

Looking back at Apollo 11: *reunion set for July 22*

'That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind'

Those monumental words, first spoken by Neil Armstrong at 9:56 p.m. CDT July 20, 1969, are now legend and a keystone of America's space history. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the first lunar landing, JSC and Boeing will host an Apollo 11 Family Picnic and Reunion from 4:30 - 8 p.m. July 22 at the Gilruth Center.

Tickets purchased in advance include a barbecue plate, beer, wine, soft drinks, and snacks. Free hot dogs will be

available for children age 12 and under. Food will be served from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. In addition, special Apollo 30th anniversary buttons will be available at the picnic while supplies last.

Exhibits and artifacts from the Apollo Program will be on display throughout the buildings at the Gilruth complex during the event. Items that will be on display



include a one-third scale Lunar Module, the spacecraft that flew humans to the lunar surface; a lunar surface antenna; the Mobile Equipment Transporter, which allowed astronauts to carry tools around on the lunar surface; lunar surface maps; and assorted

magazines and newspaper headlines announcing the landing. ■

Book Review

New book explores growing up with the Mercury generation

During Bryan Ethier's childhood, his favorite teachers weren't math, social studies, or science instructors; they were journalists Walter Cronkite and Jules Bergman. And his favorite heroes were the men whose lives they reported: the seven Mercury astronauts-Alan Shepard, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, Deke Slayton, Scott Carpenter, Wally Schirra, and Gordon Cooper.

Ethier's book, *Fly Me to the Moon: Lost in Space with the Mercury Generation* (McGregor), recounts the tales, thoughts, and dreams of his generation, merging quotes from the astronauts with autobiographical experience. What results for the reader is a journey back in time to the beginnings of this nation's human space flight program through the eyes and the imagination of a space buff whose life, like those of his fellow Mercury generation compatriots, was shaped by those early attempts to fly in space and the men who made them.

As he says, to fully experience Mercury, Ethier and those of his generation had to be Mercury. Ethier recounts the story when, as a youngster, he transformed a turkey baster into his own *Freedom 7* capsule and how he imaginatively transformed the back seat of his father's Ford Fairlane 500 into his own "individually-molded Mercury couch." During the Apollo era, he built his own Apollo command module facsimile "armed with a relatively useless ball pen hammer, a handful of splintered two-by-fours, and a bag chock-full of broken knobs, dials, and switches."

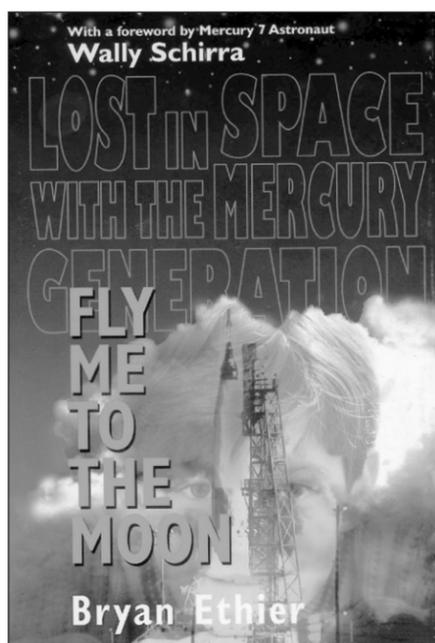
Beyond inspiring Ethier and his fellow members of the Mercury generation to build makeshift space modules and fly model rockets, the space program had a more pervasive impact on the development of their lives. Beginning with Mercury, the space program inspired them to dream, to be courageous, to understand that with "perseverance, effort, study and faith," they could achieve their goals. The space program taught them that they could be forever young and imaginative. As Ethier writes, "Those of us in the Mercury Generation know... that when we need to really connect with the Original Seven, all we have to do is look inside our hearts, and we will return to a time when we all were wide-eyed boys and girls wondering about worlds beyond our own."

The chapter titled "Heroes" recounts the launch of the world's first artificial satellite, *Sputnik 1*, on October 4, 1957, the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1958, and the subsequent race between America and Russia to land a man on the moon. Ethier recounts the voyage of Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin in April 1961, a flight that catapulted the Soviets ahead in their fight to dominant space exploration. Flights by Shepard, Grissom, and Gherman Titov followed.

Glenn followed these voyages with his own historic flight, a mission that Ethier retells, complete with the suspense of

whether or not the powerful Atlas rocket would function properly and whether *Friendship 7's* heat shield would hold. Sprinkled in throughout these stories of mankind's early voyages into space are the reflections on what they meant to those of Ethier's Mercury generation, including those of journalist Scott Pelley.

