

U.S. rejoins space race

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The United States has rejoined the space race.

The last time Americans were in space, it was a joint mission with the Soviet Union. Since then, 43 cosmonauts have been launched into orbit. Two have been afloat in space since last March.

Now, the Soviets are not alone.

Columbia's successful launch ends a six-year drought in the U.S. man-in-space program and signals this nation's intention to regain eminence in a domain it once dominated with

the man-on-the-moon missions. Since the dawn of the space age, the world's two superpowers have used that arena as a symbol of national power. The renewed race will focus heavily on military superiority.

With American astronauts on the sidelines since 1975, the Soviets have wrested away every endurance record once held by the Americans. The latest pair has been aloft in a small station for a month and they may stay up more than half a year.

The flight of John Young and Robert Crippen, slated for just

over two days, seems slight in comparison. The big edge for the U.S. is Columbia.

Columbia, says Young, is light years ahead of the Soviet spaceships.

George Page, the launch director who sent the astronauts on their way, put it this way as he waved an American flag: "I think they (the Russians) would be real happy to have something like we have launched today."

Columbia is the first spaceship designed to land back on Earth like an airplane, to be refurbished for repeated round-trips into orbit. A fleet of at least four of these revolutionary ships will form the backbone of the U.S. space program for the next two decades.

The shuttles will carry up satellites and space laboratories for military, scientific and commercial projects, with heavy emphasis on defense flights as the Pentagon moves to counter what it considers a growing Russian threat from space. The craft is the size of a jetliner and can ferry up as many as seven persons and 32 tons of cargo in its 60-foot-long bay.

While the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has been developing the shuttle — two years behind schedule because the craft incorporates so much advanced technology — the Soviets have been operating for years with essentially the same Soyuz and Salyut space vehicles.

U.S. observers say the Russians are developing a shuttle vehicle but they believe it is much smaller than Columbia and perhaps 10 years behind.

Columbia initiated the third decade of manned space flight — roaring into orbit on the 20th anniversary of the historic orbital flight of Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, on April 12, 1961.

making the news

From Associated Press Reports

PORTLAND — U.S. Forest Service officials said this week average yearly fees will double for people who own vacation homes on national forest lands.

The increase is the result of a routine reassessment of land values, said Fred Isabel, recreation specialist for the regional Forest Service office in Portland.

Isabel said fees for some home owners will quadruple in places where development has increased land values.

He said most vacation home owners probably will appeal the increase which will take effect in January. Homeowners have 30 days to file the appeals.

Fee increases will affect people who have 20-year permits to use national forest sites for vacation homes.

Those who have such permits are charged five percent of the appraised value of their lots.

MOSCOW, Idaho — A Moscow doctor believes strong winds and year-old volcanic ash from Mount St. Helens are to blame for an increase in eye, nose and throat irritation complaints.

Dr. Robert Strobel, who specializes in afflictions of the eye, nose and throat, said the number of patients seeking relief at his office has increased noticeably over the past eight weeks.

"I've been telling people that I think it's due to the ash," he said late last week.

Last May 18, Mount St. Helens unleashed tons of volcanic ash over major portions of Washington, Idaho and Montana. Other eruptions during the summer sent out smaller amounts of ash.

Ash from a small eruption Friday dusted only a small area near the mountain in southwestern Washington.

Strong winds throughout Eastern Washington and northern Idaho in the past month have kicked up the year-old dust, closing highways at times because of poor visibility.

Alaskan landslide mistaken for blast

ANCHORAGE (AP) — A massive landslide on Mount Sanford was mistaken for a volcanic eruption by nearby residents and airline pilots passing overhead, a University of Alaska glaciologist said.

After flying over the 16,237-foot peak Saturday, a member of the university's

Geophysical Institute, Carl Benson, said a massive slide on the mountain's sheer south face fooled observers who thought they were witnessing an eruption.

The landslide carried debris from the summit to about four miles beyond the mountain's base, he said.

It exposed layers of old, loose ash and the warmth generated by the sun created strong updrafts that carried the ash into a plume-shaped cloud about 1,500 feet above the summit, he said.

Ash darkened a bowl near the mountain's summit and was blown up to 50 miles away.

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