

Engineer testifies in shuttle disaster

Says NASA budget for safety diverted into 'slush fund'

By JIM ROWLEY
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — One of the Morton Thiokol engineers who tried to stop the fatal launch of the space shuttle Challenger claims the company received money from NASA to hire 18 quality control and safety people but "the money was used instead as a slush fund for Thiokol."

Engineer Roger Boisjoly said also, in a paper filed with U.S. District Court, that his warning in July 1985 of possibly catastrophic failure of seals on the shuttle booster rockets was immediately classified as "company private" by Thiokol and withheld from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The Challenger exploded on Jan. 28, 1986 after 73 seconds of flight, killing the crew of seven. The Rogers Commission that investigated the disaster found it was caused by a leak of hot gases streaming from the ship's right booster rocket.

Boisjoly is suing the company on his own behalf and on behalf of the taxpayers. He accuses Morton Thiokol — the sole manufacturer of booster rockets for the space shuttle — of fraud by falsely certifying the safety of the rubberlike O-ring seals at places where rocket booster segments are joined.

Efforts to reach company officials by telephone for comment were not immediately successful. The firm said also that it "will explore all legal means to redress any damage to its reputation"

stemming from Boisjoly's charges.

The engineer's charges were contained in a paper that had been held under seal by U.S. District Judge Harold Greene since it was filed on April 2. The government had requested the document be withheld from the public so that Morton Thiokol would not know that the FBI had begun a criminal investigation of the company.

During a conference between the government and Greene on March 11, also under seal until Thursday, Justice Department lawyer David W. Long said employees of Thiokol had gone to the FBI with "substantial allegations of fraud."

The FBI began a criminal investigation of Morton Thiokol after the allegations were made to agents in Salt Lake City on Jan. 17.

Inquirer cops three Pulitzers for 1987

By JERRY SCHWARTZ
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — The Philadelphia Inquirer won three 1987 Pulitzer Prizes yesterday, including two for investigative reporting, and The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times also captured two of the prestigious awards.

The Pittsburgh Press won the public service award for its revelation of the inadequacy of the Federal Aviation Administration's medical screening of airline pilots. The work by Matthew Breis and Andrew Schneider led to significant reforms. Schneider also shared the 1986 award for specialized reporting.

The Inquirer's John Woestendiek won a Pulitzer for his prison reporting, including an account of the innocence of a man convicted of murder. Woestendiek, who had been one of three finalists in the general news reporting category, was given the investigative reporting award.

A second investigative award went to Daniel R. Eddle, H.G. Bissinger and Fredrick N. Tubsky of the Inquirer for their series "Disorder in the Court," involving scandals in the Philadelphia court system. The stories led to federal and state investigations.

The Pulitzer Prize for feature writing was awarded to Steve Twomey of The Philadelphia Inquirer for a profile of life aboard an aircraft carrier.

The Inquirer newsroom burst into cheers and applause as the official announcements came. Sam McKeel, publisher of the Inquirer, called it "a great day, a great year and the continuation of a great trend."

The specialized reporting prize to Alex S. Jones of The New York Times was for "The Fall of the House of Bingham," which was described as "a skillful and sensitive report of a powerful newspaper family's bickering and how it led to the sale of a famed media empire." The Bingham's owned The Louisville Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times.

The Times' other Pulitzer was for national reporting and went to its staff for its coverage of the aftermath of the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger, including "stories that identified serious flaws in the shuttle's design and in the administration of America's space program."

"This place has been popping for the last half hour," said Max Frankel, executive editor of The New York Times. "We're excited, we're exuberant, we're proud as can be."

The other national reporting prize went to the Miami Herald staff for its coverage of the Iran-Contra scandal.

The explanatory journalism award went to Jeff Lyon and Peter Gorner of the Chicago Tribune for a series on gene therapy.

The prize for general news reporting was awarded to the Akron Beacon Journal staff for its coverage of the attempted takeover of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. by a European financier.

The international award went to Michael Parks of the Los Angeles Times for his coverage of South Africa.

"South Africa is one of the more difficult countries to cover, given the present restriction on the press," said Alvin Shuster, foreign editor of the Times. "Parks is a true professional and has provided our readers with unique insight into that society," Shuster said.

FCC tightens obscenity laws

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — The Federal Communications Commission yesterday asked the Justice Department to consider prosecuting a California radio station for broadcasting an allegedly obscene program and issued warnings to two other stations — including one airing controversial morning-show personality Howard Stern.

The actions put radio stations across the country on notice that the FCC will be imposing a stricter standard for adherence to laws prohibiting the broadcast of indecent or obscene material over the airwaves.

The FCC vote took aim at areas of broadcasting formerly considered safe harbor by radio programmers — programs aired after 10 p.m. and material that merely avoids repeated use of obscene words.

The five-member commission agreed that material broadcast by Pacifica Foundation Inc.'s KPFF-FM, Los Angeles, containing graphic depictions of sex acts was indecent and may have crossed the line to obscenity. The commission voted to refer that case to the Justice Department for possible prosecution.



AP Wirephoto
Scales
Illinois zoologist Robert James fondly hugs his pet python as school children hold up their end. James, with his mobile petting zoo is on a 100-school lecture tour through New England.

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April 3, 1925: Fearing the spread of influenza, Dr. J.P. Ritenour issued a list of nine "don'ts" for students. Such modern medical advice included: "Don't fail to keep your feet dry and warm; Don't fail to sneeze and cough into your handkerchief; Don't be irregular in your habits." Read all about it.

