

# Astronauts prepare for return

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Atlantis' six astronauts wrapped up their work in orbit Sunday as scientists gloat over the amount of data collected during the 11-day mission to map ozone in the Earth's atmosphere.

One ozone monitor aboard Atlantis gathered enough data to fill 120,000 computer floppy disks.

"We've got some science teams here that are quite well-fed," said NASA mission scientist Tim Miller.

The shuttle's scheduled landing Monday morning at the Kennedy Space Center was threatened by Tropical Storm Gordon. NASA sent the astronauts' families to California on Sunday to await a probable landing there.

Two other space shuttles have been diverted to the desert runways at Edwards Air Force Base in California in the past two months because of storms. Atlantis' first landing opportunity was around 7:30 a.m. EST Monday at Kennedy.

"In one word, the forecast ... is lousy,"

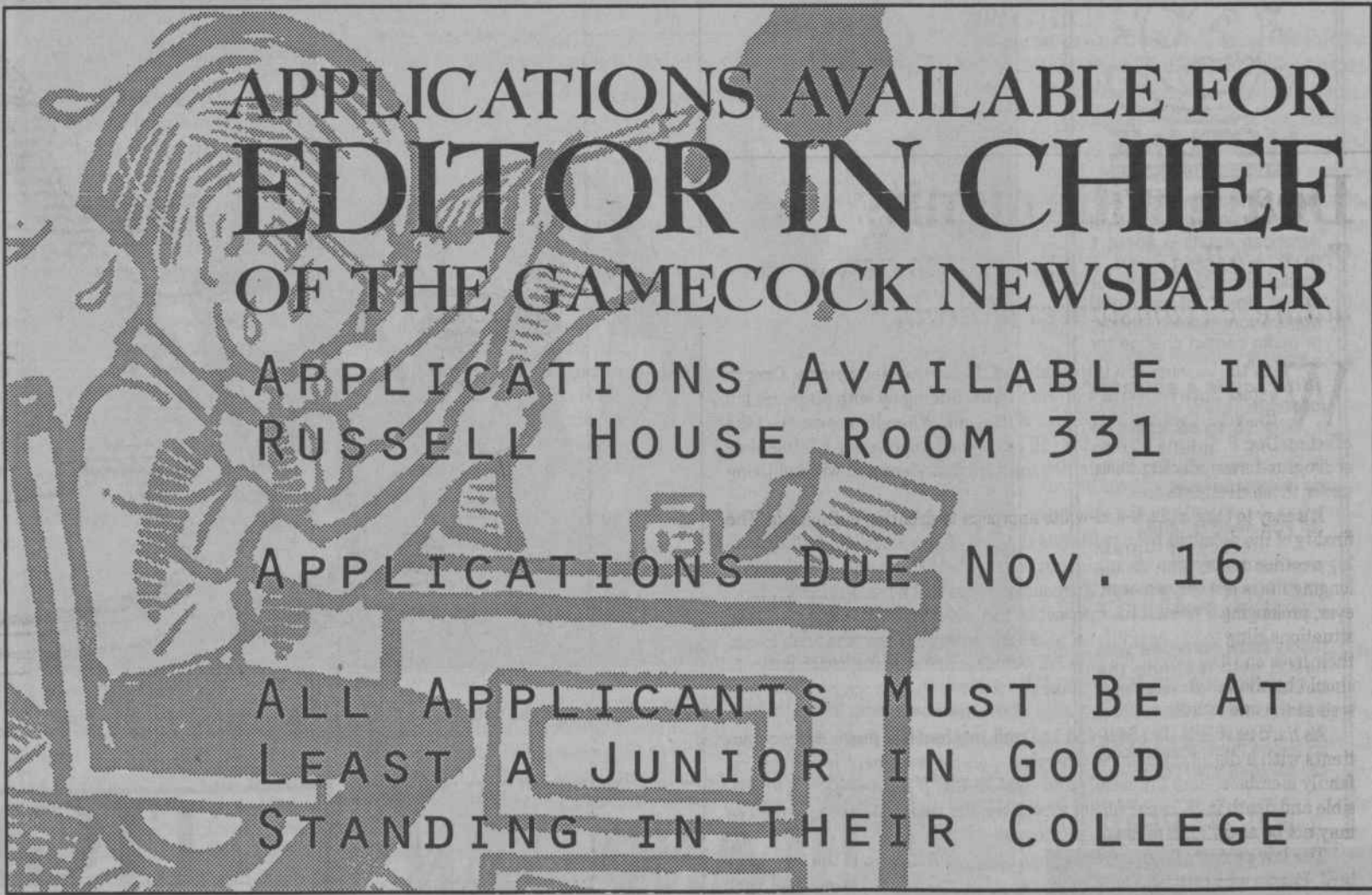
said flight director Jeff Bantle. "There are going to be low clouds. There's going to be rain. There's going to be gale-force wind."

The outlook for Tuesday was just as bad. Good weather was forecast for Edwards; Bantle said the shuttle could land there later Monday morning if needed.

Atlantis had enough power to stay in orbit until Tuesday, possibly Wednesday if extreme conservation measures were taken, said mission operations director Lee Briscoe.

It costs about \$1 million to transport a shuttle back to Kennedy atop a modified Boeing 747 jumbo jet. NASA also loses a week in getting the shuttle ready for its next flight.

Atlantis isn't scheduled to fly again until late May or early June but that is to be 1995's biggest mission, the first shuttle docking with Russia's space station, Mir. NASA has to install a docking mechanism on Atlantis as soon as it returns to Kennedy.



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