

Russians seek help of American astronaut

Vital repairs to space station Mir put off as doctors assess Commander Tsibliyev's heart condition

MOSCOW (AP) — With Mir's commander potentially sidelined by heart problems, Russia's Mission Control turned to NASA on Tuesday — proposing that the American astronaut on board try to repair the crippled space station.

Tapping Michael Foale to join the difficult fix-it task would be the biggest assignment ever for an American on the Russian Mir — and the riskiest. NASA said it would take "a good, hard look" at the request.

Vital repairs on the damaged space station have been delayed as long as 10 days while doctors look into Russian commander Vasily Tsibliyev's heart trouble. If Tsibliyev's recently discovered irregular heartbeat turns out to be a serious medical problem, Foale

may have to don a spacesuit himself to help bring the station's energy system back up to full power.

Russian space officials also need to get the go-ahead from the American astronaut himself.

"We haven't talked to Foale about that yet," Mission Control chief Vladimir Solovoyov said. "Back on the ground, he said he would be eager to do a spacewalk."

Foale said before the flight that he would love to do a spacewalk on Mir — though he hadn't had emergency repairs in mind.

Officials still hope the two Russian cosmonauts in the three-man crew will be up to carrying out the repairs themselves after they are rested.

Tsibliyev's surprise heart trouble forced officials to postpone Tuesday's scheduled practice session for the repairs, designed to fix damage caused when a cargo ship collided with Mir on June 25, punching a hole in the Spektr module and ultimately halving the Mir's power.

The new setback pushes back the vital repair mission from Saturday until the last week of July.

While lives aren't in danger, the Russians are eager to solve the problem before the next crew arrives Aug. 5.

"We have problems with power," Solovoyov said. "If we are unable to go into the Spektr to solve it, we will have to consider how much energy will be spent when

there will be two crews on board."

A successful repair job would give the Russians a chance to fulfill their goal of keeping the aging Mir manned to the end of the century — and repair some of their space program's battered credibility.

Russian doctors met throughout the day Tuesday, debating the best treatment for the 43-year-old Tsibliyev, who complained Monday of heart problems.

Igor Goncharov, deputy mission controller in charge of medical affairs, said Tsibliyev had no previous health problems and the primary cause might be lack of sleep related to a string of Mir mishaps.

Tsibliyev, who has been on Mir since February, has faced serious problems on

the 11-year-old space station, including collision, a fire in February and numerous equipment breakdowns.

"This crew had enough stressful moments," Goncharov said. "It's natural tension, emotions flying high, the feeling of responsibility — all of this has increased emotional pressure and could affect condition."

Goncharov said the commander's pain and his condition should improve if he takes medicine and the crew is given more rest.

Tsibliyev or Russian crewmate Alexander Lazutkin had been scheduled to make the delicate trek into the Spektr — one of the modules that make up the orbital station.

Jet evacuated after engine catches fire

BOSTON (AP) — A US Airways jet with more than 80 people aboard was evacuated Tuesday at Logan International Airport and doused with foam after an engine caught fire just before take-off. No serious injuries were reported.

The fire started as the DC-9 was backing away from the gate for a flight to Pittsburgh, said US Airways spokesman Rick Weintraub. Passengers evacuated by way of the plane's emergency slides.

"I looked out and saw the chute coming down," said Ken Powtak, an auto parts salesman who was in the airport. "I saw one or two people slide down. Then I noticed both emergency exits open and people jumped onto the wing and then onto tarmac and ran away from the plane."

Some suffered bruises and

Educators plan private high school for gays, lesbians

DALLAS (AP) — Three educators believe it's high time for a Texas high school that caters to gay and lesbian teenagers.

Becky Thompson, Pamela Stone and Wally Lineberger are starting such a school themselves.

The trio have leased a 4,000-square-foot ramshackle brick building in a strip mall near Dallas Love Field and plan to open the Walt Whitman Community School on Sept. 2.

Although it's being set up for homosexuals, the school will accept any student, regardless of sexual orientation, said Thompson, who will serve as director. No students have signed up yet.

"We want to be all-inclusive," she said. "We want to be a school that people are saying, 'Oh, gee, I want to go to that school because it is tolerant.' They might not even be gay."

The purpose of the school, named after the 19th-century gay poet, "is to create an atmosphere of tolerance, an acceptance of sexuality confusion and opportunities for personal growth so that each individual student can become a fully functioning and healthy member of society," according to its mission statement.

