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### World and Nation

# NASA says booster seals sound but not infallible

WASHINGTON — A NASA official told a presidential commission Tuesday that the sealing design for the space shuttle's rocket boosters was deemed "safe and adequate," but that after recent ground testing and minor cases of past-flight ero-sion, "we felt like it could be im-proved."

NASA's David Winterhalter testi-fied that the shuttle was safe to fly. During the second day of public testimony on Challenger explosion, the investigating panel focused on whether NASA had prior warning of a problem with the design and material that joined the four segments of its rocket boosters.

"At no time during that period did any of my men come to me and give any indication that there was a safety or flight problem in their area," he told the commission.

NASA's shuttle propulsion group, told the panel that NASA engineers were not satisfied with the safety margins they found on testing of the

"We're always striving to make things perfect," he said.

"We're always striving to make things perfect.'

- David Winterhalter, acting director of NASA's shuttle propulsion group.

He said tests were conducted during most of 1985 to determine what changes could be made to the seals and that the testing "intensified as

Lawrence Mulloy, head of the solid booster program at the Mar-shall Space Flight Center in Ala-bama, told the panel that analyses, which followed each of NASA's 24 successful shuttle flights had determined erosion had occurred in six of 171 primary sealing rings.

failure that spread to the second level of sealing protection.

The commission, however, released a letter dated July 22, 1985 from a supervisor in the rocket propulsion section of the agency, warning that the design and the method used to check the O-ring seals must be improved.

CBS News said Tuesday evening that NASA is studying films of two previous launches for evidence of malfunctions. The network showed a film of the Nov. 26, 1985 launch of Atlantis that appeared to show a second flame at one of the boosters after it separated, and a film of Aug. 30, 1984 that appeared to show burning fuel above and around one of Discovery's booster skirts.

Malloy said past indications of erosion were not disturbing from a standpoint of safety, adding that NASA hadn't seen any erosion in the joints between the rocket segments in the year before the Challenger

### Rights panel divided over hiring quotas

**Associated Press** 

WASHINGTON - Lawyer for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have been old to stop demanding num cal hiring goals and timetables in settlements with companies and unions accused of discriminating against women and minority em ployees, officials said Tuesday.

Johnny Butler, the EEOC's ing general counsel, said he rected regional attorneys not bring any more cases that incluthem, although the five-memb commission has taken no form vote on abandoning use of suc

race- and sex-conscious goals.

The administration is sharpledivided on whether numeric goals and timetables are synony mous with "quotas," Butler said.

Because of this, Butler said, he said the said of the sa

told the regional attorneys to sto including the numerical goals i proposed consent decrees.

# Bars raise prices to protest insurance

**Associated Press** 

CONCORD, N.H. - "Happy Hour" became a time for imbibers to cry in their beer rather than unwind Tuesday when about 400 New Hampshire restaurant and bar own-ers staged an "Unhappy Hour," charging from \$14 for a beer to \$32

Operators were trying to dramatize and gather support against skyrocketing increases in their premi-ums for liability insurance. Rates limiting personal injury awards to

have soared nationally because of increased litigation and jury awards in liability cases, and one Keene bar owner said much of that was due to drunken drivers.

Bar owner Dewey Mark said the participating tavern operators would discount prices back to normal for patrons who joined the protest and signed postcards urging the insurance commissioner, governor and state lawmakers to back legislation

\$250,000 in an effort to hold down rates.
The establishments raised prices for drinks by the same percentage their liability insurance rates have risen — 2,000 percent in some cases.

At Mark's restaurants in the resort towns of Gilford and Glenn, a beer was \$14 during "Unhappy Hour"; a martini, \$32; a snifter of fine brandy, \$40 plus. Moe Mozier, owner of Henry Da-

vid's Restaurant in Keene and president of the New Hampshire Hospi-

focused on more common d such as a bottle of beer for \$14. Insurance Commissioner

Bergeron said the publicity rounding "Unhappy Hour" was leading. What's needed, he said discussion of the problem to than a splashy publicity event.

Increasing the cost of a drink tween 10 cents and 20 cents as the same transport to the same

than multiplying it by up to 20 th would cover the increased insur

## Slander charges against Walesa dropped Tuesday

**Associated Press** 

GDANSK, Poland — The state dropped slander charges against Solidarity leader Lech Walesa on Tuesday, and Walesa hailed the decision as the first step toward com-promise by Poland's Communist government since it crushed the independent trade union.