The chapter titled "Liftoff" relates Ethier's reflections on the first launch that he witnessed, that of *Columbia* on STS-1 in April 1981. What united that time with the earlier Mercury era was a need for heroes to make the nation feel good about itself. What that launch did for Ethier and his fellow University of Rhode Island classmates, it did for all of those in rapt attention at Cape Canaveral and across the nation: it united them together behind a common goal.



For Pelley, a shuttle launch is like the "birth of a child." Ethier relates how, on October 9, 1997, he had the chance to test this theory when his son, Adam, was born. Following the long, painful experience of his wife, Debbie, giving birth, Ethier notes that Pelley's hypothesis is correct. And just as a shuttle launch drives disparate people together and unites them behind a singular cause, so too does childbirth unite previously unrelated parents, doctors, and nurses for a common purpose.

Ethier structures each narrative about the effect of space flight on different people by beginning with an event from the recent past and then going further back in time to fill in the background. "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" begins with singer/songwriter Jeannie Cunningham seeing Astronaut Judy Resnik on TV during the STS-41-D mission flown in 1984. The experience gave Cunningham a hero and, more importantly, the impetus to kick her cocaine habit.

The adopted daughter of a Marine officer and an abusive, alcoholic mother, Cunningham grew up with her brother Caleb, who had also been adopted. Ethier recounts her descent into the world of music and drugs and her eventual recovery. Today, astronauts

and music comprise her life, and she has her own recording studio-Resnik One.

Ethier also includes the stories of David Crosby of the band Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young and former radio talk show host Dayna Justiz Steele-their associations with the worlds of music and space exploration. Through her association with Crosby and Astronaut Bonnie Dunbar, Steele was introduced to space exploration and to her husband, NASA research pilot Charlie Justiz. Justiz has been a research pilot for more than 15 years, instructing the astronauts on reentry and landing procedures.

These reflections lead again to the theme of how space flight unites people as Ethier recounts how, since the flight of Apollo VIII in December 1968, the residents of Timber Cove, Texas, not far from JSC, where Dayna and Charlie Justiz live, light luminarias-small votive candles-at 7 p.m. every Christmas Eve. Intended to enhance the festive appearance of the neighborhood, it was merely coincidental that the tradition began with the flight of Apollo VIII; nonetheless, most citizens of El Lago and Timber Cove still associate luminarias with spacebound neighbors.

Pelley, astronauts Mark Lee, Jay Apt and Steve Smith and Air Force Captain Rick Chiavetta, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory launch controller of the recent *Cassini* mission, all have common interests - space exploration and model rocketry. Ethier discusses these interests and how they have kept these and other men "forever little boys." Their "little boy spirit," born out of the Mercury era, has seen them through personal tragedies and has engendered them to incite that same spirit, that love of space flight, in the hearts and minds of their children and other youngsters.

Pelley, Associated Press journalist Howard Benedict, NBC reporter Jay Barbree, CBS journalist Walter Cronkite - they all wanted to be the first journalist to fly in space. None of them made it. In July 1986, NASA put an end to the Journalist in Space Program.

These were Ethier's teachers, the reporters who brought the space program into America's living rooms. As with his life, their lives became Project Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, Apollo-Soyuz, and Skylab. As passionate as he, it was difficult for them to report objectively on the space pioneers of the day, to "separate the objective reporter from the thrilled human being." Nonetheless they reported accurately, even sometimes critically, of the historic events they were all privileged to cover.

The book concludes with the author's reflections on the death of Shepard, an event that reminds Ethier of his mortality. This discussion leads to a final note, a chord that is struck throughout the book: the contrast between the immensity of space and the smallness of man and between the power and the immortality of God versus the humanness and the mortality of human beings. ■

Faces in the crowd

Where were you for the first lunar landing?



S99-05995

Richard Gavin
NASA, Branch Chief of Orbit Dynamics

I was 10 years old when it landed. I remember sitting in the living room taking pictures of the TV during the landing. Unfortunately none of the pictures came out, so I had a lot of pictures of a blank TV. But it was pretty cool watching it land.



S99-05993

Charles Nagay
GHG, Senior Engineer

I was in graduate school at the time of the first lunar landing and I watched it at home with my wife. I felt accomplishment and pride because we had finally accomplished our goal. That landing is what brought me to Houston in 1977 to work in the space program.



S99-05997

Benny Benavides
Dyncorp, Photographer

I was on the USS Hornet in the Pacific Ocean at the time. I was a staff photographer and flew aboard one of the four helicopters during the crew recovery. We didn't have TVs on board the ship, but we heard the landing by radio - so it was still an exciting moment.



S99-05996

Shirley Smith
NASA, Contract Specialist

I was in Florida working for the Department of Health & Human Services. I watched in astonishment as it was happening. I didn't think it could be done. When I relocated to this area, I sought out a job with NASA so that I could be a part of the space program.

JSC Photos by James Blair