

World and Nation

Source: Low temperatures on booster were reported

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Crews examining the space shuttle Challenger at close hand shortly before launch reported abnormally cold temperatures on one booster rocket over a radio circuit monitored in NASA's launch control center, a source close to the shuttle investigation said Monday.

But, he said, "these low temperatures never got the attention they should have."

The issue of what launch officials knew and when they knew it will be explored by the presidential investigating commission in open hearings Tuesday and Wednesday.

"It will all come out tomorrow," the investigation source said. "It ain't going to be good."

"The American people are going to scream bloody murder."

Meanwhile, Mary Elizabeth

Beggs, wife of NASA administrator James M. Beggs, told the Associated Press he will resign in the next few days.

Beggs went on unpaid leave last year after a grand jury indicted him on charges stemming from his days as a General Dynamics executive.

A top level NASA source said the White House would not immediately name Beggs' successor but that acting administrator William Graham, whose appointment Beggs is known to oppose, was unlikely to get the job.

Witnesses scheduled to come before the commission Tuesday include Allan McDonald, the Morton Thiokol engineer who refused to endorse a recommendation to launch, and Joe C. Kilminster, the firm's vice-president who signed the recommendation.

The source said the readings were

made by an "ice team" sent out before the launch to ensure the shuttle's fuel tank was not covered with ice that could drop off and damage the ship's tiles.

The team, he said, works like a bomb-disposal squad, reporting over a radio every movement and step around the ship and its toxic, volatile fuels — so if there is an explosion, experts can trace the movements.

"These guys on the pad are reporting continuously where they are and what they are doing on an open net, so if anything goes boom, someone will know what happened," the investigation source said.

He said part of the reason their cold-weather readings did not raise alarm is because "they did this on their own," using an infrared pyrometer, that had not previously been part of the team's equipment.

10,000 unable to return home in California

Part of Boise, Idaho, was cut off Monday as flood control workers blocked streets with a sandbag canal to drain swollen ponds, and about 10,000 Californians were still unable to return to homes flooded by more than a week of storms.

High water and mudslides caused by weekend rain and melting snow closed some Idaho highways while some roads remained closed in northwestern Nevada, washed by the same nine-day series of storms that inundated northern California.

Oregon, Washington state and Montana also had scattered road closings caused by flooding, mudslides and washouts from rain and melting snow.

Most of the Olivehurst-Linda area, inundated Thursday when a levee burst, was dry enough for residents to start cleaning up.

The death toll stands at 20 across the West from the series of storms that started Feb. 11.

Nancy Hardaker, a spokeswoman for the state Office of Emergency Services, said that storm-caused damage in northern California was estimated at \$319 million. At least 10,872 homes were damaged and 1,463 were destroyed, she said.

Government spells out rights of aged who use Medicare

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Facing complaints that elderly Medicare patients are being dumped from hospital beds before they are well, the government released on Monday a "bill of rights" spelling out how the aged can fight premature hospital discharges.

The statement, including a telephone number where patients can file an emergency appeal, will be given to each of the 9 million Medicare beneficiaries hospitalized each year, the Health and Human Services Department said.

Otis R. Bowen, secretary of the HHS, said: "All patients deserve to have a clear understanding of their rights when they are hospitalized."

"With these messages, the Medicare program will be providing important information to beneficiaries more directly, more effectively and more helpfully than has been done in the past."

Consumer groups have complained in recent months that Medicare beneficiaries sometimes were dumped from their hospital beds prematurely because their pre-set Medicare payments had run out.

The American Association of Retired Persons and the People's Medical Society called on the Reagan administration in November to inform Medicare patients of their legal rights against premature discharge.

Bowen did not mention those complaints directly. He did say there is no evidence of a "systematic increase" in premature discharges, and noted that both consumer groups and medical industry groups were consulted in drafting the rights statement.

The retired people's group and the People's Medical Society have said that hospitals too often simply inform Medicare patients that their benefits have run out and they are being discharged, even though discharge is not supposed to be influenced by payments.

The groups said the problems were caused by belt-tightening in Medicare, particularly the pre-set payment rates based on types of illness under the so-called prospective payment system.

Since 1983, payment rates have been based on the average cost of treating a particular illness.

High court dismisses pornography statute

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court, in a decision that could hamper local efforts to combat pornography, struck down as unconstitutional Monday an Indianapolis ordinance that subjected distributors of sexually explicit materials to lawsuits.

By a 6-3 vote, the justices said the ordinance, which allowed women injured by someone who had seen or read pornographic material to sue the maker or seller, interferes with freedom of speech.

The Indianapolis ordinance defined pornography as a practice that discriminates against women by por-

traying them as sexual objects who enjoy pain or humiliation and presents them as sexual objects of violence.

Women hurt by someone who had seen or read pornographic material were allowed to sue the maker or seller of the pornography.

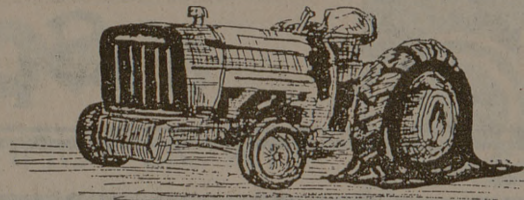
The ordinance was found unconstitutional by two lower federal courts, and Indianapolis city officials asked the high court to reinstate the ordinance. The city's appeal called the ordinance an innovative and promising way to help those it called the victims of pornography, mostly women and children.

Despite being told "the record

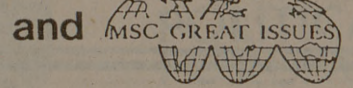
shows that the pornography industry . . . generates sex-based abuse," the justices agreed with the lower courts that the ordinance went too far.

In other business, the court also agreed to decide by July the constitutionality of the new law requiring a balanced budget by 1991. The justices said they will hear arguments in the case on April 23, and decide it before adjourning for the summer.

The court also let stand the Texas "no pass, no play" law that has sidelined high school athletes and silenced band musicians with failing grades.



the dept. of philosophy
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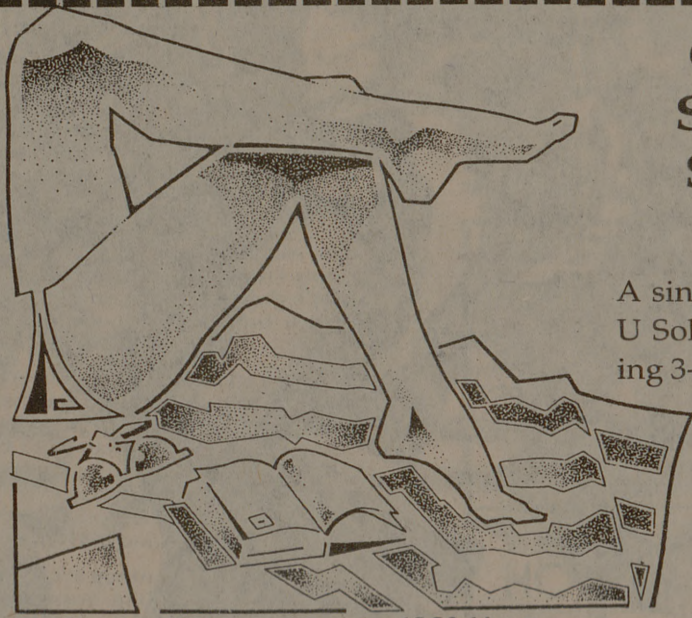
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