



World Beat

International Aussies celebrate

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — Two million Australians threw a party around Sydney's harbor to wish their country a happy 200th birthday today in a wild celebration attended by the heir to the British throne. Thousands of aborigines, meanwhile, staged their biggest demonstration in the nation's history to protest past wrongs by Australians of European ancestry and what they claim is ongoing discrimination.

In his bicentennial message, Prime Minister Bob Hawke called on Australians to reflect on the country's heritage and said the nation should not feel collective guilt about past wrongs done to aborigines. About 11,000 aborigines converged on Sydney from across Australia's outback and staged a peaceful march through the city of 3.3 million, waving banners, demanding land rights and shouting "Shame! Shame!"

National Reagan, Demos speak

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan and congressional Democrats have changed tunes: He is acting conciliatory, trying to make a mark in history, and they are talking tough, saying his presidency is over and irrelevant to setting the national agenda. In his final State of the Union address Monday night, Reagan asked Congress to forget the political calendar and keep marching to his drumbeat.

"Let's make this the best of eight. And that means it's all out, right to the finish line. I don't buy the idea that this is the last year of anything," Reagan said.

"We've come to the end of an era," countered Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd, D-W.Va. "The feel-good slogans have gone flat with time. We've learned that... ideology is no substitute for common sense."

Problem found

WASHINGTON (AP) — NASA engineers, investigating cracks in a critical shuttle main

engine part, discovered an unrelated problem in which two seals were not properly welded together, the space agency disclosed today. The problem may cause further delay in the first post-Challenger flight. "It is not known to what degree the condition of the seal might limit its acceptability for flight," said Jerry Berg, a spokesman for NASA. "All of the high-pressure fuel pumps currently are being examined."

Top NASA officials met on Monday and decided later in the week to set a flight date. David L. Winterhalter, the agency's director of systems engineering and analysis, claimed that there were no new problems with the shuttle's propulsion system.

Regional Teenagers arrested

VENETA (AP) — Three Florence teenagers were arrested early Tuesday in a shootout with two Lane County deputies who caught up with them after the hold-up of a Florence grocery store, authorities said. The boys, aged 14, 15 and 16, walked into the Circle K grocery store in Florence shortly after midnight wearing bandannas over their faces, two of them armed with rifles, Florence police said.

After threatening the clerk, the youths made off with about \$100 in cash and the clerk's pickup truck, police said. The youths fired three shots at a Lane County deputy who was chasing them, hitting the patrol car windshield but not injuring the officer, deputies said. A second deputy headed them off at an intersection and after more gunfire, the boys surrendered, authorities said.

Suit continues

SALEM (AP) — A Marion County judge today continued proceedings indefinitely in a lawsuit challenging the process used to pick the design for a new state license plate. Michael Swaim, a lawyer representing the Salem man who brought the lawsuit, asked for more time to obtain evidence in the case.

Richard Breen, who submitted a losing entry in the statewide license plate contest,

filed the lawsuit Jan. 19. Circuit Judge Duane Ertsgaard rejected Breen's request that he order the state Transportation Commission to delay its announcement of the winning plate design, and the selection was disclosed the next day. Breen contends judges didn't comply with the law because they didn't view all of the more than 5,000 entries.

Burglars trapped

PORTLAND (AP) — Police officers hiding in the home of an elderly couple arrested two intruders while the occupants waited at a nearby precinct station. About 5 a.m. Monday, five police officers appeared on the doorstep at the north Portland home of Ted and Olive Wittren, who have endured three burglaries in the past six years.

At the house in north Portland, the officers set their trap. An officer pulled Wittren's bathrobe on over her bulletproof vest. Other officers hid inside the house and in the street. At 7:20 a.m., officers heard a noise. A man wielding a butcher knife and a woman entered. A police spokesman identified the arrested suspects as James A. Laffin, 23, and Tara J. Dobizo, 19, both of north Portland. They are charged with conspiracy to commit first-degree robbery, Simpson said.

Rail center housed

OMAHA (AP) — The Union Pacific Railroad will put its new \$55 million high-tech dispatching center in the old freight house where the company started its modern era 90 years ago. An estimated 400 people will be employed in the long brick building. Dispatchers will use computers and video screens to monitor and control operations through the railroad's 21,500-mile system in 20 states. A computer center will be built along the south side of the existing structure.

Laser-generated control screens about 900 linear feet long will line the control room. The center will replace regional train dispatching centers in Portland; Sacramento, Calif.; Salt Lake City; Cheyenne, Wyo.; North Platte, Neb.; Kansas City, Mo.; Kansas City, Kan.; North Little Rock, Ark.; and Houston.

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