Seattle Assist for Jupiter Flight

Our Seattle waterfront is set to take off into space, with an assist to a Jupiter flight, no less. A huge antenna-type-NASA tracking station, now sits here, a knockdown station scattered between Terminal 25 and assorted railcars around town. The station is bound for Spain to help scientists track our Jupiter spaceship — and Longshoremen’s strike committee has cleared it for shipment “in the near future.”

This station is a sister of one that boarded ship here early this year for Down Under. It was assembled by Collins Radio at its Spokane plant, with help from Western Gear in Everett. The station will fill some 50,000 measurement tons of shipboard space. Some knockdown pieces will run as long as 50 feet, heavy as 69 tons.

UNCLE SAM HAS two Jupiter shots on his mind. The space trips will take from 600 to 900 days apiece and cover a half billion miles or more. Taking off for Jupiter requires delicate timing — and aim, too, come to think of it. Uncle is scheduling his Jupiter shots 13 months apart — one next March, the second in April, 1973.

That sort of project and that sort of timing shouldn’t be jessed up, our Longshoremen have decided, even by a West Coast dock strike.

IT TAKES MORE LEGAL MUSCLE to get some other cargos moving. Howard Lyon went to court yesterday to gain possession of two vanloads of novelties from Hong Kong. He is the first importer to do that here, we believe. He will take a Superior Court injunction to Terminal 18 today for release of his two vans. They are loaded with knickknacks: like gullers’ wrist scorecards and plastic tees. It must have been hard on Lyon’s financial health to have them sitting on the dock since June.

DOCK STRIKE-SUFFERING is worse in Vancouver, B.C., these days. Vancouver port and longshore people are laboring to keep up with too much cargo. Now their breweries are on strike, and there isn’t enough beer to slake their thirsts.

ONE STRIKE ON TOP of another. The Walt Brown’s found out how grim that really can be the past weekend. Brown isn’t a striker, but as a retired dock checker, his medical benefits are tied up with the Longshoremen’s Union. That situation became important Sunday when Mrs. Brown suffered a stroke. The union medical benefits continue through the strike, although there had been a question. But in the strike confusion, Brown’s records were misplaced somewhere down in San Francisco. Those records finally were found. Then a pending nurses’ strike “delayed Mrs. Brown’s hospital admission.”

The nurse’s strike was called off, of course. Mrs. Brown got into the hospital and already has been treated and released. But the Brown story should remind the rest of us, sometimes we just think we’ve got troubles.

Puget Sound’s GREAT and wonderful “ships of tomorrow” grow apace. Yesterday’s column talked about jumbo vanships coming for American Mail and Sea-Land Service. Today we hear the L.A.S.H. ships are next. The Pacific Far East Line has applied for rights to sail its L.A.S.H. ships into the Northwest.

L.A.S.H. as you probably know, stands for lighter-aboard ship. Pacific Far East is building six of the ships at a total tab of around $100 million. They are remarkable vessels, 820 feet long, of 26,400 gross tons, designed to carry up to 44 barges and 334 cargo vans. The barges (for lighters) will be 8½ feet long, with cargo capacity of 415 short tons apiece.

AS THE L.A.S.H. THEORY WORKS, the barges will load cargo at leisure, wherever the cargo may be. When the mother ship’s due in port, they’ll gather to meet her. She, in turn will discharge inbound barges and bring loaded outbound barges aboard with her 35-ton gantry crane.

It is such an efficient system that Pacific Far East thinks it will have to expand its home ports of California to find enough cargo to keep its six (at L.A.S.H.) ships busy. In the Northwest the company sees Seattle and Portland as its key ports of call. Unlike vanships, L.A.S.H. ships can operate out of relatively simple terminals. The Port of Seattle’s general manager, Elidon Ophelm, says this port has many terminals that could serve PFEIL’s L.A.S.H. ships — with pleasure!