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# Endeavour leaves space station, headed home

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Space shuttle Endeavour undocked from the international space station on Monday and headed for home with the one American and two Russians who spent the past six months aboard the orbiting outpost.

"We promise to take good care of space station," astronaut Donald Pettit told its departing commander, cosmonaut Valery Korzun.

Endeavour is due back on Earth on Wednesday, though storms are forecast for Cape Canaveral and could delay the long-overdue homecoming for Korzun, cosmonaut Sergei Treschev and astronaut Peggy Whitson.

They spent an extra 1 1/2 months aloft because of various shuttle problems; Monday was their 180th day in orbit.

The space station's three new occupants are Pettit, astronaut Kenneth Bowersox and cosmonaut Nikolai Budarin. Unlike the first five sets of space station residents, they will spend the next four months in solitude, with no one showing up until it is their turn to go home in March.

"It's so much quieter here now, Houston. I don't know what the deal is," Bowersox radioed.

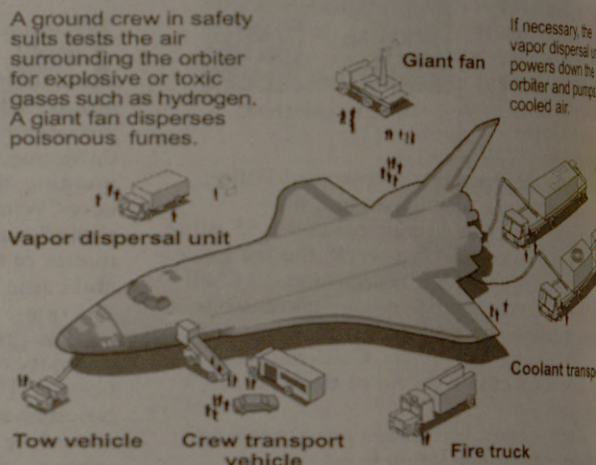
"We're still here with you," Mission Control replied.

"That's good to know," Bowersox said. "We'd be really lonely without you guys."

Endeavour departed after its

## Returning from space

Shuttle Endeavour is scheduled to return from the International Space Station Wednesday, landing either at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida or at Edwards Air Force Base in California. On the runway some 20 to 30 vehicles will greet the orbiter with a team of about 150 personnel.



The crew hatch is opened and a physician performs a brief examination of the astronauts before they leave.

Scientists collect materials from the orbiter performed in space. The Shuttle is then towed to an examination area where remaining fuel is removed and damaged thermal tiles of the orbiter's protective skin are replaced.

SOURCE: NASA  
A crew delivered and installed a new \$390 million girder on the space station. The two spacecraft separated 250 miles above Australia, ending one week of joint flight.

Two of Endeavour's crew performed three spacewalks to hook up the 45-foot girder and correct a design flaw in the air-conditioning lines.

The final spacewalk was especially dramatic. A vital crucial for station construction got snagged on its track by protruding radio antenna.

Herrington, the first American Indian in space, removed obstruction and got the antenna moving again.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### El Paso airport evacuated when suspicious item found

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A concourse at El Paso International Airport was evacuated for about two hours Sunday after an airport screener spotted a suspicious item in the X-ray machine but somehow lost track of it. One airport official described the item as contraband.

"A person might have had a weapon," said Antonio Ortiz, a director of the Transportation Security Administration in El Paso. "My first concern was to make sure people were screened."

The security sweep of the airport's east concourse and passenger rescreenings caused the delay of most aircraft leaving and entering El Paso. Thousands of travelers were affected on one of the airport's busiest days.

"In 30 years of aviation, I've never seen a back-

up quite like this," Pat Abeln, the airport's director of aviation, told the *El Paso Times* in Monday editions. "I've asked for an explanation. TSA supposed to have security measures in place to avoid these kinds of incidents."

### Blaze at house built by former Enron exec deliberately set

HOUSTON (AP) — A blaze at the three-story mansion once owned by former Enron CEO Financial Officer Andrew Fastow was deliberately set, said fire investigators.

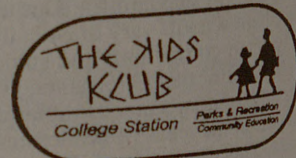
The 11,493-square-foot house, which was sold to another energy company official for \$3.5 million in October, caught fire early Sunday.

The blaze was started at the front door of the home, which is still under construction in an exclusive River Oaks subdivision.

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