

Shuttle to be modified before Spacelab mission

United Press International
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The veteran shuttle Columbia faces an eight-month overhaul at the Kennedy Space Center and when it flies again it will carry the billion-dollar Spacelab, an orbiting research center.

Spacelab, a joint venture of the 11-nation European Space Agency and NASA, is scheduled to ride in Columbia's cargo bay for nine days starting Oct. 30. It will be the most ambitious scientific laboratory ever to orbit the Earth.

A crew of six on that mission — the commander and pilot, two mission specialists and two payload specialists, and non-astronaut scientists — will operate a wide variety of sophisticated experiments.

Spacelab, which has a 23-foot-long manned module and a 10-foot-long instrument pallet, was designed and built by ESA at a cost of about \$1 billion. Technicians at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., are directing the Spacelab mission.

The experiments planned for Spacelab 1 — the ninth shuttle mission — include atmospheric physics, material processing, space plasma physics, biology, astronomy and solar physics.

Eight months of modifications are planned for the Columbia so that it will be able to handle Spacelab and the record six-man crew that will work its instruments around the clock.

Percy Baynes, acting director of orbiter program for NASA, said other modifications for the Columbia include strengthening all the orbiter's fragile heat-resistant tiles, installing six-man crew accommodations and rewiring 100 instruments and gauges on the flight deck.

The Columbia was originally scheduled to undergo the modifications at an assembly plant in Palmdale, Calif., but it was changed to the Florida space center in a time-saving move.

Baynes said if the modifications were done at Palmdale, it would probably delay delivery of the Discovery, the third shut-

tle, which is scheduled to arrive at the Kennedy Space Center next September.

Baynes said modifications that can not be completed at the Cape will be done at Palmdale, but no date has been set.

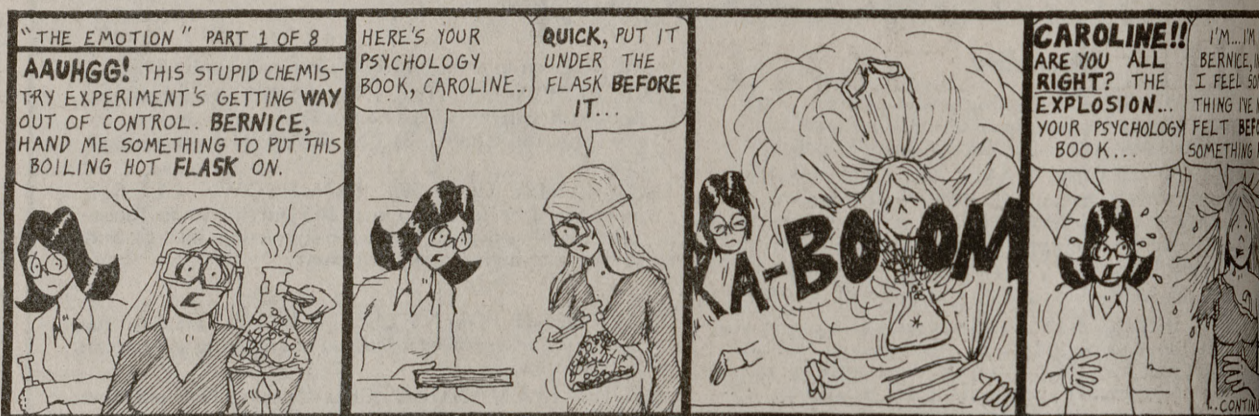
Roger Gaskins, division chief for Spacelab at the Kennedy Space Center, said all the experiments and instruments have been tested and the lab's systems will be turned on Jan. 21 after technicians lay the floor and install dozens of racks.

The laboratory, which has been at the spaceport since last December, is scheduled to be installed in Columbia's cargo bay on Aug. 3.

Other than a few pieces of equipment that were damaged or broken in shipping, Gaskins said, work on Spacelab has gone well.

"We have a 25-man European team helping us and they have been worth their weight in gold," he said. "Thanks to them, we're right on schedule and we shouldn't have any trouble in installing it in the orbiter on time."

Warped



by Scott McCulla

Minority

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Director Loyd Taylor is involved in recruiting qualified minority students and administering scholarship money earmarked for minorities.

The scholarships help recruit about 50 black or Hispanic students every year, he said.

"I am pleased with the results we have had, compared to the dollars put into the program ... but the most important factor to consider is our retention rate," Taylor said.

"That is, we estimate we will have at least 70 percent of the black and Hispanic students who come here through our

scholarships eventually receive a degree from Texas A&M.

