

Search widens for missing paper boy

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa (UPI) — Haggard searchers riding mules and rough terrain vehicles criss-crossed ditches, river banks and wooded areas Tuesday looking for signs of a 12-year-old newspaper carrier who vanished while making his early morning rounds.

The widening search included areas along the Raccoon River, known by police to be a hideaway for youths. But authorities remain stumped by the disappearance Sunday morning of John Gosch and neighborhood parents expressed fear for their children.

"They know they have us over a barrel," said Noreen Gosch, who, with her husband John, assumed their son was kidnapped. "You are never more vulnerable."

"If they want anything...tell us what it is," the boy's father said.

POLICE CHIEF Orval Cooney said there still were no leads in the case and no reason for optimism.

More than 1,000 volunteers combed the area near the boy's home Monday, but search parties were considerably smaller Tuesday as many volunteers returned to work or school.

Labor leaders made up for part of the shortage by calling on unemployed workers to assist the search. Gosch's employer, the Des Moines Register and Tribune Co., offered a \$5,000 reward to anyone with information leading to his whereabouts.

Those who continued the search rode atop mules through heavy brush and wooded areas for some sign of the boy.

Gosch last was seen early Sunday as he began making deliveries along his newspaper route in an affluent neighborhood of homes and condominiums.



John Gosch

The boy's parents became suspicious when his dog returned alone. The parents found the wagon the boy uses to haul his newspapers a short distance away. "Every single paper was in his wagon," Mrs. Gosch said.

THE PARENTS of other newspaper carriers voiced fears as the search for Gosch continued. The mother of a 10-year-old paper carrier said her son had been bothered earlier this summer by a man driving a van.

Her son "ignored him and he didn't bother him further" but after learning of Gosch's disappearance, the boy is scared to go out alone in the morning.

"He won't be going out alone anymore," she said.

Gosch's disappearance was considered a missing person's case, although a spokesman for the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation said: "It's safe to say that concern becomes more grave as the hours go by."

"We can't call it an abduction or kidnapping because there are no witnesses, no one has seen anything," he said.

