

WEATHER DELAYS SHUTTLE LIFTOFF

Flight Is Delayed for at Least
24 Hours After False Alarm
Over a Pressure Valve

By WARREN E. LEARY
Special to The New York Times

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug. 1 — Threatening weather today forced another postponement of the planned 42nd space shuttle flight.

The launching of the Atlantis shuttle, postponed twice before by technical problems, was put off today because of worsening weather around the Kennedy Space Center. The weather at the beginning of the launching period was extremely good, but there was a delay while flight controllers checked out a suspected problem in the shuttle's cabin pressurization system.

"We were looking very good at the beginning of the window, but after the first half hour, it deteriorated rapidly," said Staff Sgt. Salinda Larabee, an Air Force meteorologist. "The problem was the threat of rain showers and, to some extent, high winds."

More Computer Problems

The delay was to be for 24 hours, but late this evening as engineers prepared for a launching attempt on Friday, they noticed a problem in an electronic data processing unit.

Technicians became concerned about erratic performance in one of the 23 units that link the shuttle's main computers with major system components. This processing unit converts and formats computer signals and is located in the rear of the crew compartment.

Mitch Barnes, a spokesman for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, said technicians later isolated the problem in a backup part of the unit. "The board that was causing the problem was a spare not being used on this flight, so we can go on without it," he said. Flight officials continued the countdown.

Testing a Pressure Valve

Before the launching was canceled today, space agency officials had been concerned about showers at the beginning of the period and the possibility of thunderstorms and high winds in the afternoon, Sergeant Larabee said.

The initial delay in today's launching attempt came as the five-member crew was conducting last-minute



Associated Press

Crew members of the space shuttle Atlantis preparing for liftoff yesterday before threatening weather canceled the flight. From left were Comdr. Michael A. Baker, G. David Low, Col. James C. Adamson, Col. John E. Blaha and Dr. Shannon W. Lucid, rear.

checks before the mission to launch a communications satellite. Controllers could not verify if one of two pressure-control valves in the shuttle's cabin was operating properly and several attempts by the astronauts to open and close the valve were inconclusive.

While engineers conducted pressure tests that eventually indicated that a faulty warning sensor was the problem, the weather changed for the worse and Robert Sieck, the launching director, decided to call off the attempt.

The crew of the Atlantis is to put a fourth Tracking and Data Relay Satellite into orbit 22,300 miles above the Earth. The satellite will complete a \$3 billion communications network designed to funnel data from other satellites back to earth. The system allows almost continuous communications between the ground and spacecraft in lower orbits that produce large amounts of data, like the Hubble Space Telescope, space shuttles and military spy satellites.

Baby Deaths Found High in Rural Areas

Infant mortality rates are as high in nonurban areas of America as in the nation as a whole, but the problems there are often ignored, the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation says in a new report.

The report, "Infant Survival in Rural America," is the first to document the distinct problems contributing to high rates of infant mortality in nonmetropolitan areas, where one in five of all infant deaths in the United States occurs, the foundation said.

According to the report, more than 8,000 babies born in 1988 in nonmetropolitan areas — towns of less than 20,000 people and in rural areas — died before reaching their first birthdays. The infant mortality rate in these areas was 9.8 deaths for 1,000 live births, about equal to 10 deaths for 1,000 rate in metropolitan areas, the same as the national rate.

In some nonurban areas, the report said, infant mortality reaches far higher levels than in cities.

For example, the 21 rural counties in Alabama had an infant mortality rate of 14.6 in 1988 as against New York City's rate of 13.2. Alabama's infant mortality rate for small towns was also higher, at 13.6.

High Rate in Harlem

In selected neighborhoods in inner cities, the infant mortality rates can far exceed those in metropolitan areas, which the report identified as cities and their suburbs. In central Harlem, for example, there are about 23 deaths for every 1,000 births.

In issuing the report, to be made public Monday, the March of Dimes joins critics of Healthy Start, a campaign President Bush proposed earlier this year to attack infant mortality in 10 sites with high infant death rates. The sites have not yet been selected.

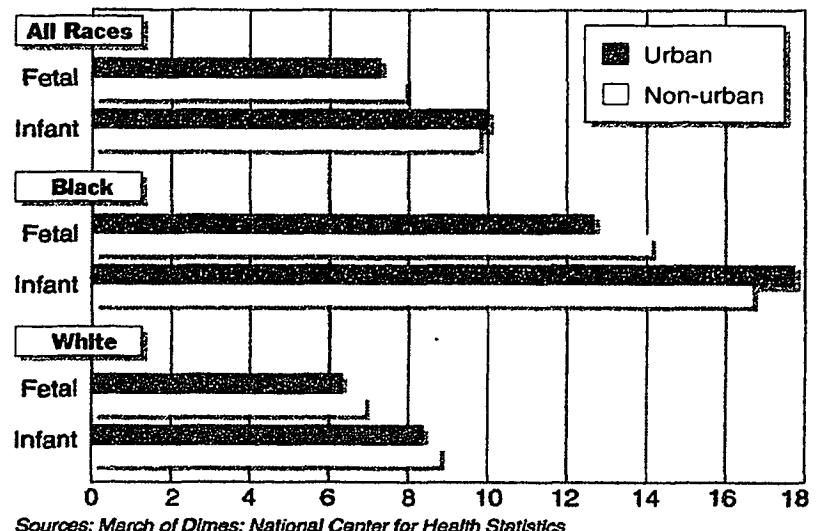
"The needs of mothers and babies in rural America are being overlooked," said Dr. Jennifer L. Howse, president of the March of Dimes. "Rural areas are still very much underserved in health care, especially prenatal care, and they are under-represented in visibility."

