

Space technology not yet perfected

Just when Americans have become blasé about space travel, a near disaster seconds before Tuesday's launch caused more than one person's heart to plummet.

The six-member crew spent 38 tense minutes waiting for ground crews to put out a hydrogen fire before they were hustled out of the space shuttle Discovery.

The blaze, which flared moments after two of Discovery's main engines shut down on computer command, occurred 24 hours after the shuttle's blastoff was delayed by the failure of a backup computer. Discovery's maiden voyage now has been delayed indefinitely.

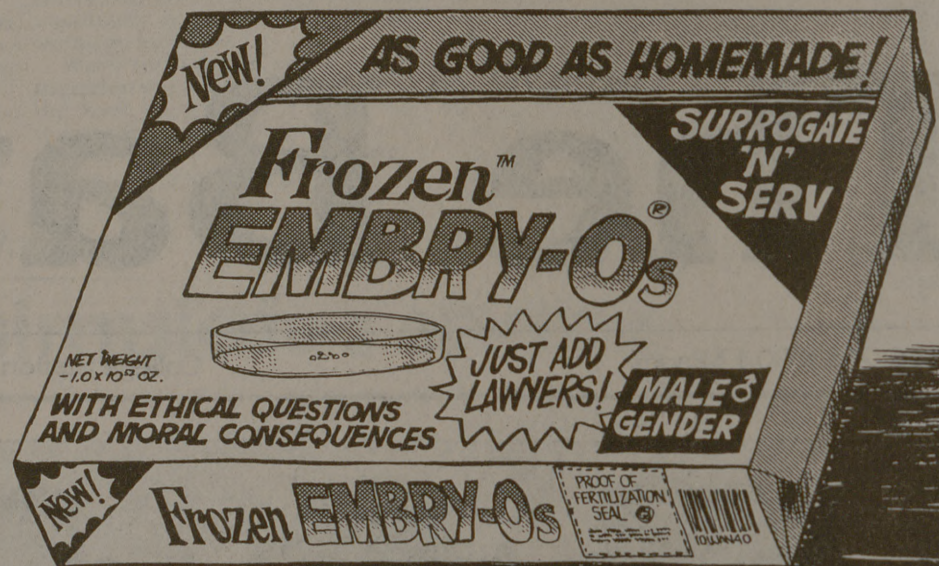
The space program has come a long way since the tragedy of Apollo 1, when three astronauts were trapped in the burning craft and died. Since that time, many astronauts have flown safely to the moon and in the space shuttles.

But the program is as human as the people who put it together. We shouldn't take the dangers lightly, but the near disaster shouldn't curb the spirit of adventure and discovery that characterizes space flight.

The episode simply reminded people that technology isn't so perfect that disasters don't happen.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

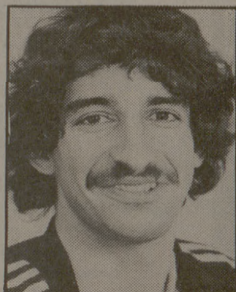
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THE OREGONIAN COPY BY TRIBUNE NEWS

Seedless melons don't a tourist-town make

MUNDAY — Once a week it's Monday in Munday and some of the town's folk rejoice by opening the doors of their businesses and starting the work week.



donn friedman

For most of the citizens of Munday, the work week never ends.

The 5,329 residents of Knox County — 1,785 in Munday, and the rest scattered near Knox City, Goree and Benjamin — combine to produce \$24.5 million worth of crops. The potatoes can't take off to Abilene for the

weekend, and neither can the farmers — they don't have the time or the money.

Nor can the seedless watermelons. Munday's brochure, it's not quite a tourist's brochure, boasts that Munday is home of the seedless melon. In fact, the brochure tells the reader, it's now the only place where the seedless melon seeds — everyone has a mother and father, but not everyone has children — are produced and harvested for commercial markets.

Munday's other crops: 130,000 acres of wheat, 65,000 acres of cotton and 1,500 acres of potatoes are described in detail along with the town's offering to the capitalist system. Munday has over 90 businesses including a bank with drive-in facilities, a funeral

home without drive-in facilities and a motel.

That's singular as in one motor lodge. The motel is clean, the air conditioner works and it has color television.

Munday is also home for the Texas Vegetable Research Center. Texas Agricultural Experiment Service scientists are hard at work propagating new and improved foodstuffs from the Munday soil.

When supper time comes a visitor's choices are few.

I'm not sure what the name of the place was that I ate at my first night in Munday, the sign on the rectangular building said plainly, 'Good Food.'

