

# News Digest

## 'Worldnet'

### U.S. to send its message worldwide through TV

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration plans to use satellites and cable television to get its message across to a bigger slice of the non-communist world.

Last April, the United States Information Agency, moving away from what one of its officials calls its "backwater" status, embraced TV technology and started beaming two hours a day of television programming to European cable television systems. USIA claims it now reaches more than one million Europeans through a number of cable companies.

By the end of next year, USIA will extend the service to Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

USIA calls its TV service "Worldnet." The centerpiece is a daily 30-minute magazine show called "America Today," a combination of news, features and

interviews.

The satellite feed recently has included interviews with singer Pearl Bailey, Queen Noor of Jordan, author James Michener, astronaut Sally Ride and polio vaccine pioneer Dr. Jonas Salk.

A weekly "Science World" show offers documentaries produced by USIA with the help of American corporations.

Chrysler Corp. cooperated in one of them, showing off its computerized auto assembly line. On another, TRW told how it was able to capture an errant satellite and put it on its proper path.

The service is part of the Information Agency's effort to use technology to promote the administration's political views and to tell the story of America's people, science and culture.

The Soviet Union, not surprisingly, is

not pleased by the celestial broadcasting operation. A Moscow commentator said last year Worldnet is being "used by Washington to impose its foreign policy line upon other countries."

The trans-oceanic experiment began in November 1983 when the administration, stung by foreign criticism of the U.S.-led invasion of Grenada the previous month, arranged a satellite interview featuring top U.S. officials and 40 journalists based at five U.S. embassies in Europe.

A month later, USIA achieved another breakthrough when it arranged an extra-terrestrial news conference with the crew of the Earth-orbiting shuttle Challenger, 147 miles aloft. Taking part were President Reagan in Washington, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Bonn and 70 European journalists in eight countries.

## Oregon professor uses humor to ease the tensions of exams

FOREST GROVE, Ore. — Humor helps students to remember more, says Dr. Byron D. Steiger, who uses cartoons on class examination papers. An associate professor of sociology at Pacific University, he points out that sociology is a study of the human condition, and that humor certainly applies.

"Who is it that tells the king the truth? It's the fool or the court jester. Humor can get across ideas that would be unacceptable otherwise," he said.

Steiger often uses a cartoon on the cover of a test to help students relax and insure that they all start the exam at the same time. Cartoons also are included in the body of the test. Steiger has found that if the student understands the preceding cartoon, he can answer the question.

He cites as an example studying the theory of deferred awards that serve a purpose.

"In the case of preparing to enter the work force, people learn that some jobs require more skill and training," he notes. "The gratification has to be deferred while the skills are acquired. However, people are often motivated to work toward this goal — the award, or the payoff or the carrot, comes at the end."

To illustrate, Steiger often uses a series of rat maze cartoons with the carrot at the end of the maze.

An example of a punch line from a cartoon Steiger has used on a test when the class was studying the efficiency of the jury system: "We find the defendant guilty, the lawyers incompetent and the judge pompous."

Steiger has used cartoons in classes and on tests for 10 years and has a collection of at least a thousand cartoons, sorted by classes in which he can apply them.

"Cartoonists make us look at the world in a different perspective, so we can't take anything for granted," Steiger says.

In the area of teaching, he adds, "You have to remain interested in what you're teaching. Collecting and using cartoons to fit courses keeps me more intellectually alive."

Some years Steiger has even taught a Sociology of Humor course, which is not standard fare in all sociology departments. He has trouble finding good cartoons for this course because there are not many cartoons about humor itself.

"I get a kick out of the cartoons on test papers. The students like it. It

helps learning," Steiger says.

Some students have said, "Keep doing it. It's the only interesting thing on the exams," he reports. Others have said more seriously that cartoons break up the sections of the exam and help break down examination tensions.

Debra Watros, a Pacific senior from Beaverton, Ore., said that the cartoons on tests "are really different. I've never seen anything like it before. It takes the tension off, loosens everyone up and humanizes the professor."

Another student, Cecilia Romero, a junior from Kahului, Hawaii, said that a cartoon at the beginning of the exam and one in the middle help her to relax. "They pertain to the test and can help me form an additional viewpoint about the topic which I can use in any essay. They help me remember illustrations to support what I am writing."

What do Steiger's teaching colleagues think? Some of them frown on the practice, Steiger admits. Others simply accept it as Steiger's style, and they also accept cartoons he finds and sends them related to their teaching fields.

"A professor should be an ally to the student, not an adversary," says Steiger. "If using humor helps, I'm all for it."

## In Brief

### Arafat, Hussein hold crucial talks

AMMAN, Jordan — King Hussein and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat are holding their most important talks in a year, discussing a new formula that might overcome some U.S. objections to dealing with the PLO, a Palestinian source said Monday.

The highly placed source said the formula would build on the year-old Hussein-Arafat agreement to offer peace to Israel and create a Palestinian state confederated with Jordan. He made his remarks on condition of anonymity in a briefing with four reporters.

Arafat met Jordanian Prime Minister Zaid Rifai on Monday to follow up two meetings the previous day with Hussein, and the source said the "decisive" PLO-Jordanian meetings would continue until Saturday.

### Reagan speech more 'visionary'

WASHINGTON — President Reagan's fifth State of the Union address, tailored for tonight's television audience, will be shorter and more visionary than his previous four, White House officials say.

But it will launch three days of hard-sell by a president who will flesh out the details of his agenda in a variety of appearances around Washington later in the week.

The speech, to a joint session of the House and Senate, will be broadcast live by the major radio and television networks beginning at 8 p.m. CST.

### Initiative 300 repeal killed

LINCOLN — The Legislature killed a proposal Monday that would have proposed to voters the repeal of a constitutional amendment that bars non-family corporations from some agricultural activities.

Senators killed LR16 on a 24-22 vote. The measure was at the first stage of floor debate and a simple majority was sufficient to approve the kill motion offered by Sen. Vard Johnson of Omaha.

Sen. John DeCamp of Neligh urged lawmakers to advance the resolution. It proposed the repeal of a part of the Nebraska Constitution that was adopted by voters in 1982 as Initiative 300.

Marty Strange, co-director of the Center for Rural Affairs at Walthill said of the vote, "I think it's a clear victory for Nebraska, it's a victory for constitutional government and it's a victory for the family farmer."

### Exxon judgment upheld

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday made final the largest monetary judgment in American history to be upheld on appeal by telling Exxon Corp. to pay more than \$2 billion for inflating oil prices.

The court, with no recorded dissent, let stand rulings that force Exxon to pay refunds and interest for overcharges of \$895 million on the 1975-81 sales of oil from a Texas field.

The money, totaling about \$2.1 billion, will be deposited by Exxon into the U.S. Treasury, and then will be distributed to the states based on estimates of energy consumption during the six-year period.

### Shuttle launch scrapped again

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Fierce winds and a stubborn hatch bolt forced NASA on Monday to again scrub the launch of Challenger with schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe aboard, the second straight shuttle mission hindered by fickle Florida weather.

Although the weather was perfect at the scheduled launch time of 8:37 a.m. CST, the problems with the hatch started about an hour before that. They were not resolved until shortly before noon when workers used a hacksaw on the bolt after contending with the late delivery of tools, a drill with a dead battery, and broken drill bits.

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