

Wednesday, July 16, 1969

Hello everybody:- How would you like to join me on an expedition -- to the Moon? How I wish we could do just that! But as so many others are doing today, all I can do is talk about it. And not too knowledgeably either!

On a flight from Texas the other day I sat near a young woman who said she and her chum were off on a vacation jaunt. Both were airline employees. There we were up at 40,000 feet cruising at jet speed over Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada. We were talking of course about the astronauts and their flight to the Moon. Said lovely Billie Parker of Grand Prairie, Texas, - "Why spend all those billions on trying to land on the Moon? Why not spend it on improving things here on earth, helping the poor and so on?" I've heard the cost so far has been twenty-four billion dollars.

I told her there were at least two reasons; one: there has been a race on to see who would get there first.

*We were in that race and had to see it through. Two:
When scientists achieve the seeming miraculous and what
they do doesn't appear to have a practical side, in the end
man usually does receive benefits many times the original
cost. Even exploring the Moon is likely to turn out that
way. And then there are various astronomical reasons for
going to the Moon.*

*Of course that wizard of words Winston Churchill
did once get off a caustic warning which could have been
prophetic. He said: - "The Dark Ages may return to the
gleaming wings of science." But I doubt if he meant it
seriously.*

*"They're going to send a rocket -- to the moon."
Do you recall that line from a ditty in "Princess Ida" -- by
Gilbert and Sullivan? The masters of British comic opera
wowed Victorian audiences with -- their satire on science
fiction. Which is precisely what it was -- in their time.*

Science fiction. The science is still here, but as of now, the miraculous has come to pass; the fiction is gone, -- our Apollo 11 has kept its rendezvous with the moon. Our astronauts have indeed brought true another of man's wildest dreams. They have actually stepped out onto the lunar surface.

CBS has asked me to say something about this, not as a newsman, but in my rather incongruous capacity as the father of and honorary President of The World Center For Exploration, of which many of our astronauts and space people are members. As you would surmise, space scientists are now asking where, where do we go from here? Mars? Venus? And is there any reason to hope that sometime, sometime in the distant future -- man will find a way to reach the so-called fixed stars - way, way out there beyond our solar system? The heavenly bodies that are four light years, a dozen light years, one hundred

light years away from where our small planet spins in orbit around our relatively small sun?

While the experts debate the future -- let's talk a bit about the past. Our generation is the first -- to reach the moon. We are sure of this. But of course we didn't discover the moon. This satellite -- our moon -- has dazzled man, ever since he became human enough to have -- a sense of wonder.

Wouldn't you suppose that the first man who wished he could visit the moon -- was a cave man? For thousands, perhaps tens or even hundreds of thousands of years -- man has had a natural desire - a longing to know more about the shining orb sailing overhead through the night sky. Even Neanderthal man sitting with his woman, and children, at the mouth of that cave might have been moved to wonder what he would find -- if only he could visit the Moon!

Denied that possibility, primitive man, as you know, created -- lunar myths. For instance the myth of the Man in the Moon may be as old as the Stone Age. After all, the face is there -- if you only look hard enough.

Four or five thousand years ago the civilized peoples of antiquity -- had their own moon-myths. For the Egyptians, the moon was a goddess -- guiding her boat across the sky between dusk and dawn. The Babylonians offered sacrifices to -- their malevolent Moon God.

The Greeks and Romans were more poetic. Their story of Diana the Huntress concerns -- the lunar goddess, chaste and fair. Shakespeare echoes the story when he makes Falstaff refer to: -- "Diana's Foresters, Minions of the Moon. Meaning -- rogues like Falstaff, plying their trade by moonlight.

Shakespeare -- as you may remember -- has many references to -- the moon. So have -- the other poets.

Consider the following examples plucked from the anthology:

"The moon, rising in clouded majesty," -- Milton said that. "The moving moon went up the sky" wrote Coleridge.

Said Shelley: -- "That orb'd maiden, with white fire laden, whom mortals call the moon."

And then, of course, those classic lines:

"High diddle, the cat and the fiddle,

The cow jumped over the moon."

I wonder how many times you will be hearing that one today on radio and TV?

Some of the most enduring literature about the moon is to be found -- in nursery rhymes, and no wonder. Psychologist Carl Jung -- took this fact very seriously. He thought it indicated -- something fundamental in human nature. Something perceived by youngsters -- in their ingenuous way. I wonder what? At any rate -- they may

have been the first to insist that the moon is made -- of green cheese. Certainly that has come down to us as a durable myth.

