

Insects orbit the Earth for research

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Crickets — more than 1,500 of them — will orbit the Earth for the first time ever in a research mission that may make it easier for humans to colonize the moon or travel to Mars.

The pioneering crickets, along with 18 pregnant mice, 135 snails, 152 rats and 223 fish, are scheduled to take off Thursday aboard the space shuttle Columbia.

Scientists say the mis-

sion is the most exhaustive study yet of how the nervous system changes in space — essential information if NASA ever hopes to set up a moon base or send astronauts to Mars or beyond.

Despite the crowd of crickets, there won't be any chirping.

Crickets chirp by rubbing their wings, and none of the astrocrickets will be old enough to have the wings necessary for serenading (fortu-

nately for Columbia's seven human passengers).

"If they start to sing, then we have a result, an unexpected one," German neurobiologist and cricket expert Eberhard Horn said with a laugh.

Scientists sorted through 10,000 of the garden-variety bugs Monday to get the ones they want.

Among the 1,514 that will fly in a sealed incubator:

824 babies at three distinct ages and 690 eggs that should hatch a few days into the flight.

So what's so special about crickets?

"The crickets have an external gravity sensor so you can see immediately what happens in space with such an animal," Horn said.

Because these gravity sensors project onto a single nerve cell, "you can study identified single nerve cells," he said.

Texas legislature get 'Muzzled'

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — The Texas Legislature received one of 11 tongue-in-cheek Jefferson Muzzle Awards on Monday for barring investment of state money in record companies with artists whose songs promote violence or degrade women.

The awards are given annually by the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression to those who, in the opinion of the center's board, deserve censure for censorship.

The Texas ban covers companies that produce or distribute

music that advocates or even describes violence or illegal drug use. Recording industry representatives are challenging the ban in court, joined by teachers, law officers and others concerned about their pension funds. A court hearing was held in Austin today.

The nationwide awards were announced on the 255th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth. Robert M. O'Neil, the Charlottesville-based center's director, said the awards "give a sense of what the major threats to free speech and press are going on

across the country in any given year."

The Loudoun County Library Board was cited for restricting the information available on its system of Internet computers the nation, O'Neil said. "So restrictive a ban on a livor couldn't get online without the disease."

"The filter blocked with the word 'brow' O'Neil said.

State seeking new teachers

(AP) — On one poster, a tree sprouts dollar bills. On a second, a fist holds a bulging bag of coins.

At first glance, the advertisements look better aimed at gamblers than teachers.

The posters boldly list bonuses for teachers who sign up with the Fort Worth Independent School District: \$500 for those who earned high grades in college, \$1,000 for those who speak two languages, \$2,000 for those who sign contracts before June.

Fort Worth's blunt approach is understandable — the district expects to lose more than 10 percent of its teachers this spring, mostly to retirement.

And it is not alone. Across the country, districts are bracing for a serious shortage of teachers in the next decade as a generation of educators retires and student populations swell.

Anxious school officials are boosting salaries, putting recruiters online and on the road, and offering to pay applicants' relocation costs, find them apartments and even throw them welcome-to-town parties.

But one teachers' group contends that lawmakers and school boards must first boost pay in Texas, which lags at 36th in the nation.

"The problem is not that there is a shortage of qualified teachers, but that there is a shortage of teachers willing to teach for the salaries and benefits offered," John Cole, Texas Federation of Teachers president in Austin, said.

He said better pay and economic benefits would attract qualified teachers.

With late-marrying baby boomers still sending a steady stream of children to school, elementary and secondary enrollments are expected to set records every year until 2007, according to the U.S. Department of Education. And with almost a third of the country's teachers having taught for more than 20 years, the government predicts the nation will need at least 2 million new teachers in the next decade.

But other factors are also squeezing the teacher supply:

— Twenty states have either

passed or are proposing class-size limits, and President Clinton has proposed spending \$7.3 billion to reduce average class size in first, second and third grades from 22 students to 18 by hiring 100,000 new teachers.

— Teaching standards are getting tougher, which could weed out under-performers.

— More new teachers are quitting, particularly in urban areas, as social and physical conditions worsen.

With the need for teachers growing, desperate districts are granting more emergency licenses and "alternative" teaching certificates. Both raise concerns that teaching standards could sink.

Emergency licenses permit people with no teacher training into classrooms if they agree to complete training and become licensed as soon as possible. But overcrowded districts commonly ask states for permission to extend the terms of unlicensed emergency teachers. Eleven percent of teachers in New York City and 7 percent in Arizona have emergency licenses.

WHAT'S UP

Tuesday

- Mexican Student Association:** There will be a movie "The Rise and Fall of the Aztecs" at 3 p.m. in MSC 206. There will be Mexican History lectures by Dr. Henry Schmidt and Dr. Armando Alonzo at 7 p.m. in MSC 206. Call Paco Rangel at 693-0140 for details.
- TAMU Water Ski Club:** A general meeting will be held at 8:30 p.m. in the Student Recreation Center. Contact John at 695-8843 for details.
- Alpha Phi Omega:** Meet to go to the Crestview Retirement Home at 3:30 p.m. in 133 Koldius.
- Aggie Lutherans:** A meeting will be held from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Treehouse, Our Saviors Lutheran Church. Call 694-6663 for details.
- ATM Womens Rugby:** Come join! No experience needed. Practices are from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the pitch on the corner of Texas Ave. and University Dr. Call Nikki at 694-0084 for information.
- A.W.A.R.E.:** There will be a general meeting tonight from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in MSC 205. Call Isai at 696-7366 for details.
- Orthodox Christian Fellowship:** Liturgy will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the All Faith's Chapel. Call Susan at 847-2073 for details.

Wednesday

- ATM Roadrunners:** Meet at 6:00 p.m. in front of G. Rollie White. We will run three to four miles. All students and skill levels are welcome. Call Steve at 847-7905 for details.
- Aggie Optometry Association:** There will be a general meeting and officer elections at 7:00 p.m. in MSC 230. For more info call Carlene at 693-0790.
- Fade to Black Dance Ensemble:** Spring Show, entitled "A Night at the Movies", will be held at 7:30 p.m. in Rudder Theater. Come see Fade to Black dance to the soundtracks of some of your favorite movies.
- ECHO:** There will be admissions representatives from UT San Antonio Medical School in Koldius 111.
- ATM Womens Rugby:** Come join! No experience needed. Practices are from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the pitch on the corner of Texas Ave. and University Dr. Call Nikki at 694-0084 for information.
- ATM Roadrunners:** Meet at 6:00 p.m. in front of G. Rollie White. We will run three to four miles. All students and skill levels are welcome. Call Steve at 847-7905 for details.
- Catholic Students Association:** "Hot Topics" discussion session from 6 to 7 p.m. in

St. Mary's Student Center by Newman Mass at 7:15 and in Rudder Tower.

Study Abroad Programs Office: There will be an informational meeting at 10:00 a.m. in Blizzell Hall. The meeting will promote the '99 program.

TAMU Sailing Club: There will be a meeting at 7:00 p.m. in Rudder Theater. Students interested in sailing to attend. Call Daniel at 847-8642 for more information.

Episcopal Student Center: Celebration of holy eucharist at 6:15 p.m. at 696-0774. Call Father Mark at 696-0774.

Aggie Wranglers: There will be an informational meeting will be held from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. in MSC 292B. For more information call look www.tamu.edu/aggiewranglers

What's Up is a Battalion service lists non-profit student events and activities. Items submitted no later than the advance of the desired publication deadlines and notices events and will not be in the Up. If you have any questions call the newsroom at 845-2111.

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