



Apollo 11 and Current Challenges

In the glow of a computer screen on a moonless summer night, I write this note in the presence of fireflies and chirping of crickets on the back porch of our home.

There is not much that I can add to all the remembrances and celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Some 450,000 Americans had a hand in the success of getting two people to the surface of the moon in July of 1969.

Technical difficulties overcome were monumental. The personal human costs were great mountains, almost unfathomable in today's world of comfort and immediate gratification.

It's my understanding that the memory in one single cellphone today is greater than was available to all of NASA at the time of the moon landing. The lunar module's own landing program actually froze as the small lander was speeding toward the powdery moon surface. In spite of this, the mission proceeded. In 1969, travelers dared to wander to the moon with faith in themselves, trust in their team and, dare I say, a wing and a prayer. I ponder the times that I have returned to my driveway abandoning the odyssey of a trip to the grocery store because I left my phone on the kitchen counter.

Mike Collins was once considered the loneliest man. While his crewmates walked on the sunny lunar sphere, a view of earth rising just over their shoulders, he circled the moon crossing over its far side. His only companion a pouch of coffee. The

rest of humanity from the start of time was on the other side of the moon. No radio, no cell phone, a person with no contact or view of the earth.

I "suffered" through a particularly long stretch on a road trip this summer. One over-populated by pine trees, straight roads and random thoughts bouncing through the inner space between my ears. Accompanied by tunes courtesy of Spotify, my course directed by Waze, with no less than three cell towers pinging my little android phone at any time, I felt alone. How spoiled am I!

Astronauts have shared, even as they made the great trek through space to the moon, it was the blue, green and white marble, Earth, that stole the show.

Traveling far to appreciate the gift so near and precious. Taking way too much comfort in the technology made possible by the endeavor to place footprints on the moon, I am in awe of the people who dreamed dreams, accepted challenges and broke the bonds once believed inescapable.

We have our own challenges in the year ahead. They are much nearer than the moon and close to our hearts. In many ways quite daunting. Travelers in our own way, we leave imprints as lasting as those left on the moon. We are tasked to grow dreamers, engage doers and give wings to those who will make impossible possible. Difficulty... Opportunity... We are cut from the same cloth as those celestial wanderers. ... Now, where did I put that cellphone?

Happy Maths, Good People!

Peter

In the middle of
difficulty lies
opportunity.

- Albert Einstein