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• NOTICE

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Nation honoring Challenger crew with memorials

(AP) — Fourteen-year-old Tami Quinn in Grants Pass, Ore., raised \$6,000 for NASA. "Star Trek IV" audiences see a dedication to Challenger's crew as the film opens. New Hampshire plans a planetarium to honor Christa McAuliffe.

The international outpouring of grief that began last Jan. 28, when the space shuttle exploded, has been channeled into dozens of projects over the past year to remember the astronauts in song, scholarships, paintings and monuments.

The largest is the Challenger Center project taken on by the crew members' families.

They are trying to raise \$50 million for a space science teaching laboratory in Washington and a regional center in Houston, and to provide scholarships and sabbaticals for teachers to attend. About \$250,000 had been raised by Jan. 6, and the families hope businesses will donate 10 percent of their sales on Wednesday's anniversary.

The Tennessee Education Association is sponsoring Tennessee Space Week this week, with lessons geared toward space. Television and radio stations in the state plan space quizzes and space-related news coverage. The state also set up a teaching scholarship.

In another major effort, about \$1.2 million has been collected for the Challenger astronauts' 11 children, aged 2 to 25.

A month after the blast, children at Livingston Park Elementary School in North Brunswick, N.J., raised \$400 for the fund through a bake sale.

Tami Quinn raised \$6,000 for NASA in the "Kids for Space" fund she established.

Children in West Virginia collected pennies for a statue of McAuliffe. And in Bath, N.Y., Haverling High School students raised \$17,000 in their "Pennies for Space" — Rebuild the Spirit fund. They plan to ask the president where to send the money.

In Winston-Salem, N.C., Jonathan Pitts, 12, who wants to be an astronaut, spearheaded a drive that raised money for a shuttle mock-up and scholarship.

Ronald McNair's family established a scholarship foundation in South Carolina for disadvantaged students. The state inducted McNair into its Hall of Science and Technol-

ogy, plans to exhibit his space moments in a museum to be opened next year and named a highway for him.

The Soviet Union named craters on Venus for McAuliffe, the high school teacher who was to have been the first "ordinary" American in space, and Judith Resnik, the only other woman on the flight that ended in disaster little more than a minute after liftoff.

The Paris-based International Astronomical Union named asteroids after all seven crewmembers.

In Florida's Brevard County, home of Cape Canaveral, schools have been named for McNair, McAuliffe and the "Challenger 7."

Auburn, Wash., where Richard Scobee grew up, has a Dick Scobee Elementary School and a Scobee scholarship fund. The municipal airport was renamed for him, and a Scobee mural hangs at his high school.

In Akron, Ohio, Resnik's Firestone High School this month named a library addition for her and has established a scholarship fund in her name.

Hawaii's tributes to native-son Ellison Onizuka include a scholarship fund of more than \$300,000. An educational pavilion and museum are being built. An astronomy center and an island flower were named for him.

The San Francisco Air Force Station outside San Francisco was renamed in Onizuka's honor.

In Beaufort, N.C., Michael Smith's hometown, the airport where Smith learned to fly as a teenager is now Michael J. Smith Field.

Many scholarships and educational awards have been named for McAuliffe. New Hampshire plans a planetarium in her honor, and the government of Japan sent the high school where she taught more than \$112,000.

John Denver, a church choir, a symphony composer and school children have recorded music commemorating the crew. In Philadelphia, composer Christopher Rouse dedicated the first of six works commemorating the U.S. Constitution's 200th anniversary to the astronauts.

The shuttle exploded as he was composing a section about Zeus, the Greek god, knocking a runaway chariot out of the sky with a thunderbolt.

Reagan's speeches show rosy view of U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — In 1982, President Reagan talked of "an era of American renewal." In 1983, the nation was "on the mend." In 1984, the country was "back, standing tall," in 1985 "poised for greatness" and in 1986 "on the move."

And in 1987? In five State of the Union messages, Reagan has painted portraits of an America as confident and buoyant as the image he presents when he steps to the rostrum in the high-ceilinged chamber of the House of Representatives.

Tonight, however, as he goes before the lawmakers again, he faces — for the first time — a Congress dominated in both houses by Democrats poised to launch major investigations of alleged misdeeds by his administration.

Aides say Reagan will deal only briefly in the speech with the crisis brought on by secret arms sales to Iran and the diversion of some of the profits to aid anti-communist rebels in Nicaragua.

Some in Congress, however, say this could be the most important part of the speech, arguing that the president must assume more responsibility for what went awry in his foreign policy.

Reagan has denied that the arms sales were a swap for the release of hostages and has said he knew nothing of the diversion of funds to the rebels he has often acclaimed as "freedom fighters."

Both the House and the Senate have created special committees to look into these contentions and other aspects of what is called the Iran-Contra affair.

Much of Reagan's speech will outline his legislative agenda, following the constitutional command to report to the lawmakers and "recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient."

Among these measures are expected to be proposals to overhaul the welfare system and the federal budget process. Both are familiar Reagan themes, which he has pushed with mixed success in previous State of the Union messages.

This year's speech will mark the president's first major personal appearance since his Jan. 5 surgery for an enlarged prostate. Doctors say his recovery, expected to take six weeks, is proceeding satisfactorily.

Rush for tax breaks pushes home sales to record high

WASHINGTON (AP) — A rush to take advantage of expiring tax breaks helped push sales of existing homes to an all-time monthly high in December, closing out the best year for home resales since 1979, a real estate trade group said Monday.

The National Association of Realtors said existing single-family homes were sold at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.17 million units last month, 6.6 percent higher than November and the highest monthly sales pace on record.

Analysts attributed the big surge to unusually warm December weather and a rush by some homeowners to sell while their profits would still be taxed at favorable capital gain rates before the new tax law took effect on Jan. 1.

"This change was particularly important to sellers of higher-priced properties who wanted to take their capital gains under the old tax rules," association economist Glenn Crellin said.

For all of 1986, sales of existing homes totaled 3.57 million units, 10.9 percent higher than 1985 and the best annual sales total since 1979, when 3.83 million existing homes were sold.

Analysts attributed the strength last year to a dramatic drop in mortgage rates, which fell below double-digits for the first time this decade. Currently, fixed-rate mortgages are averaging 9.1 percent, the lowest level since January 1978, according to a weekly survey by the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp.

A belief that mortgage rates will hold in this level or decline even more in coming months is leading economists to forecast that sales of both newly built and existing single-family homes will rise even higher in 1987. Sales of new homes for 1986 are expected to top 700,000 units when December figures are released early next month.

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