At the opening day of Walesa's trial, the prosecutor said the 12 elec-tion officials who filed the complaint statement in court that he did not intentionally slander them when he gave voter turnout figures for national elections lower than the offi-

The three-judge panel in Gdansk provincial court suspended the case

Walesa was in high spirits at a news conference after the trial and said he was happy the government recognized that "political trials are not in the interest of Poland." He called it "the first step toward compromise since the 13th of December," 1981. That was when the government imposed martial law and crushed Solidarity, the first free trade union in the Soviet bloc. Solidarity was outlawed the following

The case arose from an October parliamentary election boycotted by Solidarity supporters. Solidarity set trial, the prosecutor said the 12 elec-tion officials who filed the complaint were "satisifed" by Walesa's statement in court that he did not in-

When the government said the turnout was nearly 79 percent, Solidarity issued figures saying only 66 percent of voters went to the polls.

Western diplomats, who spoke on condition they not be identified, said it appeared clear the authorities did want to risk international displeasure by trying Walesa at a time when Poland is seeking new trade credits and is hoping to gain entry to the International Monetary Fund.

### Mardi Gras continues despite icy weather

kept normally risque Mardi Gras costumes bulky and sedate, but the uproarious pre-Lenten cele-bration shifted into high gear Fat Tuesday as parades turned much of the city into a free-wheeling street-party.

Crowds jammed shoulder to shoulder on Bourbon Street and the other routes of the five parades planned in the city.

"C'mon, you stuck up folks! Let's party!" a young man shouted at the bundled-up families who lined St. Charles Avenue

tain's Half-Fast Walking Club and the Zulu parade were delayed a bit by the weather, but the Rex parade - the swankiest of the Carnival season — rolled right on

Parade-goers' costumes, with some stalwart exceptions like a young man in bikini underwear and goose bumps, were dictated by the weather: around freezing, with a 17 mph wind that made it feel like 9 degrees.

Bright satin and sequined

**Associated Press** 

NEW ORLEANS — Icy winds

capes, worn over warm pants and bulky coats, were the most popular costume in the French Quar

Five friends dressed as oysten Five friends dressed as oyster on the half-shell — sporting heavy gloves, grey sweatsuits, and white satin-covered foam shells strapped to their shoulders.

Although Mardi Gras is celebrated in cities from Galveston, Texas, to Mobile, Ala., New Orleans has the biggest show.

People spend an estimated \$50 million to put on and participate

million to put on and participat in the parades and balls for the five weeks leading up to Lent. The celebrating of Charles

bars will be rocking for hours af-ter the arrival of Ash Wednesday. Fat Tuesday is the biggest Car-nival day since Sunday when Bac chus and 10 other krewes pa-

During that parade, two men were shot and wounded, another was knifed and two other men apparently drunk, fell from tractors that were pulling floats.

In the most serious Carniva related episode, a Houston ma was fatally stabbed Friday nigh

### Italian mayor fights to rid Palermo of Mafia influence

**Associated Press** 

PALERMO, Sicily - "If you let fear stop you, nothing will change,' says Mayor Leoluca Orlando, who is trying to rid Palermo of Mafia influence that has been woven into the city's fabric over centuries.

The mayor feels that success will come only through the people's will and the state's unwavering commit-

When the trial of 474 alleged Ma-

fia members began Monday, Orlando was in the courtroom, sitting in a show of solidarity with the widows and children of men who were killed fighting the pervasive criminal

"You fight the Mafia with repression but also with economic development," he said in an interview. Italy's poor south is ripe prey for

organized crime, he said. Since taking office in July, the 38-year-old Christian Democrat has or qualifications.

earned a reputation for boldness,

honesty and courage.

An example of Orlando's approach to the job is his decision that contracts for city services and construction be granted by competitive

The previous system, considered ideal for the Mafia, was to give the jobs to those who had previous contracts with the city, regardless of cost

The Mafia's strength has been tributed in part to a Sicilian distr of outsiders inspired by centuries foreign exploitation that led pe ants to turn to bandits for pro

tion, for a price.

Orlando says that arrangement weakening and the wave of killin of police officials, government lears, journalists and judges investiging the Mafia has convinced many Palermo's people that their wo must change.

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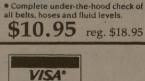
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