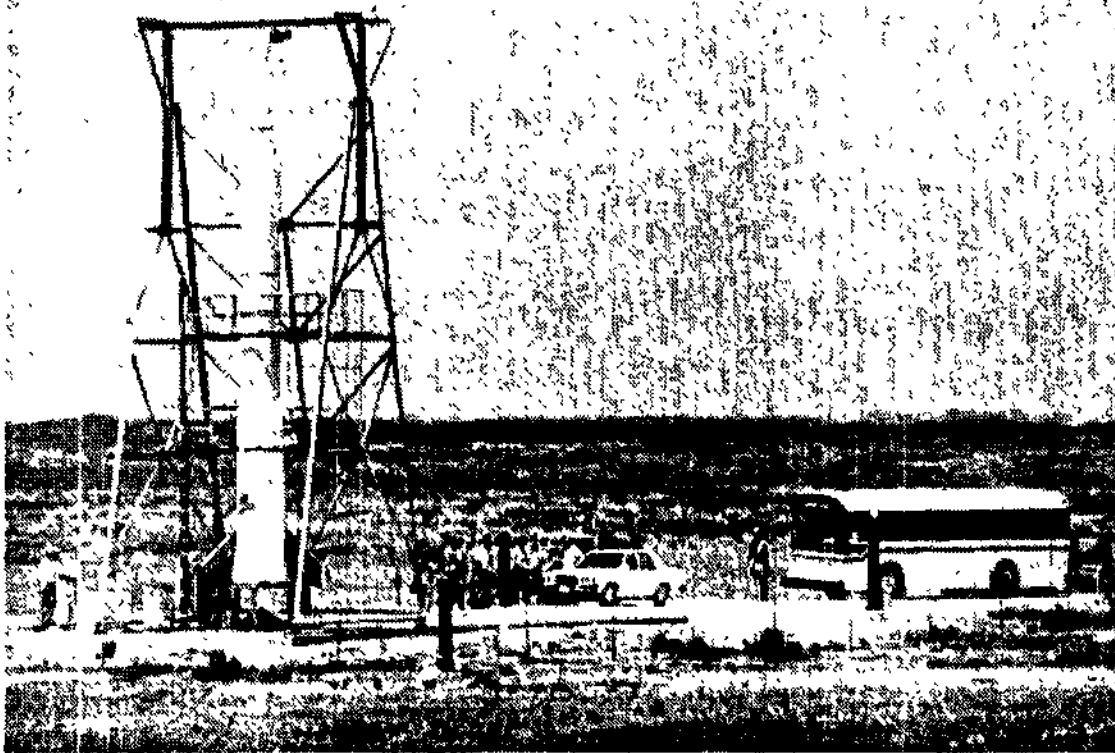


UPI photo

SEARCH CONTINUES. Duane Onstot of the Warren County Disaster Service points to an area along the Raccoon River in West Des Moines as rescuers continue the search for 12-year-old John Gosch, who has

been missing since Sunday. Gosch, a paper boy, was last seen by another paper carrier talking to a man in a car. The area's unemployed joined the 1,000 people searching for the boy.

Conestoga I expected to lift off despite problems



UPI photo

ROCKET READY. The Conestoga I, on which is riding the hopes of the Space Services of America, Inc. to be the first private company in the satellite busi-

ness, waits on the launch pad prior to today's scheduled 321-mile sub-orbital flight from Matagorda Island, Texas to the Gulf of Mexico.

ROCKPORT, Texas (UPI) — A last-minute battery problem in the Conestoga I rocket Tuesday threatened to delay today's sub-orbital test launch of the vehicle a Houston firm hopes will make it America's first private satellite launching company.

Space Services Inc. launch director Donald K. "Deke" Slayton said crews were trying to weld a crack found in a plate on the battery supplying power to a guidance control system in the rocket's payload. The battery was found to have lost power during the final prelaunch test countdown Tuesday.

If the welding did not restore the battery, Slayton said SSI officials would fly to White Sands Missile Range, N.M., where similar rockets are stored, or to Los Angeles, where the batteries are made, to try to obtain a new battery that would allow them to stick to launch on schedule at 10 a.m. CDT today.

"Deke says we're definitely going for 10 a.m.," SSI spokesman Walt Pennino said.

SLAYTON EARLIER in the day told a news conference all systems appeared ready for the launch.

"At this time, I don't know of anything that's going to bother us," he told reporters gathered in a tent at the Matagorda Island launch site.

"We're always very nervous about the weather. The last few days (with scattered showers) it would have been marginal...I'm confident we're going

to do it."

The Space Service Inc. launch crew fired another prelaunch sounding rocket to test radar Tuesday and everything worked well. Given government clearances all around and at least partly sunny skies, Slayton said he expected to start the automatic launch sequence 50 seconds before 10 a.m. CDT and send the 37-foot Conestoga I rocket on a 10½-minute sub-orbital flight.

BY THE STANDARDS of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Conestoga I would fit inside the Apollo capsule escape rocket. But Houston-based Space Services Inc. doesn't have government financial backing.

SSI, with contract help from California and German firms, is striving with the test flight to move in on the day it can orbit private industry's satellites relatively cheaply and quickly.

The firm's first test 13 months ago went up 50 feet in smoke at a cost of \$1.2 million. Investors — mostly Texans — to date have put up \$6 million, said Chairman David Hannah, a successful residential developer.

He believes the technology and hardware is available to sell the launch capability, and one person he has convinced is Slayton, the former Apollo-Soyuz pilot who recently became SSI vice-chairman and mission director for the Conestoga I flight.

Interest yet to rocket as launch nears

ROCKPORT, Texas (UPI) — Retail store manager Wayne Nugent, because of yawning indifference by folks in this sleepy vacation town, Tuesday slashed the price of his charter boat service for viewing the launch of a 37-foot rocket from a nearby barrier island.

