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Texas A&M

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Shuttle launch delayed

United Press International

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A million-dollar computer aboard the space shuttle Discovery failed Monday, prompting frustrated mission planners to reschedule the maiden launch of the nation's third spaceplane for Tuesday.

The countdown had been running smoothly toward the scheduled 8:43 a.m. EDT launch of Discovery when a backup computer aboard the billion-dollar shuttle failed a crucial test about 20 minutes before launch.

The countdown was stopped minutes later, marking the first delay of more than 24 hours in the shuttle program since November 1981.

Discovery is equipped with four flight computers and one backup in case the others break down or "disagree" on a course of action.

NASA engineer Carroll Dawson said the \$1.2-million computer, which is based on designs more than 10 years old, worked properly during a test Saturday and probably suffered a hardware failure between then and when it was turned back on Monday.

"A hardware failure is the failure of a component within the machine, some electronic component actually failing," he said.

A replacement computer from the shuttle Challenger was installed on Discovery Monday afternoon and the spaceplane's blastoff for a seven-day mission was rescheduled for 8:43 a.m. Tuesday.

Engineers used the time to troubleshoot the balky computer while forecasters kept a sharp eye on a weather system that dumped torrents of rain on the Kennedy Space Center Monday afternoon.

Disappointed shuttle commander Henry Hartsfield, co-pilot Michael Coats and crew members Judy Resnik, Steven Hawley, Richard "Mike" Mullane and Charles Walker left Discovery's flight cabin about 9:39 a.m.

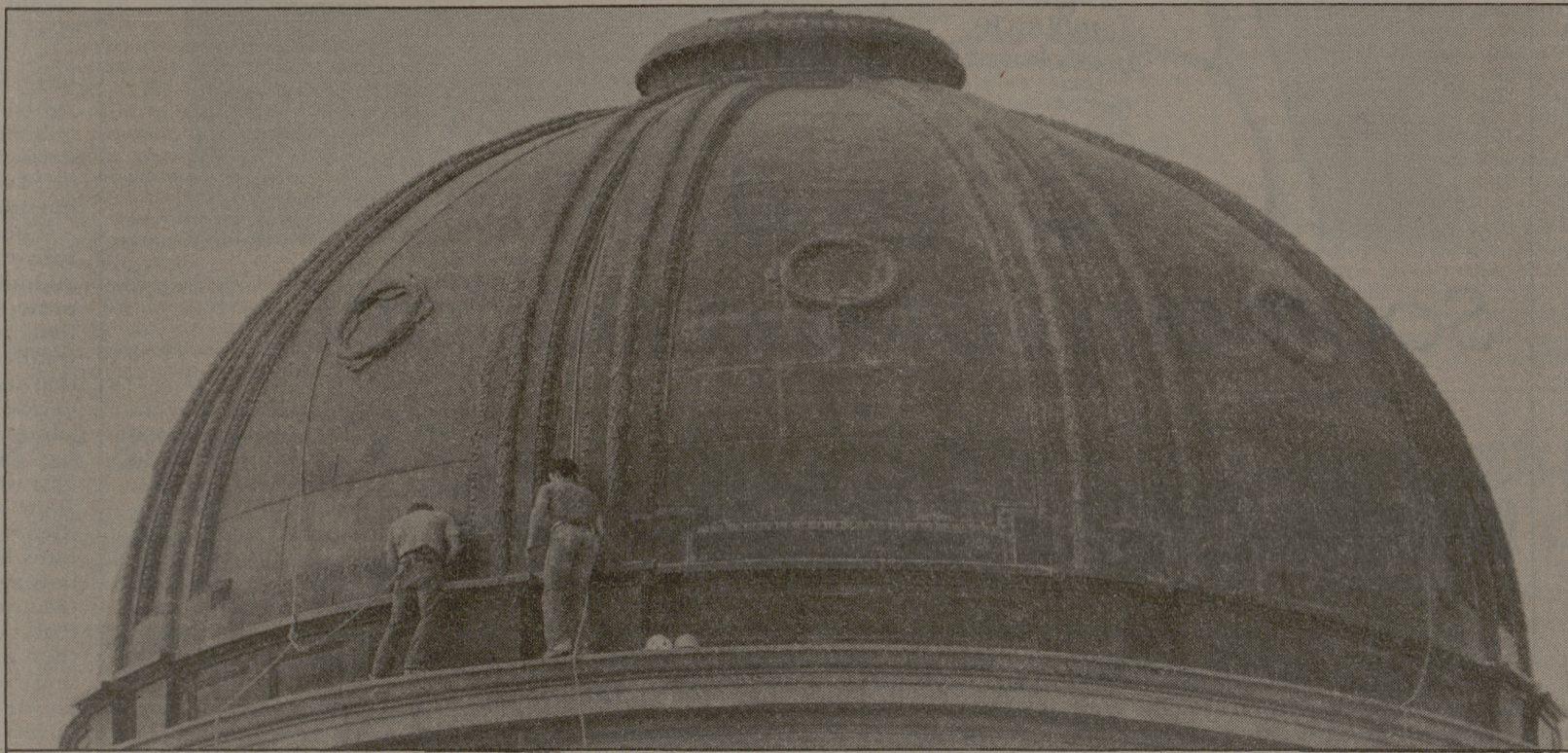
They returned to their quarters and watched a training film before retiring early in hopes of a Tuesday launch.