I meandered in, taking a seat near the front of the diner and opened the

menu. The Mexican special: two enchilidas, beans, rice, a tamale and a trip to the salad bar.

I placed my order and walked into the other room where the salad bar sat.

To my surprise, it wasn't a lettuce cart with carrots, tomatoes, three choices of dressing and plastic wrapped crackers. Instead, it was a vegetable table with all kinds of vegetable salads. Homemade crackers sat where their plastic second cousins would normally be. All this, but just a six-inch plate.

Back at my table I dug in, it was the first non-fast-nor-fried food I had sampled since leaving College Station three days before.

The Mexican plate was just edible,

but my taste-buds had already been appeased by the broccoli salad that tasted fresh-picked.

I decided that the next day I would have to try another six-inch plate of vegetable salads from the Good Food Cafe.

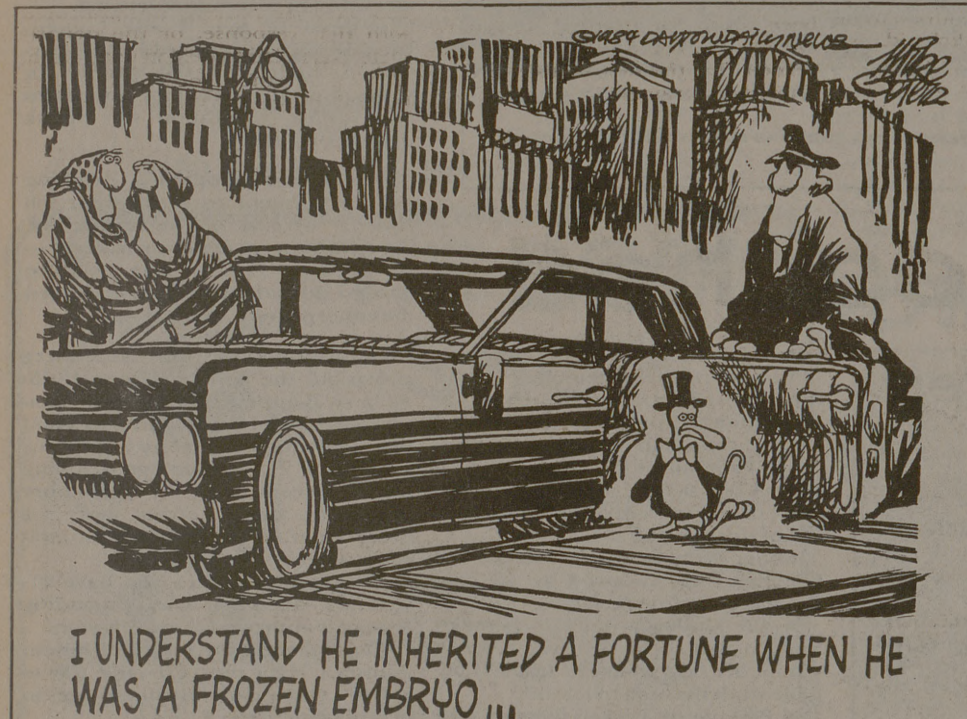
After a non-eventful morning watching onions sweat, I requested that my host join me for lunch at the cafe. He declined.

With bitterness he said, "No thanks. My ex-wife works there."

Kinda limits your choices in a one Dairy Queen town.

I had a Hunger Buster.

(Donn Friedman is a senior journalism major and The Battalion's rotating columnist covering the plains of Texas this summer)



Huffing and puffing athletes

By DICK WEST
Columnist for United Press International

WASHINGTON — Intelligence tests long have been a part of the American scene, but I have gone blithely through life never knowing what my FQ is.

Until recently, I didn't even know I had a FQ. Then I met Sharon Barbano, a champion long-distance runner who lives about as far as you could throw a bottle of liniment from "Heartbreak Hill" on the Boston Marathon course.

Barbano helped develop what are called "six simple tests to measure your personal 'fitness quotient'."

To describe them as "simple" is to do complexity an injustice.

To arrive at a score comparable to what is produced by IQ tests, it seems to me you would have to add together

such singularly incompatible figures as heart beats, push-ups, seconds and inches.

By that count, my FQ is 228. But a few more seconds of the stairstep test and I probably could have topped that sum in pulse rate alone.

It might be more meaningful to say the FQ tests rate a individual from "poor" to "excellent" on inflexibility, agility, strength and endurance.

In some ways, however, I doubt this scoring system gives as accurate a profile of physical condition as IQ tests provide of brain power.

