Explorer craft to be launched; Venus to be mapped by radar

WASHINGTON-The United States is about to take a major step in its program to explore nearby planets by launching two spacecraft that will map Venus by radar and penetrate the cloudy atmosphere to study the weather.

U.S. space scientists said Tuesday that Venus has a major role in the planetary program because it and Mars are more similar to the Earth than the other planets. Thus, those planets can be used as remote laboratories to study processes such as

weather for a better understanding of what happens on Earth.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration scientists said the first of two unmanned Pioneer Venus spacecraft is ready for launch next week from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The second will follow in three months.

The two spacecraft are the first designed primarily to study the atmosphere of another planet. One will orbit the planet for radar mapping and long-term studies and the other will break apart into five probes to penetrate the atmosphere. The probes are not designed to survive impact.

Venus, the second planet from the Sun, is almost identical to Earth in size and mass, but has a much denser atmosphere composed mostly of carbon dioxide. Atmospheric pressure at the planet's surface is 100 times that of Earth and temperatures are about 900 degrees Fahrenheit, hotter than the melting point of lead.

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AP briefly... Kansas gays lose; Seattle next

WICHITA, Kan.—In a resounding "mandate for righteousness," Wichita voters told homosexuals to keep their life-style to themselves and repealed a gay rights ordinance by a 5-to-1 margin.

Anita Bryant's anti-homosexual organization poured \$20,000 into the Wichita, Kan., and Minneapolis-St. Paul battles to defeat gayrights laws and is ready to put down more cash for other such crusades, a spokesman says.

Bryant's group has sent a representative to Seattle where two policemen are trying to repeal that city's homosexual-rights ordinance.

Italy's police minister resigns

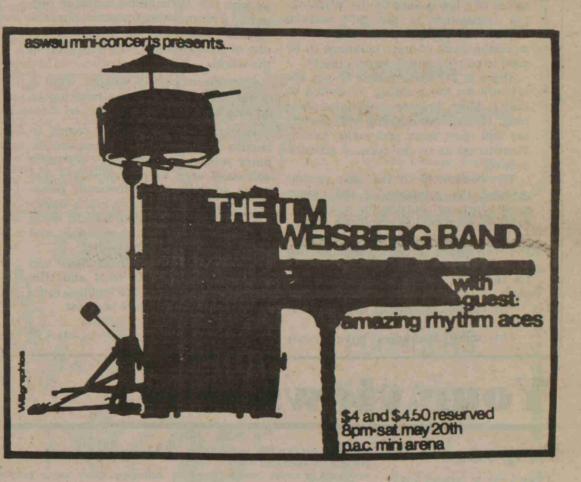
ROME-Aldo Moro was quietly buried yesterday by his embittered family in a village cemetery north of Rome while Italy's top police minister resigned in the backlash of Moro's assassination.

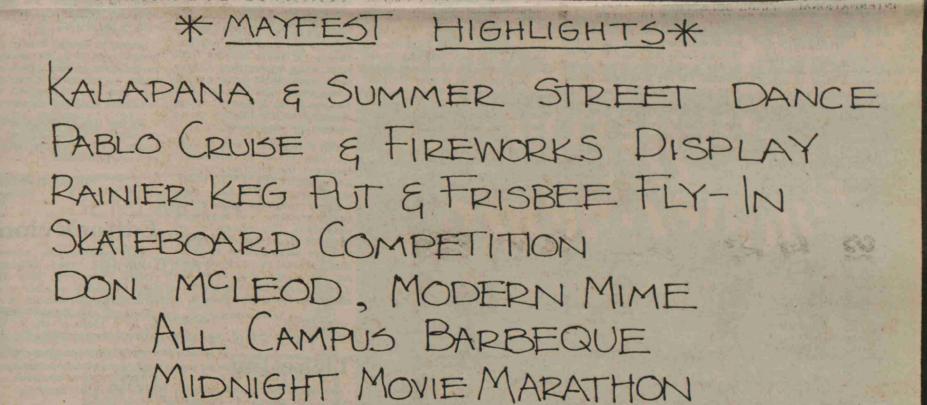
The urban terrorist war against the Italian establishment continued, meanwhile, the latest blow coming in Milan, where four terrorists shot and wounded an industrial executive in the legs.

Inquiry to study airliner crash

PENSACOLA, Fla.—Federal officials have begun their investigation to learn why a National Airlines jetliner—in no apparent trouble—made a "perfect landing" into Escambia Bay, instead of on the runway three miles ahead.

Flight 193 crashed into the fog-shrouded waters late Monday with 58 persons aboard. Three of the 52 passengers drowned.





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