"These are still the kids on the outs, the ones that are being picked on at school,"

said Thompson, a former teacher and counselor at the Walden Preparatory School in the north Dallas suburb of Addison.

"This population is a population that was undeserved in terms of education."

Pamela Stone
Grapevine resident

She cited a 1984 New York study that found that 28 percent of gay and lesbian students drop out of high school because of harassment.

Thompson brainstormed the idea in May with Stone, a Grapevine native who was director of Walden. Both resigned in May to pursue new options.

"This population is a population that was underserved in terms of education," Stone said. "There wasn't anything special

happening for these kids."

Starting with Thompson, Stone and fine arts head Lineberger, the three hope to hire three more teachers to help with math and science classes as enrollment grows. The school will seek accreditation later, Thompson said.

Course offerings will include language arts, math, natural science, social studies and electives in either fine arts or human development.

Attending the school won't be cheap. Annual tuition will be \$7,000. The founders hope for sufficient community support to offer scholarships for those who can't afford the fees.

"I most definitely want us to be a high school like any other, with a few differences," said Thompson, a 45-year-old Indiana native who came to Texas in 1982.

Other schools for gay and lesbian students operate in New York, Toronto and Los Angeles as partnerships between private groups and local school districts. The San Francisco public schools offer programs in all middle and high schools geared toward gay, lesbian and bisexual teens.

Stone said none of the three educators was interested in trying to persuade Dallas school officials to help with the project.

Cosby admits affair, denies paternity claim

NEW YORK (AP) — Bill Cosby, America's most beloved TV dad, testified Tuesday that he paid Autumn Jackson's mother \$100,000 over 20 years, in part because she all but threatened to go public with their brief affair.

Cosby said he also paid for Jackson's schooling and gave her a car — but that's where he drew the line.

"I will be for you a father figure, but I am not your father," Cosby recalled telling Jackson, 22, who claims to be his out-of-wedlock daughter. During cross-examination, however, Cosby admitted he once wanted to know so badly whether Jackson was his daughter that he proposed taking a paternity test — but backed out because he feared the media would find out.

Jackson is on trial for allegedly trying to extort \$40 million from the entertainer by threatening to go to the tabloids with her story.

Cosby has said he does not believe he is Jackson's father, but concedes he had an affair with her mother, Shawn Upshaw. He now declines to take a blood test to determine paternity, and the judge has ruled that the issue is irrelevant in the case.

But Cosby admitted to defense attorney Robert Baum that he once told Jackson he loved her and, wanting "to settle the issue," as Baum put it, had suggested going to Chicago for a paternity test before backing down.

"You feared the test result would be discovered by the media?" Baum said.

"Yes," Cosby said. Prosecutors said there is evidence to believe Cosby is not Jackson's father, including a birth certificate naming a Los Angeles truck driver as her father.

But Baum had said his client was raised to believe Cosby is her father. He denied she committed extortion and said she was simply engaged in a lawful negotiation.

Cosby testified that when Jackson entered college in Florida, he began speaking to her frequently, coaching her to succeed. He put her picture on "The Cosby Show" set after she gave it to him the one time they met, in the early 1990s.

"This is to inspire you to go out and become something," Cosby recalled saying, glaring at Jackson across the courtroom.

Jackson beamed as Cosby arrived to testify. Cosby described his tryst with Upshaw in the mid-1970s. He met her in a Los Angeles hotel and asked her to dance, later inviting her to meet him in Nevada.

"I called her and she came to Las Vegas and we spent time. We had sex," Cosby testified.



Cosby

Poll: Medicare solution appeals to young workers

WASHINGTON (AP) — If they could afford it, grandma and grandpa would have to pay more for Medicare.

That idea, to make better-off elderly people pay more for their coverage, has struck a resonant chord with many Americans, particularly younger workers, recent polls suggest. And President Clinton has hinted he may go along.

The plan is drawing stiff resistance in the House, where members fear retribution from angry retirees. As a bloc, Americans in their 20s and early 30s don't vote in high percentages, particularly in midterm elections. Senior citizens do.

"There's tremendous fear in the House," said Ari Fleischer, spokesman for the GOP-run House Ways and Means Committee.

He said many members vividly recall the outburst among retirees the last time Congress tried "means-testing" Medicare. It was a 1988 law providing catastrophic medical benefits, but requiring wealthier seniors to pay a surcharge for them.

The anger reached the point that a band of demonstrating retirees chased Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill. — then Ways and Means chairman and a principal author — into his car in his home town of Chicago. They then banged the windows and the roof.

