

105th YEAR

VOL. 140 NO. 103

TUCSON, ARIZONA, MONDAY, APRIL 13, 1981

25 CENTS 36 PAGES

FINAL

The Arizona Daily Star

Columbia winging around Earth

'Performs like a champ,' astronaut says of shuttle

By HARRY F. ROSENTHAL
The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The space shuttle Columbia shot straight for the heavens on a lower of white-hot flame yesterday and sailed a perfect course around Earth, a spectacular beginning to an American era of making space a work place for mankind.

Everything worked.

"The vehicle is performing just like a champ," astronaut John Young said 9½ hours after lift-off. "It was as smooth as it possibly could go — better than anyone expected on the first flight."

And from rookie astronaut Robert Crippen: "I had a thrill from the moment of lift-off."

Flight 1 of the winged space freighter began on time, soared smoothly into orbit, and flawlessly exercised its cargo-bay doors during a critical early-flight test between 11 and 15 trouble-free times shook off, but officials weren't alarmed.

As Columbia cleared its launch tower, responsibility for its mission shifted from Cape Canaveral to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, which quickly dubbed itself "Shuttle Central."

Flight director Neil Hutchinson, at the Johnson Space Center, said some thermal-protection tiles are missing on the left side of the spacecraft and 4 on the right. "I don't think that's going to bother us," he said. "We are not worried about any other tiles working loose."

He called the Columbia "a super vehicle."

In a burst of blinding beauty, Columbia trails a golden column of flame as it takes two astronauts into space

Boxing 'Bomber' Joe Louis dies at 66

By DENA KLEIMAN
The New York Times

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP) — Former heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis, who held the title for almost 12 years and ranked as one of history's greatest fighters, died yesterday at the age of 66.

"He was in a cardiac-arrest state when he arrived," said nursing supervisor Shirley Brown at Desert Springs Hospital. "They did everything they could to revive him."

Brown said Louis died at 10:05 a.m. PST.

"He had been ill for quite some time. He had been hospitalized before. He had had a stroke and different things," said Brown.

She said Louis' wife, Martha, and some immediate family members were with him when he died.

Louis, confined to a wheelchair since heart surgery in 1977, attended the Larry Holmes-Rever Berwick heavyweight-title fight Saturday night at Caesars Palace.

Called the Brown Bomber for his punch and string of knockout victories, Louis was just 23 when he won the title by knocking out 25-year-old James J. Braddock in the eighth round at Chicago in 1937.

He had a 25-1 record, including 21 knockouts, at the time he was the heavyweight title. His 11 years and eight months as titleholder was the longest continuous reign in heavyweight-title history.

He was saluted by boxing professionals yesterday for his contributions to the cause of black athletes and other blacks.

Teddy Brenner, former president of Madison Square Garden Boxing and a major matchmaker, said, "He opened up boxing to every black fighter. He even led the way for guys like Jackie Robinson in other sports. Every black athlete that followed owes a debt of gratitude to Joe Louis."

George Benton, a former middleweight contender, said, "He was a big inspiration to all black fighters coming up — especially in the 1930s and 40s. He kept a lot of people hanging in, not just fighters."

In 17 years as a boxer — almost four years of that time spent in the Army during World War II — Louis earned nearly \$5 million. An admitted high-liver who often made unrecoverable loans to friends, he had little to show for his earnings when he was thought and was in constant difficulty with the government on income taxes.

When he returned for the first time, on March 1, 1946, he told reporters, "I'm glad to retire. It takes a load off my mind. I could see that I couldn't fight any more."

(See LOUIS PRAISED, Page 1A)

1st man in space

Cosmonaut startled world 20 years ago

By DENA KLEIMAN
The New York Times

NEW YORK — It was 20 years ago yesterday that a man was hurled for the first time into space, propelling mankind into the age of space travel.

The man was a Russian, May Yuri A. Gagarin, who on April 12, 1961, took a 108-minute spin around the earth at a speed of more than 17,800 miles an hour, six times faster than man had ever traveled before, and at a height of 167 miles. He returned safely to earth and as an international hero. Some called him "The Columbus of the Interplanetary Age."

"Let the capitalist countries try to catch up," said Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev in declaring a victory over the United States and its space efforts. Three weeks later, on May 5, the United States sent Col. Alan B. Shepard Jr. up on a suborbital flight.

But it was not until almost a year later that the United States was able to send an astronaut into orbit. That occurred on Feb. 28, 1962, when Lt. Col. John H. Glenn Jr. successfully circled the earth three times.

Still, Gagarin was the first human to fly in space. He traveled 62 miles higher than Shepard, four times faster and 108 times farther. Most significantly, Gagarin had actually circled the earth, whereas Shepard had spent only about 15 minutes in his suborbital flight.