"Everyone agreed they would rather wait and fly with a very clean machine with a good backup flight system," said NASA spokesman Mark Hess.

Workers at the launch pad drained the shuttle's huge external fuel tank and its half-million gallon head of super cold liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen and planned to refill it early Tuesday.

Weather was satisfactory Monday but Air Force spokesman Lt. Marty Hanser said the prospects might not be as good Tuesday because of a weather system moving slowly east from the Florida panhandle.

When news of the blastoff delay reached the VIP site 5 miles from the launch pad, a collective groan went up from the 4,000 observers there, including Marc Garneau, a Canadian astronaut scheduled for a shuttle flight in October aboard Challenger.



Top Job

Photo by PETER ROCHA

Workers continue renovating the Academic Building under overcast skies. Today's forecast calls for a high near 100,

with little or no rain. When the renovation is completed, the building will look as it did when it was first built.

House, Senate conferees disagree

Teacher salaries snag talks

United Press International

AUSTIN — House and Senate conferees were unable to agree Monday on a career ladder pay plan for Texas teachers — one of the major proposals in education reform — while trying to resolve the conflicts in two versions of the education bills.

The conferees are trying to reach an accord on a bill in the final week of the special legislative session, but even with the presence of Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and House Speaker Gib Lewis the committee made little progress.

Senate members of the conference committee rebuffed efforts by the House side to adopt a career ladder plan that would reward the best and most experienced teachers through a supplemental four-step system.

The House plan would have allowed one-fourth of the state's teachers to enter level II of the ladder in 1984-85.

But Sen. Carl Parker, D-Port Arthur, said the House plan amounted to merit pay based on longevity and would lead to favoritism because teachers could not appeal their assignment within the ladder.

"All this means is that you're going to get more because you've been there a little longer," he said. "We're going right back to where we started."

"The way you improve a profession is that you assure that nobody but the highly qualified you want gets in it," Parker added.

The House, in turn, voted down the Senate proposal, which would require teachers to undergo a one-year probationary period before entering the career ladder.

Senate says 'no, no, no' to nuclear dump in Texas

United Press International

AUSTIN — The Texas Senate said "no, no, no" Monday to the federal government's consideration of two West Texas counties as potential sites for a high-level nuclear waste repository.

On a voice vote, the 31-member body adopted a strongly-worded resolution that urges the U.S. Department of Energy to drop plans for drilling an exploratory shaft in either Deaf Smith or Swisher counties in the Texas Panhandle.

"I think in the strongest possible way we are saying we don't want a nuclear waste dump here," said Sen. Lloyd Doggett, an Austin Democrat and candidate for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by the retirement of Sen. John Tower.

"Our answer is no, no, no when it comes to locating a nuclear

waste site in Texas."

The resolution also was sponsored by West Texas Sens. John Montford, D-Lubbock; Bill Sarpalius, D-Amarillo, and Bill Sims, D-San Angelo.

The Deaf Smith and Swisher county locations — two of Texas' most agriculturally rich areas — are among two of five sites being considered by the DOE for the high-level waste dump, Doggett said.

"I just don't think they have developed the expertise in terms of containment to start dumping this stuff on the people," Montford said. "And secondly, they're placing it in the Panhandle, right squarely in the middle of the great Ogallala Aquifer."

Under a 1982 federal law, the governor and legislature of a state picked as a waste repository have limited powers to veto or block the selection.

The conferees did compromise, however, on a phased-in student-teacher ratio plan that will eventually lower the ratio to 1:22 in the lower grades.

The panel also agreed Monday on opting for the House bill's requirement that school districts offer pre-kindergarten to poor and Spanish-speaking 4-year-olds if at least 15 children wish to attend. The Senate

bill made the program optional for school districts.

The state's share of the cost of the program, however, would be capped at \$50 million over the first three years.

The conferees remained at loggerheads on a proposal to govern participation in extracurricular activities.

Several other major areas of dis-

agreement also remained to be resolved, including teacher competency testing and the dates of elections of a temporarily-appointed state school board.

The 10-member conference committee was formed after marathon sessions in the House and Senate last week produced divergent versions of an education reform bill estimated to cost the state between \$2.8 billion and \$3.6 billion over the next three years.

