

Ark search begins again

United Press International
DENVER — Former astronaut James Irwin has initiated a third expedition aimed at finding Noah's Ark on a mountain in Turkey, near the Russian border.

A team of six men, some of whom had been on two unsuccessful expeditions in August and September, flew to the eastern Mediterranean Tuesday to search for the biblical ship.

Irwin said a new member of the expedition had climbed part of the way up 16,946-foot Mount Ararat in August and saw an unusual, large object.

The latest attempt, led by Robbie Gowdey of Dallas, will try to get permission to use a helicopter to search, but probably will be grounded by the Turkish government because of concerns about a possible incident along the Turkish-Soviet border, just 15 miles away.

Irwin, who was injured in August during his first expedition up the massive mountain, said the sighting was made by Dennis Burchett, an American who has been living in Turkey. Burchett climbed Ararat before Irwin's first attempt.

"It wasn't until I got back from Turkey from the first expedition that I found out about his report," said Irwin, who walked on the moon as an Apollo 15 astronaut in 1971.

"From what he said it looks very suspicious. Its color is black—much darker than the surrounding rock. He was only able to get 2½ miles from it, but it was large enough to

see from a distance."

Burchett's report indicated an object of the dimensions and shape of Noah's ark, described in the Bible as 450-feet long and rectangular. Burchett said the object was between 12,000 and 13,000 feet elevation and east of the base camp of Irwin's first expedition on the north face of the mountain.

"We didn't see it (Burchett's object) because it is east of Lahora Gorge," Irwin said. "We didn't look there because I thought the whole gorge had been explored completely in the past."

Irwin, who couldn't make the third attempt because of other commitments, said, "Lahora Gorge is a gigantic canyon. It is just awesome and rugged. It's filled with glaciers and rocks."

Irwin said he would not be disappointed if the latest attempt found the ark.

"I will be delighted if they find it," he said. "Then it will be available for me or anyone else to visit."

Irwin is a Baptist fundamentalist whose High Flight Foundation sponsored the three expeditions. He was in Turkey last week trying to get permission to use a helicopter. The Turkish government rejected his request.

Besides Burchett and Gowdey, members of the third expedition are: Doug Dean of Las Vegas, Nev.; Ray Anderson, of Shelbyville, Tenn.; Bob Stuplich, of Gunnison, Colo., and Marvin Steffans, of Monroe, La.

Begin to visit Dallas in Nov.

United Press International
DALLAS — Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, scheduled to visit Los Angeles in November, as tentatively agreed to stop over in Dallas to address a Christian rally and in turn rally support for his country, sponsors of the event said.

Evangelist Jerry Falwell of Lynchburg, Va., who claimed he is a supporter of Israel, said he had agreed to co-sponsor the event. He said he had been contacted about the sponsorship several weeks ago by Dr. Jimmy Draper, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Euless, a Dallas suburb.

"My support of Israel is well-known, and my answer was yes," Falwell said.

Draper is president of the Southern Baptist Convention, but the organization was not a co-sponsor of the event.

Mark Briskman, director of the Dallas chapter of the Anti-defamation League, is helping coordinate the Begin visit. He said the first request that Begin visit Dallas was made weeks before the war in Lebanon.

"The arrangements (about the Begin visit) are tentative, based on the days and weeks ahead," Briskman said Wednesday. "There was a growing frustration among some grass-roots people for a reaffirmation of Israel and its people."

The scheduled visit to Los Angeles is set for the second week of November.

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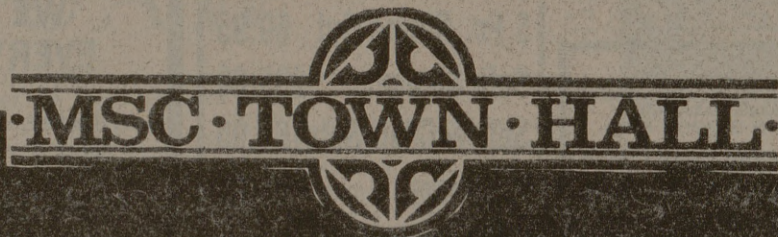
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Bank wins suit against player

United Press International
SAN ANTONIO — Wide receiver Drew Pearson of the Dallas Cowboys has been ordered to pay more than \$45,000 to Frost National Bank for defaulting on a loan, but a lawyer says Pearson was an innocent victim.

District Judge David Peoples ruled Wednesday that Pearson must pay \$37,000 plus interest of \$7,800 because he failed to respond to the bank's lawsuit.

Pearson borrowed \$75,000 last year with teammate Harvey Martin and former Houston Oilers quarterback John Reaves to renovate four buildings in St. Paul Square, a historical section near downtown San Antonio. The bank said only four payments were made on the loan.

Martin and Reaves responded to the lawsuit but Pearson did not, so the judgment was entered against him, Peoples said. The suit is still pending against Martin and Reaves.

Attorney Kevin S. Wiley of Dallas, who worked with St. Paul Square in 1981, said the players had paid back half the loan then arranged with another business partner to pay the rest. But the partner backed out, he said. "Drew and Harvey became innocent victims in the process," he said.

Because of the split partnership, Pearson believed he was not responsible for paying the rest of the loan to Frost Bank, Wiley said.

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