The March of Dimes report recommended that at least three rural areas be included in Healthy Start. It also urged Congress not to cut any of the \$686 million earmarked for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant program. The money can be used for new prenatal health programs.

The foundation also called for an additional \$70 million to improve prenatal programs at the approximately 600 federally financed community and

Infant Mortality

Rates per 1,000 live births. Fetal deaths are those after 20 weeks of pregnancy; infant deaths are those during the first year after birth.



Sources: March of Dimes; National Center for Health Statistics

The New York Times

Complaints that rural America is being overlooked.

migrant health centers and a \$40 million increase for the National Health Service Corps. The corps provides incentives to doctors and other health providers to work in remote areas where health services are scarce.

Problems Are the Same

Dr. Howse said that many of the problems that contribute to infant mortality are the same in rural and urban areas: poverty, illiteracy and inadequate housing. But some of the problems, such as a lack of transportation and the shortage of health care providers, is particularly acute in rural areas. In addition, access to specialized services such as genetic screening, counseling and treatment to prevent birth defects is even more limited.

"Pregnant women should not have to travel 50 miles or more to get prenatal care," Dr. Howse said. "A mother should not have to travel more than an hour to bring her sick baby to a doctor. Yet this is often the sad reality of

health care in rural America today and as a result, babies die."

Kay Johnson, a senior health policy adviser at the foundation and the author of the report, said rural areas are often overlooked because smaller populations mean fewer babies are born and thus, fewer babies die. But while the actual numbers are small in comparison to cities, the ratio of births to deaths is just as high.

The report's findings are based on figures compiled in 1988 by the National Center for Health Statistics. They are the most recent reliable figures available to assess rural areas in detail.

Ms. Johnson said she first studied nonmetropolitan areas and then looked at the truly rural areas. She found that more than three-quarters of the deaths in nonmetropolitan areas occurred in the most sparsely settled rural communities. In cities the highest mortality rates are often found in the most densely populated neighborhoods.

In 22 states, rural areas had infant mortality rates at or above the national average, the study found. In Missouri, for example, the 68 rural counties had a combined infant mortality rate of 16.7 deaths for 1,000 births as against 10.1 for the state as a whole and 10.7 for all nonmetropolitan counties in the state.

The study found that birth defects and accidents caused slightly more deaths in nonmetropolitan areas, while low birth weight and premature birth were more prevalent in metropolitan areas.

There were a number of other findings.

About two-thirds of all nonmetropolitan counties have no prenatal care.

Rural families are more likely than those in urban areas to be uninsured.

Infants born in rural areas appear to have a slight survival advantage in the first month of life over infants born in metropolitan areas.

Stillbirth or miscarriage is more common among people in nonurban areas, particularly blacks.

And from one month to one year of age, infants in rural areas have a higher death rate than babies living in cities, 4 against 3.5.

Midair Collision Kills Pilots

SILICA, Kan., Aug. 1 (AP) — Two small cargo planes under contract to United Parcel Service collided near this town Wednesday, killing the two pilots. The planes, which carried no passengers, had taken off from Wichita Mid-Continent Airport shortly before the crash, said Jerome Walburn, assistant air traffic manager at the Wichita tower.



Chocuyens, right, a California condor chick, is one of two condors that are to be released into the wild this fall as an experiment.

Pulled From Extinction, Condors to Be Freed

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— the California and the Andean, of which several thousand still exist in South America. But the story of the California condor, formally *Gymnogyps californianus*, has been an especially dispiriting chronicle of the human species' cruel dominion over the animal world. Fossil evidence shows that by the end of the Pleistocene epoch, about 100,000 to 200,000 years ago, California condors ranged over much of North America, as far to the east as Florida and upstate New York. When the first European explorers reached the West Coast, the birds were common from Canada to Baja California in Mexico.

But by the turn of the 20th century, no more than a few hundred condors remained. They were not given legal protection under California law until 1953, when there were fewer than 100 left. In 1967, they appeared on the Federal Government's first list of endangered species. Concern turned to crisis in 1985, when six of the wild birds, which by that time were closely moni-

tored, suddenly disappeared. Others were found dead of lead or cyanide poisoning or hunters' bullets.

The elaborate recovery plan has cost more than \$10 million, but the captive breeding at the two zoos has far exceeded expectations. In all, 25 chicks have been hatched since 1988, only one of which has died, last week. Normally, female condors lay one egg a year, but scientists found that breeding could be accelerated by removing the egg from the nest just after it was laid, inducing the mother to lay another.

