

WORLD AND NATION

SHOE

by Jeff MacNelly



Funky Winkerbean

by Tom Batiuk



Scientific mission set for noon

Challenger shuttle ready

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — While the seven-man human crew received their final briefings, 24 bearded rats and two squirrel monkeys named "3165" and "384-80" were loaded aboard the space shuttle Challenger.

The launch time for today's start on a seven-day scientific mission is set for noon, EDT.

"All systems are go," said Jesse W. Moore, director of the shuttle program. "We are giving the thumbs-up now."

The weather looked good for the second liftoff, which is the second of the month, and NASA looked forward to the shortest interval between flights in the space shuttle program. Discovery landed April 19 after a seven-day mission.

The previous "turnaround" record was 34 days.

The crew is comprised of commander Robert Overmyer; pilot Fred Gregory; physicians William Thornton and Norman Thagard; physicist Don Lind and Taylor Wang; and Lodewijk van den Berg, chemical engineer. Both Wang and van den Berg are naturalized U.S. citizens.

In the shuttle's cargo bay is a 12-ton, barrel-shaped laboratory, 23 feet long and 13 feet in diameter, where five scientists will conduct around-the-clock experiments in materials processing, fluid mechanics, life sciences, atmospheric physics and astronomy.

It is the second time that the \$1 billion, European-built Spacelab has flown. The first was in December 1983.

The squirrel monkeys, carefully chosen because they were found to be free of herpes saimiri, which infects 95 percent of their species, were put into the laboratory Sunday, a cumbersome procedure when the vehicle is vertical on its launch pad. Herpes-free monkeys were chosen because of a remote risk that the astronauts might be infected with the cancer-causing form of herpes, although they will not handle the animals.

A complicated system of lifts and pulleys was used to hoist the animals aboard.

Animal rights groups have said they will picket the Kennedy Space Center today.

"Challenger's liftoff means that every painful experiment performed on animals on Earth will now be performed in space," said Alex Pacheco, chairman of People for Ethical Treatment of Animals.

But Joseph Cremin, the Spacelab 3 mission manager, said the animals are being treated humanely.

"We do not cause the animals any undue pain," he said. "I don't think from our activities there are any reasons to think they aren't being treated in the best possible fashion. ... They are there, basically, for the ride."

The animals' cages are being tested for future missions in which animal experiments will be performed. On this flight, the animals will be studied for symptoms of space sickness. The rats will be killed after landing and autopsies performed.

Challenger is to return to Earth on May 6, landing on the nearly limitless runways at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., rather than at the Kennedy Space Center, as a safety measure because Discovery's brakes locked and a tire ruptured during its landing on April 19.

Federally licensed landfills fail to meet requirements

WASHINGTON — Federally licensed landfills are not complying with groundwater monitoring requirements, the chairman of a House oversight committee said Sunday.

"Clearly, some of the data are shocking, especially when viewed from the perspective that the regulations called for compliance ... 3 1/2 years ago," Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., chairman of both the committee and the subcommittee, wrote to panel members.

EPA officials said they would document for Dingell extensive efforts to strengthen enforcement and improve monitoring at 1,246 landfills, impoundment areas, lagoons and land treatment facilities required to undertake groundwater monitoring.

The subcommittee report found that 559 facilities had some indication of groundwater contamination, either by statistical tests, confirmed sampling or the undertaking of full-scale monitoring.

EPA officials said this figure was misleading in that statistical tests

show many false indications of contamination. EPA officials said they are now starting to require complete monitoring of all facilities.

After a report from the General Accounting Office in 1983 that 78 percent of landfills had not met groundwater monitoring requirements, Congress imposed a deadline of Nov. 8, 1985.

EPA is supposed to close non-complying facilities after that.

EPA officials said there would be problems in meeting the deadline.

No new offers given to Reagan officials by Soviet negotiators

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration said Saturday that Soviet negotiators have made no new offers to reduce strategic nuclear missiles or even put their old proposals back on the bargaining table.

"We are, of course, ready to examine seriously any concrete Soviet proposal for substantial, balanced and stabilizing reductions in strategic forces," the State Department said.

"We already have suggested (in the Geneva talks) that both sides reduce strategic offensive arms by one-fourth as an opening move," Gorbachev said. "We would have no objections to making even deeper mutual cuts. All this is possible if the arms race does not begin in space, if outer space remains an area of peace."

The two sides appear to have divergent goals. The United States wants to concentrate on limiting offensive weapons while the Soviets are eager to sidetrack the Star Wars program.

In the previous Geneva talks, the Soviets offered to reduce their 2,250

missiles and heavy bombers to 1,800. Gorbachev's statement indicated the Soviets may be prepared to cut even deeper.

"Contrary to the impression created by press accounts of General Secretary Gorbachev's statement, however, the Soviet Union has made no proposal for reductions in strategic forces in the new Geneva negotiations," said Sonda McCarty, State Department press official.

Earlier last week, Gorbachev accused the Reagan administration of reneging on an agreement to consider Star Wars in conjunction with cutbacks on offensive nuclear missiles. Kenneth Adelman, the U.S. arms control director, said the program had been discussed extensively at Geneva.

The State Department said Saturday that Gorbachev may have been referring to the old Soviet offer, which U.S. negotiators rejected on the grounds it did not cut deeply enough into warheads and destructive capability.

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