"We are working to recruit students who can be successful, not just in increasing the numbers. If we had 1,000 black students and 600 flunked out, what good would that be for anyone?"

But if the University is going to increase the black and Hispanic enrollment significantly, more money is needed, Taylor said.

Other universities are spending more money. For example, the University of Texas budgets money for 1,225 undergraduate minority scholarships, compared to Texas A&M's 200.

Kessel Thompson, a black

senior engineering technology major at Texas A&M, said many black students can't go to college if they don't receive financial assistance. Many black students go where they receive the most money, she said. The more money a school provides, the better the chance that a black student will complete school, Thompson said.

Another way to recruit more black students is for the University to recruit more black faculty members, she said. The lack of black faculty members makes it difficult for some black students to find someone to turn to for advice, she said.

Texas A&M also needs to implement a minority affairs office — headed by a black, she said.

"If they really wanted to recruit black faculty — rather than just needing them because the government said so — they could do it," Thompson said.

There are 11 black faculty members at Texas A&M — about 0.5 percent of the total faculty.

Hispanic students Pedro Rocha, a sophomore English major, and John P. Lopez, a junior journalism major, do not see prejudice towards minority students as a big problem.

Rocha said it is a matter of attitude.

"I never act like I expect to be treated differently, so people usually don't treat me differently," Rocha said.

Lopez said: "It's better to laugh off people who are prejudiced."

It is impossible to try to deal with closed-minded individuals, he said.

The University appears to be trying to accommodate minority students, but it will take time, Lopez said.

"They just got a late start," he said. "It has nothing to do with the school or the people here."

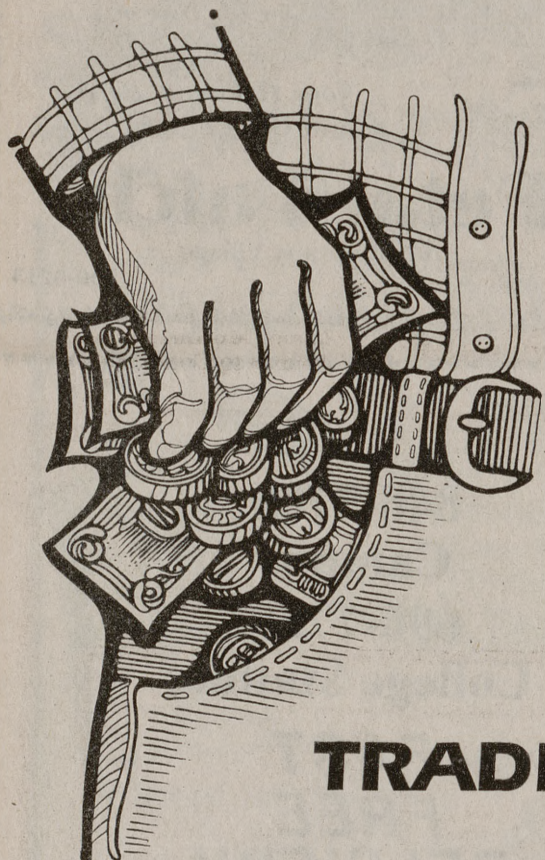
"I don't sit in the back of the classroom — I am no different from any other Aggie."

But Kevin D. Johnson, a junior mechanical engineering major from Houston, said others do not quite accept him as he is.

"When I first came to Texas A&M, and I didn't know any people, I believed all this about being a Texas Aggie, but they realized they accepted me differently."

"I am accepted as an Aggie but a different type of Aggie."

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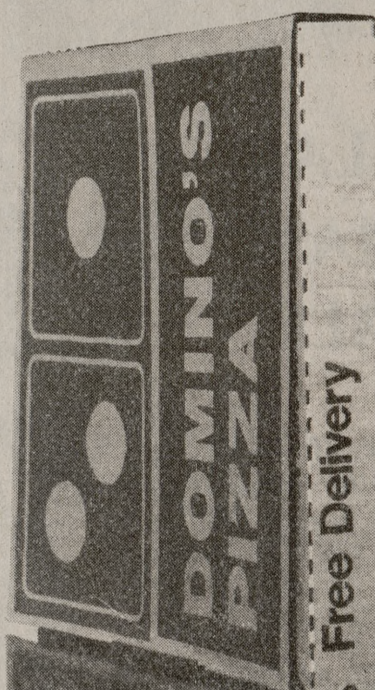
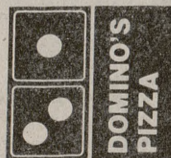
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