Gagarin's mission prompted President John F. Kennedy to send an urgent memorandum to Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, who served as chairman of the National Aeronautics and Space Council. It asked: "Do we have a chance of beating the Soviets by putting a laboratory in space, or by a trip around the moon, or by a rocket to land in the moon, or by a rocket to go to the moon and back with a man?"

Johnson's reply, delivered to the president on April 29, strongly recommended that the nation embark on a program to land an astronaut on the moon. On May 25, in an historic declaration, Kennedy proposed to Congress that the nation commit itself to the venture of landing an astronaut on the moon "before this decade is out."

Still, it was Gagarin who electrified the world, catapulting mankind into a new era of possibility.

With this 27-year-old Soviet air force pilot's journey around the globe, mankind had for the first time moved outside its element.

Frogs in space

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — Frogs may accompany astronauts on future space-shuttle missions in an experiment designed to study reproduction without gravity, according to a University of Michigan biologist.

George W. Naeff, director of the university's Amphibian Facility, has designed the experiment to study the effects of weightlessness on the development of frog eggs fertilized in space. On Earth, fertilization and reproduction always occur in the presence of gravitational forces, he said.

Benzonites, railroad dispute trains' safety

By PAUL TURNER
The Arizona Daily Star

BENSON — At midnight, from almost any hilltop, you can see the windbound train coming long before they make a sound.

At night, the single headlights on the lead engine snakes toward this Cochise County town of 4,300 like a high-beam Cyclops tearing through the darkened desert.

In minutes, the silent approach gives way to growling, rolling thunder, as one of the Southern Pacific Railroad's approximately 20 freight trains per day chugs through the heart of Benson. For most residents, the sight and sound of the big trains is second nature. Conversations take a timeout while the engineer blows his whistle. Motorists pull up and wait at the three track crossings.

This is a railroad town.

But at least some of the locals are afraid that the steel-and-smoke enterprise that gave Benson much of its reason to exist also threatens to wipe out a considerable chunk of the town that sits almost within spitting distance of the SP's main east-west track.

John R. Nelson, a retired Air Force sergeant who is running for a seat on the town council, fears that a spot where the track curves may eventually be the site of a disaster. "A wreck there with an explosion would wipe out this whole town," he said.

Nelson and others say the trains move through Benson at what they feel are unsafe speeds.

"I've clocked them at more than 40 (mph)," said Donald W. Crump, operator of a window-washing business.

Southern Pacific spokesman says the railroad has an exemplary safety record, and that critics have been sidetracked from the truth by rumors and inaccurate news.

(See BENSONITES FEAR, Page 1A)

Weather

Monday is sun day. Skies will be mostly sunny today with some high clouds. The high will be in the low 80s, and the low tonight will be in the mid-60s. Yesterday's high and low were 81 and 63.

Heavy thunderstorms stretched from Oklahoma into Ohio yesterday. Tornadoes were sighted in Ohio and Oklahoma, and soft-hill hail was reported near Rosewell, Okla. Showers were scattered from the Great Lakes eastward to the mid-Atlantic coast. Showers continued in the Pacific Northwest, with rain turning to snow in the northern Rockies.

Today, showers and thunderstorms are expected to be scattered across the nation from the mid-Atlantic Coast across the Plains to the southern and central Rockies.

Yesterday's national temperature extremes were 81 at Alamosa, Colo., and 87 at Fresno, Texas. Details on Page 4A.

News

Minorities reassured. Vice President George Bush, standing in for President Reagan, defended proposed budget cuts and reassured a largely black audience at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama that the administration is not insensitive to the needs of minorities. Page 1A.

New VD problem. The nation's leading venereal disease may now be chlamydia, which is causing problems because it cannot yet be diagnosed easily, say researchers at the National Center for Disease Control. Page 1A.

Con reopens murder door. A convicted murderer in Florida, who was spared from execution three years ago because he told a judge he had "cloned the door" on a life of crime, is held on charges of killing two people who were tracking him down after a prison escape. Page 2A.

3rd night of London violence. Police report 40 people injured during a third night of violent clashes in south London's poverty-ridden Brixton district after angry youths pelted Home Secretary William Whitelaw with screams of "Sing Hell." Page 1A.

Salvador aid condemned. The head of the Catholic Church in El Salvador condemns U.S. military aid to the junta, saying the country's problems are being resolved by measures rather than by negotiation. Page 2A.

The Master — Goller

Tom Watson releases after winning the Masters Tournament by two shots over Jack Nicklaus and Johnny Miller in Augusta, Ga. Story on Page 1B. (AP)

Deviation warning. Deviation from communist theory has "fatal consequences," a Soviet leader warns at an East German party congress dominated by communist on Poland. Page 1A.

Sports

NBA playoffs. The Phoenix Suns lose, giving the Kansas City Kings a 3-1 advantage in the playoff series, the Boston Celtics out the Chicago Bulls, and the other series are even. Pages 1B and 1B.

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