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state news briefs

Dwyer' widow seeks House seat
HARRISBURG (AP) — The widow of state Treasurer R. Budd Dwyer will return to western Pennsylvania and run for a state House seat, according to a report published yesterday.

The Philadelphia Daily News reported that Joanne Dwyer, 47, of Hershey, would move home to Meadville, Crawford County, and seek the seat held by Connie G. Maine, a first-term Democrat.

Reached at home yesterday afternoon, Dwyer declined to discuss the report. "I have no comment right now," she said, adding she didn't have time to answer questions.

Man charged in daughter's death
ERIE, Pa. (AP) — Police in Erie filed criminal charges yesterday against a 39-year-old city man who allegedly left his infant daughter locked in their second-floor apartment, where she died in a fire.

Magistrate Kay Pohl arraigned William King on charges of involuntary manslaughter, reckless endangerment and endangering the welfare of a child. She ordered King jailed in lieu of \$25,000 cash bond.

A complaint filed by Erie police Det. David Bradley says King left his daughter, Mariella King, 6 months, and Taywan Beason, 3, April 7 in the apartment they shared with the children's mother. The fire killed the girl. The boy was rescued by passers-by. King was found in a tavern, and the only exit from the apartment was locked, police said.

Program simulates acid rain cycle
STATE COLLEGE (AP) — A new computer simulation program developed for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency could allow scientists to track acid rain from small-scale lakes and give policy-makers more information for setting emission-control standards, project researchers say.

The Acid Deposition Modeling Project is a \$5 million research effort, which began in June 1983, by the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo., and Penn State University.

Federal environmental researchers are already working with a prototype of the project, and should begin full testing on a more comprehensive model later this year, said Julius Chang, director of the EPA-funded project at the private research center in Colorado.

nation news briefs

Hinckley denied leave from hospital
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — Presidential assistant John W. Hinckley Jr. lost his chance to leave a mental hospital unescorted to spend Easter Sunday with his parents following an uproar over revelations that he corresponded last year with triple-murderer Theodore Bundy.

St. Elizabeths Hospital withdrew its request for a 12-hour pass for Hinckley, who was committed to the mental hospital after his 1981 attempt to assassinate President Reagan.

The hospital said it wanted to take a detailed look at documents taken from Hinckley's room "to assess the clinical significance of writings and other materials belonging to Mr. Hinckley which were heretofore unexamined by the hospital staff."

Cancer ranking scale developed
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — Scientists have developed a scale for ranking the potential hazard to humans of natural and man-made chemicals that cause cancer in animals, a measure they say takes into account real-life exposure to the substances.

Researchers at the University of California, in Berkeley, said yesterday that their system — which, for example, rates a daily glass of beer as a greater cancer hazard than some pesticide pollution — is designed to help people assess the dangers of the many carcinogens they hear about.

Ames, with Retae McGaw and Lois Swirsky Gold of the university's Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, said their scale rates possible cancer hazards to people based upon the known potency of a substance in animals and the likely human exposure over a lifetime.

FCC votes to up phone line charges
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — The Federal Communications Commission voted yesterday to increase the monthly line charge paid by residential telephone subscribers by \$1.50 over the next two years, beginning with a six-cent boost in July.

The increase — which sets the charge at \$3.50 by April 1989 — won unanimous support of the five-member commission as a way to further reduce long-distance rates and discourage large business users from leaving the public phone network to build their own networks.

world news briefs

Tutu defies speech restriction
JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Archbishop Desmond Tutu and 46 fellow Anglican clergymen today defied new restrictions on anti-apartheid actions and appealed to President P.W. Botha to free detainees or bring them to trial.

Meanwhile, a judge today set an April 28 hearing on a challenge to some of the restrictions.

Emergency regulations imposed by police last weekend prohibit organized appeals or campaigns to release detainees.

"With respect sir, we believe the valid response that law-abiding citizens should make to these regulations is openly to disobey them as we are doing now," the clergymen said in an open letter to Botha. "We do so deliberately and consciously, out of Christian conscience."

S. African court overrules police ban
CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — A court overturned a police ban on an anti-apartheid meeting shortly before it was scheduled to start, and the Rev. Allan Boesak went ahead with a speech denouncing tightened restrictions on dissent.

"This government is a danger to this country," Boesak said. "We do not let dangerous people run around the streets. . . . Why do we let criminals into Parliament to do what they want?"

The meeting Wednesday night was sponsored by the United Democratic Front and attended by about 650 people at Cape Town's city hall.

It had been banned by the regional police commissioner as a potential threat to public safety. The ban was overturned by a three-judge panel of the Cape Town Supreme Court following an appeal by the United Democratic Front, the country's largest anti-apartheid coalition.

Rev. Moon assaulted in S. Korea
SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A close confidant of Unification Church leader the Rev. Sun Myung Moon was pelted with stones and eggs at a university yesterday by students who called him a "pro-American flunky," witnesses said.

The witnesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Park Bohi was unhurt but at least one of his bodyguards was injured. A young man took off his jacket and put it over Park's head, and Park was escorted out an hour later.

Park, a retired army lieutenant colonel, was to have spoken at the privately run Korea University on "Korean Unification."

"We don't like the Unification Church because it is close to the government," one student said.

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