Nugent had previously advertised the close-up look at the blast off for \$100 a head. But with so much else to do in the area, like sunbathing and fishing, the price was cut in half during a meeting of the charter boat company officers Monday night.

Down the road on U.S. 35 in Fulton, the Sea Gun Inn has advertised its six-man private boats and four-man air boats for rent at \$30 a person, "and there's plenty left," a reservationist said Tuesday.

Sea Gun management decided Tuesday to take spectators on its big party boat that regularly visits the endangered whooping crane nesting grounds, but as of noon nobody had called inquiring of the cost, \$30.

IF PEOPLE were so lucky to be invited by the Houston-based Space Services Inc. to watch the 10 a.m. launch from Matagorda Island, everything is free including a catamaran ferry ride with food and drink supplied by the Rockport Chamber of Commerce.

Not everyone in Rockport wishes the rocket crowd would go back to Cape Canaveral and take the enterprising speculators with them. Take Judy Guillett, 44, the Rockport Chamber of Commerce president and a real estate broker.

"A lot of people say, 'Oh, they're just wasting their time,' but I don't feel those people understand the full impact of what this means," she said.

"These businessmen are entering a new venture, something that business can do to provide a service for other businesses. This will help make the country and the world a better place to live," she said.

AN EXPLOSION 13 months ago during Space Services' test of the engine prior to a first launch may have something to do with the residents' wait-and-see attitude. Managing Editor Ted Norman, 49, of the Rockport Pilot, says talk at the coffee shop is over property tax reappraisal — not rockets piercing the ionosphere.

"There's one guy in town bugging the hell out of me to fill the paper with news of the rocket," Nugent said. "He said this was a big, national story, that he'd read about it in Washington, D.C. But I haven't heard anybody talking about it. You go ask people on the street and they will say, 'What rocket?'"

The primary impact on Nugent of the rocket launch on the south end of the island about 15 miles from Rockport was that the managing editor, sports editor and darkroom technician for the newspaper will be out of the office all day Wednesday. Of course all of those people are one person — Nugent.

Kansas sniper hunted as Reagan date nears

TOPEKA, Kan. (UPI) — Secret Service agents preparing for President Reagan's visit to Kansas Thursday are interviewing suspects in search of a sniper who shot at cars on Interstate 70, a Kansas Highway Patrol officer said Tuesday.

Sgt. Sam Grant said the Secret Service agents were intent on tracing the sniper. Four cars have been hit on I-70 west of Topeka.

"We gave them the information we had yesterday and they've been interviewing suspects in the area — at least

one," Grant said. "Apparently their intelligence is better than ours."

He said the highway patrol had no suspects.

James Cantrell, agent in charge of the Kansas City Secret Service office, had little comment to make about the shootings.

"THERE'S NOTHING really to tell you about it, except that we are aware of the incidents and we're working with the Topeka Police Department and the highway patrol," Cantrell said.

Reagan is to arrive Thursday in Topeka and is scheduled to go by helicopter from Topeka to Manhattan, Grant said. A motorcade along I-70 is not expected to be necessary, he said.

The most recent shooting on I-70 occurred Monday when a car driven by Norman Kemp, 18, of Topeka was damaged by what officials believe was a bullet. Highway Patrol officers did not find a slug in the car.

Kemp was driving on I-70 at the western edge of Topeka about 8:30 a.m. Monday when the rear window of

his vehicle was shattered, Grant said. About 15 minutes later, Grant saw a white male carrying a rifle over his shoulder and walking east in a pasture. The man moved in between trees and buildings south of the Menninger Foundation's campus.

"WE SEARCHED for him most of the morning and afternoon, but we couldn't find him," Grant said.

The officers also enlisted the help of Menninger Foundation security officers, who said they would watch the area more closely, Grant said.

