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Steak Reward

Space Spider Spins Symmetrical Web

Houston (AP)—Arabella, the space-going spider, has learned quickly to spin an apparently normal web without the aid of gravity, the Skylab 2 astronauts reported today.

Her success was to be rewarded with something a lot of Americans can't get on earth—a piece of filet mignon.

Dr. Owen K. Garriott gave an account of Arabella's work as he, Capt. Alan L. Bean and Jack R. Lousma prepared for a photo survey of earth resources in western Canada and the eastern United States.

The space station was to pass over British Columbia, North Dakota, Minnesota and Ohio and across the eastern coast at Cape Hatteras as a package of sophisticated cameras and sensors examine the earth and its atmosphere.

Garriott said that for the first day or two Arabellaw as disoritented by weightlessness and could build only rudimentary web in the corners of her cage. By the third day, she had managed to spin a web with a normal circular pattern.

"Simply working on her own, she has figured out a very nice solution to the problems of zero gravity," Garriott said.

He said he wouldn't mind at all sharing his filet mignon dinner tonight with Arabella and her companion spider, Anita.

Garriott congratulated 17-year-old Judith Miles, a high school student from Lexington, Mass., who suggested the experiment.

He said it was "a very outstanding concept, a very interesting idea and one that might very well have some application in studies of how some animals and even men might think and behave when placed in a brand-new environment."

Skylab medical officials reported yesterday that the crewmen are in excellent spirits and are now just as healthy as were the previous Skylab astronauts at this point in the mission.

The only lasting effect of their early motion sickness, a NASA doctor said, has been a weight loss of about five pounds a man.

Dr. Lawrence F. Dietlein also said tests in a spinning chair on the space station show that the men have overcome their susceptibility to motion sickness.