Congress repealed the law in 1989. People who are retired, and those near retirement, generally feel that they contributed to Medicare and Social Security through their

working lives and the rules should not be changed now.

House and Senate negotiators are grappling with the divisive issue as they work toward a compromise plan to balance the federal budget in five years.

The means-testing proposal, plus other Medicare provisions, including an increase in the age of eligibility from 65 to 67, appear only in the Senate version.

Raising the eligibility age looks dead in the water and lawmakers are expected to abandon it.

Polls have shown surprisingly strong support for means-testing.

A poll by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center showed that those surveyed favored requiring better-off seniors to pay more, 60 percent to 37 percent.

Strong support for overhauling Medicare comes from younger workers, who increasingly resent paying taxes for generous health benefits for the nation's richest retirees. They worry there'll be little left for them once millions of baby boomers retire.

The political influence of senior citizens shouldn't be minimized, said GOP pollster Frank Luntz.

"1998 will see some of the lowest voting in modern history. But you can bet your bottom dollar the seniors will still show up," Luntz said.

Every House seat is on the ballot next year, as every two years.

LAMPS

Continued from Page 1

According to a story by Laura Lane titled "Housing Services to Phase out Halogen Lamps" in the April 22 issue of the Stanford Daily Online, rules to restrict the use of halogen torchieres will be enforced at Stanford University this fall.

According to a July 29, 1996, press release from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, halogen bulbs can reach a temperature from 970 F to 1,200 F for a 500-watt bulb. The CPSC also conducted tests during which 250-watt, 300-watt and 500-watt bulbs in torchiere lamps started fires in nearby combustible material.

According to an April 7 story in The Battalion titled "Halogen Lamp Causes Blaze," a fire that burned four apartment units at Travis House Apartments on Harvey Road was caused by a halogen lamp.

Elena Bosley, manager of Travis House, said that as a result of the fire, tenants are no longer allowed to have halogen lamps in their apartments.

Bosley said the Residence Life's policy of banning the lamps in residence halls was good because the lamps are dangerous.

But Jon Mies, fire marshal of College Station, said that now the fire department does not believe a halogen lamp caused the Travis House fire.

"When we reconstructed the scene of the accident, the lamp couldn't reach the point of ori-

gin of the fire," he said.

Mies said he has heard of fires across the country started by the lamps, and he thought it was good that they will be banned from A&M residence halls. He said lamps with bulbs that do not produce as much heat are available.

Sasse said the Department of Residence Life found a lamp that looks the same as the halogen lamp many students have now, but its bulbs do not burn as hotly.

Elaine DiGirolamo, assistant to the CEO of Emess Lighting Inc., which is based outside of Pittsburgh, Penn., said her company worked with Ernest Orlando Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories in California to produce a CFL (compact fluorescent light) torchiere fixture. This new fixture contains a bulb that burns cooler and is more energy efficient than halogen bulbs.

She said the fixture looks the same as the one the halogen bulbs are used in.

According to a press release by the Ernest Orlando Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, CFLs reach a temperature of 100 F, as opposed to over 1,000 F that halogen bulbs can reach.

These new lamps have been dubbed "CoolBrite" torchieres by Emess.

Jason Brooks, operating manager of Texas A&M Bookstore, said he has been talking to many companies, including Emess, to get a lamp in the bookstore that can be used as an alternative to halogen lamps. Brooks said he was trying to find a company that will sell the lamp at the best price and will be able to ship them to the

bookstore by August before the fall term starts.

The earliest Emess can get the lamps to bookstore is mid-September and the price is between \$100 and \$120, Brooks said.

Brooks said a prototype of Emess' lamp is in front of the customer service booth on the floor of the bookstore.

Brooks said the light gives off a lot of light and does not burn too hotly.

"You can leave it on all day and still touch the bulb without burning your hand," Brooks said. He said he thinks the lamps will be in stores by October or November, and prices of the lamps should be lower by then.

Williams said he had mixed feelings about banning of halogen lamps.

"I agree with the department because of safety, but the decision will hurt a few people's pocket books," Williams said.

Williams said halogen lamps cost \$15 to \$25. Target in College Station and Wal-Mart's 50 percent in Bryan both carry halogen torchiere floor lamps ranging in price from \$15 to \$50.

LaTrina Williams, a Spence Hall resident and senior chemical engineering major, said she understands why they banned the halogen lamps but she still does not agree with the policy.

"College students should know how to use halogen lamps," Williams said.

LaTrina jokingly said she would make her own lamp before she would buy one as expensive as the alternative lamps Brooks has found for the bookstore.

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