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JULY 28TH
TAP 54

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696-5570
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Party Safe and Designate a Driver

Space station links with Russian module

KOROZYOV, Russia (AP) — Russian scientists linked the international space station Wednesday with its Russian-made control module, a key component that will allow the first crew to live and work on the long-delayed station.

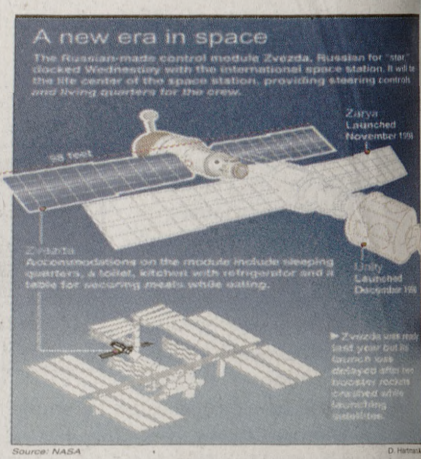
A large screen at Russia's Mission Control showed the components coming together, then briefly lost contact with the station. Once it was clear the linkup had been achieved, the scientists applauded, shook hands and gave each other thumbs-up signs.

With the linkup to the Zvezda control module, the station is ready for its first crew, due to arrive in October. But the space laboratory, a massive 16-nation project headed by the United States, will not be complete for another five years, after more than 40 space flights.

The docking occurred at 4:45 a.m. Moscow time (8:45 p.m. EDT). Space controllers will not know whether the mechanical locking system worked correctly until about an hour and a half after the linkup, officials said. During that period, the station was to pass out of radio contact with Mission Control in Korolyov, just outside Moscow.

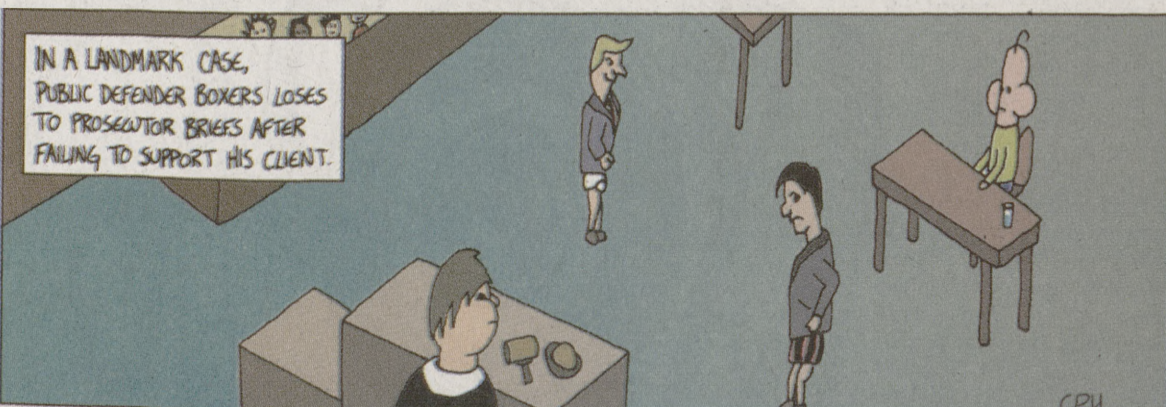
Shortly after docking, Zvezda's solar arrays will begin tracking the sun, and within a few days, its computers will take full control of maintaining the station's orbit.

The 24-ton cylindrical Zvezda — which means "star" in Russian — is crucial for the station's immediate future, providing living quarters and steering controls and distributing electricity.



THE FANTASTICO CHRONICLES

BY J. GOLDFLUTE



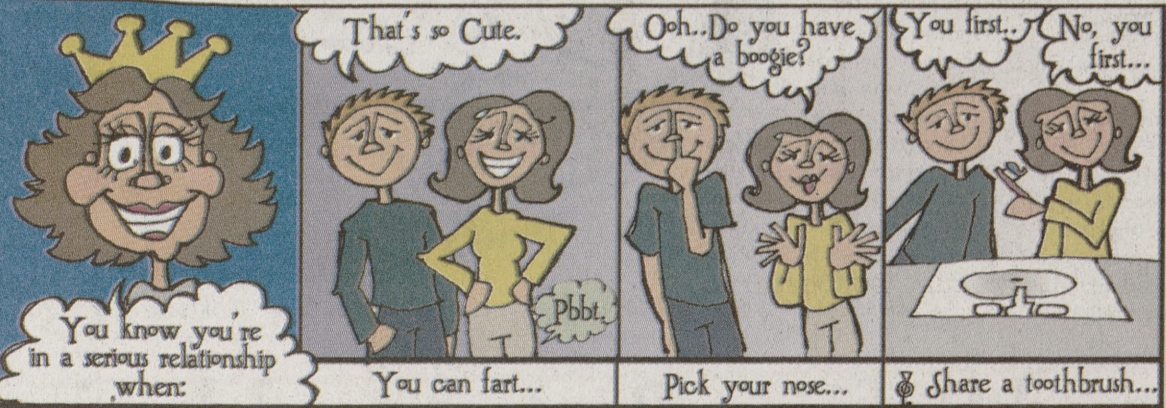
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