

The Valley

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Idahoan heads for teachernaut training

By KATHY MULLEN

Special to The Idaho Statesman

MCCALL — America's alternate for the first teacher in space is to leave her home in McCall today to launch a yearlong training program at the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Barbara Morgan, a second-grade teacher at McCall-Donnelly School, said Saturday that she would be driving early this morning to Boise, to catch a flight to Houston this afternoon.

"My husband will be joining me in a few days after he finishes a three-page list of things to do (around the house) first. I already finished my own seven-page list," Morgan said.

In addition, Boise High School business teacher David Marquart said he would leave Monday for San Jose, Calif., where he will spend the next year in the Teacher in Space program. Morgan and Marquart were two of the nation's 10 finalists in the program.

Morgan said that, in Houston, she

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would be following a busy training schedule that would include at least four more weightlessness experiences aboard a Boeing KC-135, a specially equipped plane that simulates the zero-gravity conditions in space.

"We'll also be learning how to use the shuttle's photographic equipment, and generally learning how to live and work on the shuttle, including launch and landing procedures," she said.

Morgan said she and NASA's first choice for the Teacher in Space program, Christa McAuliffe, of Concord, N.H., would be on hand to witness the next shuttle flight, scheduled to lift off in early October from the Cape Canaveral launch site.

She said an additional shuttle launch would take place before McAuliffe's flight, scheduled for January 1986.

In preparation for that flight, McAuliffe and Morgan will undergo intensive training while meeting and working with other shuttle crew members.

Morgan said her enthusiasm for the program had not lagged, but that she was leaving her hometown with mixed emotions.

"I'm more excited than ever" about being in the space program, she said. "But I also will look forward to returning to McCall-Donnelly School next year."

Morgan said she would spend the next six months in Houston, followed by another six months in Washington,

D.C., before her time in the program is completed.

Her husband, Clay, will be with her for a short time in Houston before traveling to Ecuador, where he will spend six to eight weeks doing research for a book he is writing. She said he will rejoin her in Houston afterward.

Marquart said his family would stay in Boise while he worked out of Ames Research Center at San Jose, Calif.

Marquart said he would work with NASA people in three areas: establishing a computer network between NASA and schools; encouraging business and accounting textbooks to include examples from the aerospace industry; and speaking at schools, teacher organizations and other groups.

Marquart said he would return periodically to Idaho for speaking appearances, including one scheduled for Sept. 17 in Boise before the Idaho Association of Engineers.