

# Teens foresee future of space exploration

Continued from Page 1

26 teachers who made NASA's first statewide cut in applicants.

Upset as most of the nation was last week when the shuttle exploded before national cable TV viewers, Sparrow said she later recalled how at one point she had considered "how casual we have all gotten (about the shuttle program)."

The shuttles have always gone up and come back safely, which had helped add to the almost taken-for-granted attitude about the safety of space travel.

Back in November, Sparrow said she realized the networks were no longer giving live coverage to the shuttle liftoffs. Yet she admitted that somewhere in the back of her mind, it occurred that like air travel, tragedy aboard a shuttle flight could be a real possibility. But it's always a matter of hoping it won't be this time, Sparrow said.

ALTHOUGH MOST students felt that NASA should continue with space exploration, some tempered their zeal with words of caution.

This (the Challenger explosion) may be just an example of not just society, but the space program (officials) taking the space program too



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Harrison 10th grader Ray Snyder wants space exploration stopped because "you can't do anything up there anyway."

much in routine," said Mark Bonasso, interested in eventually joining the U.S. Air Force.

"Each flight should be taken with a great deal of care and responsibility," Bonasso said.

When NASA was in the Apollo program, "everything was done with care."

But Bonasso said he feels that with the Challenger program, "everything is done haphazardly," despite the delays, generally because of weather conditions.

"The more they do it, the more they are going to get better at it," Friedman added.

THE STUDENTS acknowledged that the media devoted undue attention to the Teacher in Space program and its first participant, McAuliffe. That singular attention was even greater following the tragedy, at the expense of almost ignoring the other six professionally trained astronauts, said Lisa Murphy.

"They talked about Christa a lot," she said. "And they didn't talk about the others. There were two people from Detroit."

Although proud of Sparrow's interest in the Teacher in Space program, students murmured during the discussion they were glad and thankful their teacher was not aboard the Challenger.

Yet, the students and Sparrow support the Teacher in Space program and the participation of other private citizens.

"Private citizens should go because there is going to be some form of future travel," Moschini said. "I think they should send another teacher up there."

Teachers and other private citizens can provide a point of view that perhaps a professional astronaut may take for granted. "They (private citizens) can see it. They can come back and say how it feels. They can give us a real description."

SPARROW AGREED wholeheartedly. "I certainly would like to be in contention (for the Teacher in Space program). I would like to see the world from up there. I think I could come back and use the words to make others feel they have been there too."

Students expressed concern about the space program's future and opportunity for private citizens' participation in light of the death of a teacher who had become well-known and well-liked.

"I think a lot of people are making it that (because) a private citizen went up and it exploded," said Aaron Yaverski. "The crew were people



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Lisa Murphy felt the media devoted a lot of attention to Christa McAuliffe, NASA's first Teacher in Space participant, while the other six Challenger crew members seemed almost forgotten.

too. It could have happened if they had all been astronauts."

Friedman reminded classmates that while the deaths of the seven-member crew was tragic, the loss of the Challenger — estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars —

was also a tragedy.

Students offered little reaction to the cost of the space program. But Bonasso said that perhaps NASA should for awhile turn its attention to unmanned flights.

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