But while the kids and the poets were at work -- so were the scientists. The regularity of the moon in its monthly phases -- became a basic part of the calendar.

The Greek scientist, Aristarchus, declared that this could be explained by -- the movement of the moon around the earth. Aristarchus was right; -- oh, but neither the Greeks nor the Medievals believed him. Only modern science came up with the tools and the technique -- to prove him right. A wise man was Aristarchus.

Galileo -- as you have read or heard, was the first to spot the lunar craters through a telescope. Galileo also made an interesting mistake with regard to the moon. He argued that the tides of the ocean were caused -- by the movement of the earth around the sun. Not -- by the moon.

Sir Isaac Newton finally propounded -- the correct theory. By putting the problem within the framework of his theory of gravity he showed that the gravitational pull of the moon caused the tide to rise on the earth. And now Newton brings us right back to -- our three astronauts who went winging their way through space to the moon. Their first objective -- as you know was -- to escape from the earth's gravitational pull. Then their second objective -- to enter the moon's gravitational pull. And once in orbit, proceed on -- down to the lunar surface.

All of which is in line with -- Sir Isaac Newton's theory of gravity. So far, I guess, we don't have to bring in -- Einstein's theory. But that may come on more distant flights -- when space and time begin to get mixed up. The watch-word will be -- relativity. I suppose it will.

Tonight, the watch-word is -- Newtonian gravity. Plus -- that big Apollo rocket. Plus -- the courage of our

three Astronauts who went rocketing off to the moon.

Does all this scientific talk mean that science -- has ousted poetry from space flight? Not at all -- judging from past experience. Moon-myths may go by the board -- only to give place to a new kind of poetry based on fact.

We already have one beautiful phrase -- compliments of our Astronauts. That phrase -- "The Blue Planet", coined by the first team of Americans -- to orbit the moon. For all future time, I feel quite sure the earth will be called -- "The Blue Planet." Just as Mars since ancient times has been called -- "The Red Planet."

Surely some day a major poet will ride -- a rocket to the moon. He may well turn out to be -- the Homer of space flight. Meanwhile, our astronauts are proving they have a poetic sense -- as well as a mastery of the science of their trade.

As one who has had a lifelong enthusiasm for and some special interest in exploration -- what does it all mean? Even though I do not feel qualified to answer my own question, I'll take a shot at it -- a moon shot:-

First of all our astronauts have only visited a spot on the moon about the size of your yard -- your lawn; so, the rest of the moon remains for others to explore.

Also, reaching the moon will immediately encourage man to go on and attempt to reach other planets in our solar system. After that -- the greatest challenge of all -- to find a way to reach other solar systems -- fly to galaxies so far away you might refer to them as beyond-the-beyond. Impossible? Of course no one so far has even been able to imagine how it might be done.

But, in my lifetime in many ways man has progressed farther than in the previous three or four thousand years. Man has been doing the impossible. Our

Astronauts have now demonstrated this more dramatically and convincingly than ever. So, I expect, man eventually will fly from this planet to other far, far distant inhabited planets.

In the meantime here we are in the greatest of all eras of exploration, with much of our own continental areas still to be explored; and with all of the under sea - three quarters of our earth's surface still to be explored.

At any rate, I'm elated that I lived to see the day when man first set foot on the moon.

Wed. July 16, 1969
San Francisco, Calif.

CAPE KENNEDY

At Cape Kennedy - as you know, today was the beginning of the beginning - with Astronauts Neil Armstrong, Mike Collins, Buzz Aldrin - already far out in space on man's latest and most incredible voyage of exploration; heading for their attempt at our first man's landing on another terrestrial body; our first giant step at exploring the vastness of space - and at solving the secrets of the universe.

SPACE FOLLOW CAPE KENNEDY

How's it going so far? Perfect - we are told. The flight of Apollo-Eleven - continuing tonight as flawlessly as it began - say space officials. So perfect, in fact, that amid-course steering correction scheduled for late today - has been cancelled outright. Ground control at Houston adding - that - "everything seems to be going along just fine." Estimated time of arrival on the moon? - Still set for Four-nineteen Sunday afternoon.