There are, for example, no measurements for "huffing and puffing," which I consider a vital part of physical conditioning.

Barbano, who began jogging nine years ago, told me she developed a back problem even though she was winning marathons. That was when

she decided she was "lacking in total fitness" — strength and flexibility being the two areas in which she was most deficient.

I didn't ask whether she is stronger and more flexible now, or whether she still has backaches. I must say, however, that in a green shirt, white slacks and jogging shoes, she does look totally fit. Too bad she never met my late father.

In all of his adult years, my father never turned a muscle that wasn't somehow connected with work. Recreational exertion wasn't his idea of fun.

Once, I recall, shortly after I began exercising for pleasure, my father commented, "You are really going to be in great shape when you quit breathing."

Had he known my huffing and puffing quotient, he would have known that observation was irrelevant.

Letter: Gay community opposing Gramm

Editor:
(An open letter to Phil Gramm)
Dear Phil,
How thoughtful of you to use Gay Pride Week to launch your gay-baiting campaign. You could not have made my job any easier if you had planned it. Until you opened your mouth and stuck your "Christian" voice for "Moral" Government in it, you had a pretty solid base of support in the gay community.

Until you opened your attack, I had been finding it rather difficult to get people interested in the election. Now my phone is ringing off the wall with people wanting to know how they can ensure your defeat. If you had been in Texas instead of in Washington voting against the ERA you might have noticed that Kent Hance used the very same tactics.

As a direct result of your barrage we now plan to launch a full scale voter registration drive among the more than 3,000 gay students at TAMU. I doubt that even one will vote for you. Oh yes, we have contacted the Doggett campaign to pledge our time, money and votes. So Phil, keep up the good work. We couldn't have done it without you.

Lenny DePalma, president
Alternative

Senate not safe Mondale draw

By STEVE GERSTEL
Columnist for United Press International

WASHINGTON — As Walter Mondale, now seemingly assured of the Democratic presidential nomination, searches for a running mate he must take into account the titanic struggle for control of the Senate.

Unlike previous Democratic nominees — beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt and running through Jimmy Carter — Mondale cannot dip with impunity into the Senate, which has produced the Democrats' vice presidential candidate since Harry S. Truman in 1948.

The outlook, shared by analysts in both parties, is that the struggle for control of the Senate is going to be so close, it could hinge on one or two elections.

At present, the Republicans hold control of the Senate 55-45. This 10-vote margin is expected to shrink — perhaps to below a majority — after the elections.

The GOP problems are due partly to the fact that more Republican seats are at stake in November, partly to the retirement of two top vote-getters, Howard Baker of Tennessee and John Tower of Texas, and partly to the vulnerability of a number of incumbents.

Despite the hazards, Mondale has properly included a number of sen-

ators on what is presumed to be his list, probably incomplete, of possible candidates for the vice presidential nomination.

Among those mentioned are Sens. Lloyd Bentsen of Texas (already interviewed), Dale Bumpers of Texas, Joseph Biden of Delaware, John Glenn of Ohio, Sam Nunn of Georgia, Christopher Dodd of Connecticut — not to mention Gary Hart, who is sometimes named as the second part of a "dream ticket" for the Democrats.

Bradley, Biden and Nunn are up for re-election and, depending on the state laws, probably could not run for the vice presidency and the Senate at the same time.

In 1960, Lyndon Johnson managed to get around that problem, convincing the Texas legislature to make an exception and allow him to run for both posts at the same time. He won both.

But Bradley, Biden and Nunn do not wield that kind of power in their home states and probably would have to abandon their Senate races. It may be the reason that none of the three have evinced great interest in joining Mondale on the national ticket.

The others, with the exception of Bentsen, who was re-elected in 1982, are due to face the voters in 1986, now judged an excellent year for the Democrats to regain control if they cannot in November.

Alleviating the problem somewhat is that the governors of Texas, Arkansas, Ohio, Colorado and Connecticut are all Democrats.

In the event that Mondale chose Bentsen, Bumpers, Glenn, Hart or Dodd, the Democrats would not immediately lose a seat.

But Bentsen, Bumpers and Glenn are powerful vote-getters and their successors might not be able to match them at the polls in 1986.

In addition, Texas, Ohio, Colorado and Connecticut are not averse to electing Republicans to statewide office.

There are greater imperatives in the selection of a vice presidential nominee but, to some extent, Mondale will have to take into consideration control of the Senate. The former vice president, if elected, will need all the help he can get on Capitol Hill.

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