

USA Today heads for the Far East

United Press International
NEW YORK — In an aggressive overseas expansion effort, Gannett Co. has set another sales target for its USA Today newspaper in the Pacific. Gannett is already testing publication of USA Today in Europe.

The Pacific edition, which would cover Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and elsewhere in Asia, is less publicized than the European undertaking. But Vincent Spezzano, president of Gannett's USA Today international subsidiary, says there is a sufficient interest to produce and distribute USA Today in the Pacific area.

The Rochester, N.Y.-based publishing and information company will watch the European test edition, a reduced two-section, 16-page paper, for a couple of months, Spezzano said in an interview with UPI.

Then it will begin publication in Asia in September or October, he said.

The ventures, in which the colorful newspaper would be transmitted by satellite, are the first overseas for USA Today. USA Today is the nation's third largest daily with an average paid circulation of 1,138,030.

Spezzano led a fact-finding mission on the Asian venture in March, visiting eight prospective printers in Japan and Hong Kong and several in Singapore who approached Gannett. He would not name them.

Spezzano said USA Today will send their specifications to the prospective printers and they will tell us if they have equipment which will meet those specifications.

Mitsubishi Corp., a large Japanese

trading house, is the only company which has made public its interest in the Gannett venture in Asia.

In February, three Mitsubishi officials met with Spezzano and other Gannett leaders in Washington for the first time.

Mitsubishi, which is breaking into the communications industry, is reported to have proposed transmitting USA Today by satellite to a printing plant in Japan. It would be published there as an evening paper for American readers and those Japanese who are interested in the United States.

Spezzano indicated Gannett is not specifically interested in Mitsubishi, saying only it is "one of the companies involved in the discussion."

An informed source said Mitsubishi has approached Gannett in an apparent bid to sell to more than 80 Gannett papers rotary presses made by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd., a Japanese heavy machinery maker affiliated with the trading giant.

Asked if Gannett intends to have one printer each located in Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore for the Pacific edition project, Spezzano said no.

It is believed Gannett is less interested in printing in Japan because of high labor costs there.

"We wouldn't need three printers (in Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore) for selling, you know, 30,000 or 40,000 copies," Spezzano said.

He said the Pacific edition would contain generally what is printed in the United States, although some segments may be eliminated.



Photo by CELESTE WOZNIAR

Low Clearance
 Construction on the Texas A&M campus is still in full swing. This entrance to the Parking Annex between Reed McDonald and Blocker Buildings is partially blocked by construction equipment.

Eye doctor takes experiments to Mount Everest

United Press International
BOSTON — Most doctors are content performing their experiments in warm, well-lit laboratories, but eye surgeon Dr. Michael Wiedman believes sitting in a 20-degree-below-zero tent on Mount Everest is an ideal spot.

Altitude sickness is believed to be caused by a swelling of the brain due to lack of oxygen at high altitudes. Wiedman went to check this theory and in particular study one sign of altitude sickness, the bursting of

small vessels in the back of the eyes.

He is optimistic his research will lead to new drugs that will combat the problem.

The malady has a variety of symptoms, ranging from mild headaches to coma. It also causes climbers to become disoriented with sometimes catastrophic results.

The symptoms usually go away once a climber returns from the mountains. But Wiedman believes there may be lasting damage.

"Altitude sickness may cause damage that isn't obvious," he said.

"For instance it may cause tiny strokes in the brain that are too small to notice. But if a person has a stroke later in life, then the original stroke may make the problem worse."

Wiedman climbed with a group of 15 American non-professional climbers. The team's two summit climbers made it to within 700 feet of the top but had to quit because of exhaustion. Wiedman climbed as far as the 22,000-foot level to run the medical tent and conduct research and stayed at that height for 20 consecutive days on the 29,028-foot mountain.

If the climbers had made it up the mountain's northeast summit it would have been the second time in history and the first time for a Western team.

The northeast ridge was successfully climbed by a Chinese team in 1975. It is made particularly difficult because of the practically vertical rock walls up the last few hundred feet of the mountain with 7,000-foot drops.

"If a climber falls he only has a

second or two to self-arrest himself with an ice axe," he said. "The climbers aren't roped in because there is no opportunity to dig in and stop each other at that altitude and they would only drag each other down."

Wiedman's lab may have been only a tent, but it was a well-equipped one. He and companions carried hundreds of pounds of medical diagnostic equipment to the 22,000-foot level, including an oscilloscope and a small computer. His

studies were the most advanced ever attempted at such altitudes, he said.

"Analysis of our preliminary data seems to indicate a correlation between brain swelling and altitude sickness," he said. "If there is a correlation, as indicated, then medication aimed at preventing brain swelling would probably be most useful."

He has always gone as the expedition's doctor and has never made an attempt at the top. He plans another trip with his two young sons, Timothy and Nichols, in 1990.

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