WHITE HOUSE FOLLOWS SPACE

As for man's first venture on to the lunar surface - that's set, of course, for early Monday - which President Nixon today proclaimed "a national day of participation" in the Apollo-Eleven moon landing mission. Urging public and private employers alike to give the day off to as many people as possible - so they can follow the historic moon landing. The President also urging the nation to "join in prayer" - for successful completion of the flight and safe return of the crew.

GROUND

Meanwhile back at the Cape, the thundering lift off of Apollo-Eleven - was followed by a thunder of applause from an estimated one million space watchers. Among them - Vice President Agnew - who asserted that America should resolve now - to "put a man on Mars by the end of this century."

Former President Johnson, as you have heard also present; accepting a hearty handshake and a bear hug - from the man he beat in nineteen-sixty-four - Barry Goldwater. Later, L.B.J. saying of the moon mission: "I don't believe there is a single thing our country does - our government does - our people do - that has a greater potential for peace" on earth.

And he added, in effect: "It also proves we can do almost anything - solve almost any problems - if only we put our hearts, heads and hands to the task."

ABERNATHY FOLLOW GROUND

As you may also have heard the Reverend Ralph Abernathy was there; the man who complained yesterday - about more money being spent on space than on the war on poverty. Today there he was standing and applauding like all the rest; also calling himself - "one of the proudest Americans." Admitting that just for a moment - he "forgot that we had so many hungry people."

The Reverend Abernathy even went on to term Cape Kennedy - "holy ground." "And it will be only more holy" - said he - "when we feed the poor."

MOSCOW FOLLOW ABERNATHY

Overseas - the launch was watched by millions more - via satellite. With radio coverage - further blanketing both sides of the Iron Curtain. Even Russian broadcasters - giving a complete, up-to-the-minute account of the American moon shot. The Soviet News Agency, Tass going so far as to call the men of Apollo-Eleven - "those courageous people" - who have been "entrusted with the most responsible flight" in history.

Reverse side - the Kremlin still maintains its usual silence on its own Luna project. Unofficially though - Soviet sources have been saying it's intended to be a round trip "moonscooper".

Whether it will scoop the Apollo-Eleven - we'll know in a few days.

SAIGON

Getting back to earth - General Earl Wheeler arrived tonight in Saigon. The Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff - met by General Creighton Abrams - American Troop Commander in Viet Nam - also, Admiral John C. McCain - U.S. Pacific Commander - who arrived earlier in the day. The three promptly settled down to a series of informal discussions.

General Wheeler's assigned mission - as you know: to determine whether the current lull in enemy activity is really a de-escalation - to which we can respond in time: or whether it is merely a "breather" - to permit re-grouping and re-training for another major offensive.

CARIBBEAN

Rendezvous in the Caribbean. The Shenandoah making contact today - with Thor Heyerdahl's papyrus raft. The Ra now about seven-hundred-and-fifty-one miles - due East of Barbados. The Shenandoah reporting: "The RA looks pretty beat up;" her stern under water - with waves breaking over her starboard side. However, Thor Heyerdahl and his crew of six - refusing to give up. Still hoping to make it to the new world - just as the Egyptians might have done it some three thousand years ago.

JOHANNESBURG

While the Apollo-Eleven was making history at Cape Kennedy - history of another sort was also being made today at Johannesburg, South Africa. Mrs. Johanna Duplessis - there giving birth to a five pound baby girl - an amazing achievement in itself - for Mrs. Duplessis is aged fifty-eight; according to best available records - the oldest recorded mother in all history.

The previous mark - set by Mrs. Ruth Krispler of Glendale, California; who gave birth to a child - also a girl - in Nineteen-fifty-six -when she was then fifty-seven. Now surpassed by Mrs. Duplessis - a year older.

All of which proves again - it is never too late. Or anyway - hardly ever.

PSALM

Turning to space again - the Apollo-Eleven is carrying with it tonight - a number of messages from World Leaders. Messages to be planted on the moon - in sealed capsules. Including one from Pope Paul quoting the ancient psalm "A Hymn of Praise to the Creator of the Universe". It reads in part:

"O Lord, our Lord - when we behold the heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place - what is man that you should be mindful of him - or the Son of Man that you should care for him. Yet you have made him little less than the angels - and crowned him with glory and honor: You have given him rule over all the works of your hands - putting all things under his feet."

To which I suspect we should end by saying Amen!

And so long until tomorrow.