Mr. Kiff said a central concern was preserving a full genetic pool to prevent inbreeding. Therefore, the two chicks selected for release have at least five siblings each from the same parents, and the siblings will be kept in the zoo as a genetic hedge in the event the two released chicks die.

In a few weeks, the chicks will be taken to the Sepe Condor Sanctuary, a 35,000-acre tract owned by the United States Forest Service in the rugged, dusty mountains of central Ventura County. The tactic is to replicate the

natural fledgling process, in which the young condor normally stays in the nest for the first three months, then jumps out and stays nearby for another three or four months before flying off. The process has been used successfully with the closely related Andean condors in Colombia.

So when the two chicks reach three months, they will be placed on "hack" towers, large platforms mounted on telephone poles. A protective net will confine and protect them for a few months. Uncontaminated food, in the form of stillborn calves, will be provided by biologists. The birds seem to grow up better in groups, so a few Andean condor chicks will be put into the wild at the same time.

The netting will be removed next December or January. "We're using the Montessori approach — we'll let them go when they want," said Mr. Kiff, who is curator of ornithology at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History and director of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology.

Critics Now Excited

Skeptics have asked what will prevent the birds from suffering the same fate as previous wild ones, considering that the habitat is similar or even worse because of new suburban development and "ranchettes" in the mountains north of Los Angeles.

To protect them after release, scientists will closely monitor the two birds with special radio tracking devices and return them to Sepe should they wander too far. Shooting a condor is a Federal felony that can bring a fine of up to \$20,000 and two years in jail. But the bigger fear is that they might consume carrion tainted with pesticides or lead pellets from hunters.

David Klinger, spokesman for Marvin Plener, Pacific regional director of the fish and wildlife service in Portland, Ore., said that efforts were being made to have hunters in the area remove wounded animals so that the birds do not consume lead fragments from bullets. He said the agency was also asking ammunition manufacturers to produce copper bullets.

The roundup of birds in 1987 stirred an angry protest from the National Audubon Society, which withdrew from participating in the condor recovery program. But today Glenn E. Olson, western regional vice president of the society in Sacramento, Calif., said that the roundup was a "wise" decision. "We are very excited about the idea of restoring the birds to the wild and that it has gone so quickly," he said.

It is not known for certain how long condors live in the wild, but Mr. Kiff said that some may survive as long as parrots, about 100 years.



CLASSICAL RADIO HIGHLIGHTS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2

5:30 AM-10 AM BRIGHT & EARLY with Gregg Whiteside & Ed Stanton: Timely information from The New York Times and timeless music including Suk's Towards a New Life

FRIDAY IN NEW YORK

10 AM-6 PM Music by Vivaldi, Strauss, Berlioz, M. Haydn, Shostakovich, Beethoven, Delius and Berlioz. Highlight: Shostakovich: The Gadfly. Gallop and Dance, 2-3 PM. Hosts: Bob Jones (10AM-3PM); Lloyd Moss (3-6 PM)

NEW YORK AT SIX: News and features from New York Times correspondents and columnists, including book reviewer Michiko Kakutani

7 PM CHASE MANHATTAN PRESENTS OPERA FROM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER featuring members of The New York City Opera: highlights from "La Boheme"

8 PM GTE PRESENTS SYMPHONY HALL: Brahms: Symphony No. 4

9 PM Elgar: Cello Concerto; Mozart: Quintet in E-flat for Piano and Winds (K. 452); Tchaikovsky: Francesca da Rimini

MONDAYS AND FRIDAYS AT 7:35 A.M. LISTEN TO "THE CULTURE PAGE" SPONSORED BY ITT

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 3

9 AM Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 2; Chopin: Ballade No. 1; Ravel: Overture de féerie

10 AM Berlioz: Les Troyens: Royal Hunt & Storm; Mozart: Horn Concerto No. 2 (K. 417); Rodrigo: Musique para un jardin

11 AM Haydn: Symphony No. 27; Rachmaninoff: The Rock; Dvorak: Romance in F minor

NOON Elgar: Foissart Overture; Handel: Organ Concerto No. 4, Op. 4; Falla: Three Corned Hat: Three Dances; Debussy: Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

1:30 PM SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT THE OPERA: Ballo's "Mefistofele" with Samuel Ramey, Plácido Domingo, Eva Marton; Giuseppe Patane conducting. Sponsored by The New York City Opera

5 PM PRUDENTIAL SECURITIES PRESENTS THE MUSIC MOUNTAIN CHAMBER SERIES: Mozart: Quartet No. 19 (K. 465); Respighi: Il Tramonto (The Sunset); Dvorak: Quartet No. 12; Franciscan String Quartet; RoseMarie Freni, mezzo-soprano

10 PM THE LISTENING ROOM with Robert Sherman: Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 1; Mendelssohn: Variaciones Concertantes; Respighi: Four Pieces for Violin and Piano; Wolf-Ferrari: Idillio-Concertino; Ibert: Paris; Poulenc: Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra