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FEB. 27, 2011

Sports
Champions!



Tularosa boys defeat rival Mesilla Valley Christian for District 6 2A title.

■ **Page 1B**

Weather

AccuWeather.com
Today
Partly sunny, showers around; windy, cooler
HIGH: 57°

Tonight
Clear and very cold
LOW: 19°

■ **Page 5A**

Roadblocks

No delays

Range Control reports U.S. Highway 70 is open today. For more information, call (575) 678-1178.

Lottery

Friday Roadrunner Cash: 17-22-15-26-36
Pick 3: 3-9-7
MegaMillions: 4-5-17-19-50; Megaball: 7
Megaplier number: 4
Wednesday Powerball: 29-32-36-39-49; Powerball: 29; Power Play: 3
Hot Lotto: 2-12-27-30-37; Hot Ball: 7

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Launch into history

■ *Mission director visits space museum to commemorate Apollo 14 launch*

By **MICHAEL JOHNSON**
MANAGING EDITOR

Colors don't mean much to Milt Windler, considering he was responsible for transporting humans 239,000 miles between Earth and the moon.

Windler, the maroon team flight director for several Apollo moon missions, including the infamous Apollo 13 flight that nearly lost its three-person crew because of an oxygen tank explosion while en route to the lunar surface, was in Alamogordo on Saturday morning to talk about the subsequent Apollo 14.

"The colors don't mean anything, except we all had to have something," he said. "I don't know what (NASA) is up to now because they have all kinds of flight directors. One guy went to peppermint (team)."

Windler said he was the flight director for the liftoffs of Apollo 13 and Apollo 14 — not Gene Kranz, as was depicted in the 1995 film "Apollo 13" starring Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, Bill Paxton and Ed Harris.

"It's a Hollywood movie, not a documentary," Windler said. "I understand it. It's entertainment."

Unfortunately, there was

See **LAUNCH** on Page 8A



J.R. Oppenheim/Daily News
Milt Windler, the maroon team flight director for the Apollo moon missions, talks about the Apollo 14 mission during a presentation Saturday morning at the Clyde W. Tombaugh IMAX Theater.

Third graders beware

■ *House Education Committee approves social advancement ban legislation*

By **MILAN SIMONICH**
SANTA FE BUREAU

SANTA FE — Third-graders who do not read proficiently would be prohibited from advancing to the next grade under a bill approved Saturday by the House Education Committee.

More than 42 percent of the state's 25,000 third-graders scored below proficient last year on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment test. Sixteen percent were at the lowest level, meaning they are "non-readers," said Stan Rounds, superintendent of the Las Cruces Public School District.

Committee members voted 10-1 for the bill to end "social promotions" of third-graders. Social promotion means children are moved ahead even though they have not mastered basic skills.

Rep. Sheryl Williams Stapleton, D-Albuquerque, cast the dissenting vote. Stapleton, a former elementary school

See **BEWARE** on Page 7A

Holloman personnel train to fight terrorism

By **LAURA LONDON**
STAFF WRITER

Holloman Air Force Base personnel spent last week in Level 2 anti-terrorism training.

Arlan Ponder, 49th Wing Public Affairs spokesman, said the anti-terror training is

not only a military effort, but civilian organizations like the FBI and Homeland Security are also involved and attend the anti-terrorism training at Holloman.

"They'll teach and we'll teach, so it's a good joint effort," Ponder said.

2nd Lt. Logan Clark, also

with 49th Wing Public Affairs, said since the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia on June 25, 1996, anti-terror training is required for all Air Force personnel. She said any dependent who is traveling overseas must take the training as well. The training is done

once per year and once completed, personnel are considered current in the training for three years.

Clark said the Level 1 training gives students a basic knowledge of anti-terrorism techniques, such as what to do if a person thinks they are being surveilled.

Level 2 training allows students to teach the Level 1 anti-terrorism course as well as serve as anti-terrorism officers for their units.

"These people get together on at least a yearly basis to come up with vulnerability assessments, to come up with

See **TRAIN** on Page 2A

City gathers public opinion on Fairgrounds Road project



J.R. Oppenheim/Daily News
Peter Castiglia, senior hydrogeologist from INTERA Geosciences and Engineering shows a slide show during a city public meeting Thursday.

By **LAURA LONDON**
STAFF WRITER

The city of Alamogordo held a public meeting Thursday to get citizen input on the Fairgrounds Road project the city will start this year.

The city wants to construct sidewalks and widen the existing Fairgrounds Road alignment between the intersection with North Florida Avenue and the east parking lot entrance of the Jim R. Griggs Sports Complex.

The city has been working with Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center on the project since about December 2009. The hospital plans to build the road from their property to the Griggs Complex where the city leaves off, and the road will eventually connect with Scenic Drive.

Commissioner Robert Rentschler first brought up the subject of getting the hospital another access at the Nov. 17, 2009, city

meeting. He suggested the city complete 25th Street from the hospital to Cornell Avenue so the hospital would have more than just its one entrance from Scenic Drive.

After discussing the two possible access points with hospital staff, city staff recommended prioritizing Fairgrounds Road. Assistant city manager Mark Threadgill said the extension of Fairgrounds Road from North Florida to North Scenic has been in the city's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan for many years. In August 2009, he said the city got a Federal Highway Administration grant for \$340,000 to do the project, plus the city has \$85,000 in matching funds.

At the public meeting Thursday, Threadgill said the city has been planning to extend Fairgrounds Road through to Scenic since the 1980s, and this project is progress toward that end. He estimated construction will take about 120 days after the permitting process

See **ROAD** on Page 7A

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Launch

From Page 1

a small crowd on hand at the Clyde B. Tombaugh IMAX Theater to listen to Windler talk of his experiences as the flight director for Apollo 14, which is marking its 40th anniversary this year. The mission blasted off from Earth on Jan. 31, 1971.

But Windler couldn't talk about Apollo 14 without explaining the near-fatal Apollo 13 mission.

"Before we could fly (Apollo) 14, we had to get by the problems we had on 13," he said.

Windler said a "bad thermostat design" led to the oxygen tank explosion on Apollo 13 and added that it was a "relatively easy" fix.

"That was a screw up on our part," he said. "It was a bad design. We had an original system that was designed for 28 volts. We were asked (by the Kennedy Space Center) to change it to 65 volts, but we forgot to change the thermostat. One of the safety switches was originally designed for 28 volts. When we put the 65 volts on it, it welded the contact shut.

"So instead of opening and protecting against high temperatures, it was just a straight-through wire. (The procedure NASA used) heated things up so hot that it melted the insulation off the wires. When the wires bumped together during the flight, it caused the explosion."

Windler called it one of those "gee whiz moments" that they didn't anticipate. But it led to the installation of a backup oxygen tank for Apollo 14 and beyond.

"We changed the plumbing a little bit," he said. "It helped make things better."

There was a second problem with Apollo 13, Windler said, that most people don't know much about.

"It had to do with a pogo suppressor on a second-stage booster," he said. "You probably know the center engine (on Apollo 13) went out a little bit early in the flight. This happened because rocket fuel was bouncing up and down, kind of like a pogo stick. Instead of dampening down, it was getting more wild."

Windler said if the bouncing rocket fuel problem had kept occurring for two more seconds, Apollo 13's center engine may have fallen off.

"And you would have seen a big fireball," he said. "That didn't happen because the system detected the fluctuation in pressure and shut

the engine down. While that didn't get much publicity, it got plenty of technical attention from us."

Windler said a pogo suppressor is a common plumbing feature on most American homes.

"When you turn your faucet off and on, (the pogo suppressor) takes the shock of the water and keeps your system from hammering," he said. "If you have problems when you turn your faucet off and it goes 'ka-blang,' one of your accumulators doesn't have air in it anymore. It just has water."

Despite learning all they could about the near-disastrous Apollo 13 mission, Apollo 14 wasn't without its problems. One of those problems, Windler said, involved the initial separation of the command module from the service module and its subsequent re-attachment en route to the moon.

"The command module lifts away from the service module, turns around and comes back. It has a probe that goes into a drove on the lunar module that looks like a big (oil) funnel," he said. "The probe had some latches that catch on. This is what ties the command module and service module together so the crew can go from one module to the other."

"Well, that didn't work," Windler said. "Lo and behold, it wouldn't latch. It took 90 minutes and six tries before enough of the command module's thrust got it jammed up against the (service) module. The latches finally captured and it kept on going toward the moon."

Windler said the probe was inspected upon the crew's return. NASA scientists, he said, discovered there was nothing wrong with it.

"We never did find out why that happened," he said. "All we could do was worry for several days as to whether it was going to work when we needed it to work again."

There were also other problems that plagued Apollo 14, but they weren't big enough to warrant much attention from the public. One of those problems cropped up in the lunar radar while the Apollo 14 crew was descending to the surface.

"We received a computer signal that asked for an abort," Windler said. "We didn't abort because we required more than one signal. Some clever people at

MIT in Boston worked on a little program in about an hour. They developed a program to work around that, so we uplinked it to the crew and, lo and behold, it made the problem go away."

The program, he said, amounted to a simple system reboot, much like people do to their home computers when something goes awry.

Windler added that when Apollo 14 touched down on the moon's surface, the lunar module came to rest at an 8-degree tilt.

"It wasn't much of a problem," he said. "The crew complained because they felt like (the module) was tipping over on its side."

All told, Apollo 14 flew for nine days, or 216 hours. About 34 of those hours were spent on the lunar surface near the Fra Mauro Highlands on the near side of the moon.

"We had planned to go there during Apollo 13," Windler said. "We did it, basically, because it was easy. It's a flat place. We also went to places that interested the lunar scientists."

Windler said lunar scientists were interested in Fra Mauro because of a "relatively young crater" called Cone Crater. It was impacted by an object with such force, he said, that it launched debris from deep within the lunar surface.

"They wanted to get samples of that older material," he said.

The astronauts of Apollo 14—commander Alan Shepard, command module pilot Stuart Roosa and lunar module pilot Edgar Mitchell—collected about 95 pounds of rocks from Fra Mauro near Cone Crater. Shepard and Mitchell each walked about two miles on the moon's surface.

"Two miles doesn't sound like it's very far, but when you have a heavy backpack and wearing a stiff suit, it's pretty tough," Windler said. "We came back with 95 pounds of rocks. Those numbers are a lot more than what we had done on (Apollo) 11 or 12."

Windler said people still believe the many trips to the moon were staged.

"People say we went to Arizona or New Mexico," he said. Windler then displayed a high-resolution photograph showing locations of scientific equipment, the lunar module and footpaths taken by the astronauts between the

two pieces of equipment.

"You can see the astronauts' tracks on the moon," he said.

Because the astronauts' suits could only be used for a little more than four hours, the crew deployed a lunar rickshaw to make the journey. The rickshaw also held the crew's equipment and enabled them to gather and transport the 95 pounds of rocks back to the lunar module.

By using the rickshaw, the astronauts were within 100 feet from the edge of Cone Crater, although they didn't know it at the time, Windler said.

"They wanted to look down into that hole real bad," he said. "They were there to collect rocks. The biggest one they brought back was about 19 pounds. It was about the size of a football."

Some rocks, he said, couldn't be collected.

"They would go to pick up a reasonable-sized rock and find out most of it was buried in the ground, kind of like an iceberg."

Before leaving the moon's surface, Alan Shepard broke out a six-iron golf club and struck two balls on the lunar surface. It's known as the "six-iron shot heard around the world"—or in this case,

the moon, Windler said.

"It was actually the head of a six-iron screwed onto a tool that he used to pick up rocks," he said. "Shepard could only swing with one hand because of his bulky suit ... and he muffs it. He swings again and slices it a little ways. He takes a mulligan, so he hits his other golf ball. He says the shots went 'miles and miles,' but we think it only went 200 yards to 300 yards."

"I guess that's not a bad drive."

Contact Michael Johnson at mjohnson@alamogordonews.com.

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