On Aug. 29, three cars were struck by bullets on I-70. All were driving on the interstate just west of Topeka. Officers originally were aware of only two cars that had been struck by bullets, Grant said, until another motorist reported his window had been shattered. The man had not known about the damage to his car until he arrived home in Kansas City.

Grant said the sniper likely had fired more shots than those that hit cars.

"You have to be a pretty good shot to hit a moving car," he said.

N.Y. takes sexism out of job titles

NEW YORK (UPI) — In an effort to purge "sexism" from the bureaucracy, the New York City Personnel Department has adopted new titles for everything from foreman to seamstress.

Many of the changes, adopted on Sept. 1 and published in this week's City Record, involves substituting "neutral" titles, such as "supervisor" for traditional, gender-specific ones, as "foreman."

Now, an "able seaman" is a "mariner," a "lineman," a "line repairer," and a television cameraman, a "television equipment operator."

Leonard Rosenberg, director of the Personnel Department's Classification and Compensation division, said the city recently was "made aware" that job titles denoting gender could have a bearing on recruitment.

So, he said, the "titles are being changed to reflect the city's attitude of giving opportunity to all without reference to sex."

Rosenberg could think of only two instances where sex remained part of the job title, those of "correction officer, men," and "correction officer, women." That is because the city uses women to guard women and men to guard men in its jails, he said.

While virtually all the new titles avoid the use of "person," at least one does not: a watchman is now a "watch person."

But perhaps the most eye-catching of all was the substitution for seamstress, which is now a "sewer," pronounced soh-er and not to be confused with the underground municipal installation of the same spelling.

Principals unveil testing aids

WASHINGTON (AP) — A high school principals' group on Tuesday unveiled a battery of study materials it claimed will improve students' scores on college admission tests and boost their learning.

Scott D. Thomson, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, said the group was entering the test preparation sales market out of a belief that all students, not just the wealthy, should have access to test coaching.

Thomson also said his group is interested in regaining public confidence in high schools by stemming the long slide in students' scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

The association said its workbooks, videotapes and computer programs were based on an analysis of SAT questions disclosed under a New York law.

TEST PREPARATION should be part of the curriculum everywhere, Thomson said, but "the vast majority of schools...do not have a good, adequate test preparation program that is free for their students."

The association's materials will not

be free. The association, based in Reston, Va., will sell student verbal and math workbooks for \$5.50 each, teachers' manuals for \$10, six videotapes for \$725 and a three-disc computer program for \$175.

Thomson said that expense for schools is minimal.

"We're talking about an expenditure here of \$1,000 or \$1,500 for one of the main, if not the chief, function of a secondary school...That's nothing," he said.

The materials were created by Jay Comras, supervisor of English and reading for the Fair Lawn, N.J., public schools, and Jeffrey Zerowin, assistant principal of Park West High School in New York City. The 34,000-member association is a non-profit organization. Comras and Zerowin will get royalties on the sales.

More than two million high school students take the Scholastic Aptitude Test or the American College Testing Program each year. Commercial coaching schools charge from \$100 to \$500 to prepare students for these tests.

THE VIDEOTAPES have been shown on cable television in sections of New Jersey, Florida and North Carolina. The materials also were used by 350 students at two high schools in Bergen County, N.J.

Although Comras denied he was making any specific claim about score improvements, he said 20 to 30 points on the SAT can spell the difference between college acceptance or rejection. "A student who overcomes his anxiety, who is well-prepared, understands the skills, will rise way beyond those 20 to 30 points necessary to be accepted," he said.

The College Board, the SAT's sponsor, used to claim the test was impervious to coaching, but it has altered that stance. Educational Testing Service, the test-maker, now says 20 hours of coaching can improve a student's verbal SAT score by an average of 13 points and math scores by 21 points.

A Federal Trade Commission probe in 1978 found students at one commercial school improved their SAT scores by 25 points on each half of the test. It is scored on a 200-to-800 scale.