"The mood (of the conference committee) is more to get the best of the two (bills) than to go with one or the other," said Rep. Bill Haley, author of the House bill and chairman of the conference committee.

"We're moving right along, but I would have thought things would have gone a little faster," he added.

Haley, D-Center, said a unified measure would be presented to both the House and Senate for members' approval no sooner than Tuesday. The bill then would go to Gov. Mark White for his signature.

With work on the education reform bill moving toward a conclusion, House members next turn their attention to a tax bill to finance the reforms and highway improvements.

The House Ways and Means Committee scheduled hearings on White's \$4.8 billion tax plan Tuesday and Wednesday with House debate expected to begin late this week. The 30-day special session is scheduled to close at midnight July 3.

Banks boost prime

United Press International

NEW YORK — Several major banks Monday raised their prime lending rate to 13 percent from 12 1/2 percent, an action that quickly drew fire from Latin American countries who stand to have their debt servicing costs boosted dramatically.

"The actual boost is not a surprise, but perhaps the timing is more aggressive than one would have suspected," said William V. Sullivan Jr., senior vice president at Dean Witter Reynolds, Inc.

Reaction from Latin American countries was swift.

"This (the prime hike) is disastrous for Latin America," said Rodrigo Cepeda Yzaga, head of Peru's external debt committee. "It affects us all enormously, and it is something over which we have no control."

Cepeda called the decision "incredible" and said U.S. interest rate hikes and increasing U.S. protectionism that is reducing Peru's export income "is what is strangling us."

First National Bank of Chicago led the way and was followed by Citibank, Chase Manhattan, Morgan Guaranty, Chemical Bank, Marine Midland, all New York, Chicago's Continental Illinois National Bank and Mellon Bank, Pittsburgh.

The increase was the fourth one-half point jump this year to take the prime from 11 percent to its highest since Oct. 7, 1982.

On hearing the news, President Reagan told a gathering of the Agriculture Communicators Congress, "interest rates are still higher than you and I would like."

"To get them down I think they just have to realize we're serious about keeping inflation under control. There is no excuse for interest rates being at the level they are right now, other than just fear of the future," he said.

The rise was expected in view of an increase in the overnight federal funds and in jumbo certificates of deposit, the two major sources of bank money. The federal funds have been trading above 11 percent and the CD rate has risen to 11 3/4 percent the past week.

But the prime increase came as banks were negotiating a refinancing package with Argentina, which is behind in its interest payments — \$350-\$450 million of which has already been reported as earnings and will have to be deducted from second-quarter profits of U.S. banks if it isn't paid by the end of the week.

The hike also came following a meeting last week of top officials from major Latin American debtor countries. Argentina was the main force behind the meeting, at which the key topic was the cost of high U.S. interest rates.

One Buenos Aires banker called the timing of the increase "terrible," and said it was bound to hurt efforts to reschedule Argentina's \$46 billion in debt.

Aggie 'hams' meet at Lake Somerville

Radio operators hold 24-hour contest

By KAREN GILES
Reporter

Mix a little swimming, sailing, and a 24-hour amateur radio operating contest at Lake Somerville, and you get the MSC Amateur Radio Committee's Field Day.

The annual contest, held last week-end, included more than 300,000 group and individual entrants who tried to contact as many radio operators around the nation as possible, said Al White, a junior electrical engineering major and chairman for MSC Amateur Radio Committee.

"We all had a lot of fun, but the

main idea behind the trip was to practice emergency preparedness and to operate from remote locations without commercial power," said White. "For instance, if we were wiped out by a hurricane and our power was down, we'd be able to operate with generators."

White said participants verbally contacted about 400 stations through a microphone, and about 300 through morse code.

"We contacted a Japanese operator who spoke English, but the furthest location we got was Australia."

"A few people set up radios and antennas at the lake on Friday, and

the contest ran from 1 p.m. Sat. to 1 p.m. Sun.," White said.

Clay Schlichting, MSC vice-president of recreational programs, said he enjoyed contacting and logging information with operators as far away as Canada, but his favorite part of Field Day was sailing during his break.

"When were not getting general information from our contacts, we'll 'ragchew' (casually converse) with them," said Schlichting. "We log their location, and entry code for the contest, then send it to the American Radio Relay League, who prints the results in the QST-Amateur Radio

Journal in three months. This was a good chance for our new members to get experience, but most of all, the contest was good practice for all of us to set up quickly under emergency conditions."

The committee provided emergency communications during hurricane Alicia by passing information from students to parents who lived far away, White said. The committee also has provided communications for many local events, including construction of the Aggie bonfire, the Texas Triathlon, and the Big Event.

In Today's Battalion

Local

• Speech students surveyed Texas A&M students and found that they want a campus pub. See story page 4.

National

• The funeral of Miami Dolphins running back David Overstreet will be attended by other football players and coaches. See story page 4.