah said he has not given investors any promise of a profitable return on their investments.

"We can't do that," he said. "We've given them some idea of what we see as the market, but when you go at it from this standpoint, you are investing in development. But that's the genius of America, that you can have this type of investors who will do this."

He said it has turned out the oil industry is a potential client for his company because oil companies have wells in areas that would more easily be communicated with by satellite.

The worldwide oil glut and the downturn in oil and gas exploration has not affected his efforts, he said.

Space Vector Corp. in Northridge, Calif., is building SSI's Conestoga rocket, with the second stage of an SSI-purchased Minuteman missile as its primary booster stage.



staff photo by Octavio Gama

Just potterin' around

Round and round it goes as Ruddy Kraeher works on part of a sugar pot at the Memorial Student Center. Kraeher is a senior environmental design major from El Salvador who

is also working on an aerospace engineering degree. The craft shop is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 p.m. to 6 on Saturday.

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Physician indicted for insurance fraud

United Press International
DALLAS—A former patient of a physician indicted on charges of defrauding insurance companies said he visited the doctor only once, but was shocked to learn the physician billed an insurance company for more than 135 sessions.

Dr. Loren A. Gifford was arraigned last week on 15 counts of mail fraud and submitting false claims to insurance companies. He was freed on \$100,000 bond. The federal investigation took 18 months.

The charges say Gifford, 42, operated a network of more than 50 psychiatric treatment clinics out of one office, Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael

Heiskell said Friday. The doctor allegedly submitted fraudulent bills to insurance companies, among them Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Texas.

Steve Manion, a former patient of Gifford, said he saw Gifford once before attending five or six sessions of a stop-smoking program that, he said, was useless. Manion said, however, he was shocked to learn Gifford supposedly billed Blue Cross-Blue Shield in excess of \$8,000 for 135 sessions of "medical biofeedback," "transcutaneous electrical stimulation" and "functional activities."

The indictment accuses Gifford of diagnosing Manion as suffering from Raynaud's syndrome, a rare blood vessel disease that Heiskell said normally occurs only in women who have had children.

The Dallas Medical Society already had begun its own investigation of Gifford but was thwarted when Gifford persuaded patients who complained of overbilling to withdraw complaints by lowering, canceling their bills, Heiskell said.

Postal Inspector Edward Williams said the medical society and the Texas Board of Medical Examiners tapered off their investigations of Gifford in an effort not to hamper the federal probe.

A spokesman for the Dallas Medical Society said action has been taken against Gifford, who remains a member, but that actual sanctions were not revealed.

A Texas Board of Medical Examiners spokesman state Gifford has never been disciplined by that group.

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