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This Week - 33 Years Ago, 'The Eagle Has Landed'

By HORACE R. CORBIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

This week, 33 years ago, the entire world was watching TV with wonderment as the first men landed on the moon. It was the biggest event ever connecting all of mankind, that July 20.

"Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed!"

A few hours later, as he stepped from the ladder of the lunar landing module to the surface of the moon, Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon, said, "That's one small step for man - one giant leap for mankind." Buzz Aldrin was right behind him. Michael Collins circled overhead in the Command Module. The world glowed with self-esteem. Those alive then remember exactly where they were at that moment.

The astronauts left a plaque, which is there on the moon today. It says "Here Men From Planet Earth First Set Foot Upon the Moon. July 1969 A.D. We Came In Peace For All Mankind."

For me as a young engineer, it was a marvel fulfilled with such promise for the future. I grew up as the U.S. and the USSR were in the "Space Race." Brave and daring men from both sides risked everything and challenged the unknown - what heart, skill and bravado! - Yesteryear's "right stuff."

It strikes me that most people alive today have no idea what I'm talking about - they weren't even born then. They've never experienced a man landing on the moon. The last time it occurred was with Apollo 17 on December 11, 1972 - Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmidt. Ronald Evans was there, too, but circling the moon as pilot of the Command Module. I wonder who actu-

ally was the last man to leave the moon, Cernan or Schmidt?

I marveled at Apollo 10 in May of 1969 because of my interest as an engineer. That was the first time mankind completely left the gravity of Planet Earth and became controlled by the gravity of another heavenly body. They circled the moon, but did not attempt to land, and returned to Earth as planned.

The Apollo Manned Moon missions were not without heartache and angst. At the start with Apollo 1 in January 1967, Gus Grissom, Edward White and Roger Chaffee lost their lives during pre-flight tests on the launch pad when fire burst out in their pure oxygen filled module. There was grieving. Then, extensive investigation and overhaul was done. No one gave up. Manned flights resumed with Apollo 7 in October 1968.

Apollo 13 was filled with drama as the entire world observed with dread for days as the astronauts almost became lost in space. With a crippled craft, no power, little oxygen and computers lost, the astronauts used a slide rule to navigate home from the heavens. Most people today don't know what a slide rule is either - stop by and I'll show you one.

It troubles me today when Jet Propulsion Lab scientists and engineers are trained more to give TV interviews than to master the challenges of space. They dumped the last few satellites to Mars and billions of dollars into oblivion because they didn't have enough of that "right stuff" to convert feet to meters.

I'm curious... could we land a man on the moon today? Yes, but only if we return to the spirit of yesteryear - with the "right stuff".

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Buzz Aldrin, 1969 on the moon.



Below are four arcane words, each with four definitions - only one is correct. The others are made up. Are you sharp enough to discern this deception of diction?

If you can guess one correctly - good guess. If you get two - well-read individual. If you get three - word expert. If you get all four - You must have a lot of free time!

All words and correct definitions come from the board game Diction Deception.

Answers to last week's arcane words.

1. Scheelite - Calcium tungstate
2. Anatine - Resembling a duck
3. Spruit - A small stream or creek that is often dry
4. Titar - The gray partridge

INQUINATION

1. Of an alien or foreign nature
2. Bizarre; strange behavior
3. The act of defiling; corruption
4. A tendency or leaning

CRISPIN

1. A shoemaker
2. A family of wading birds related to the plovers
3. A Brazilian parakeet
4. A small brook

PILUM

1. A fur-lined gown
2. A Turkish dish consisting of boiled rice, mutton or fish and spices
3. The paragraph symbol
4. A heavy javelin used by the Roman infantry

DARQUE

1. Scottish for a day's work
2. A type of dugout canoe
3. A scar or ulcer underneath the skin of sheep
4. To be or become dim

Answers will appear in next week's issue.

Reader Asks Town Pool To Clean Bathroom

I read with great interest the accolades that the Memorial Pool administration is garnering for completing their project on time and on budget. This is very commendable. Our family enjoys the complex very much.

However, there is a fundamental problem that I hope will be rectified with the writing of this letter.

The women's restroom is in dire need of an antiseptic cleansing/disinfecting. The Leader has reported the membership to be approximately 9000 members. With Moms responsible for the children most times and their need to use the "facilities" often, it is easy to understand how much usage that particular room gets.

Last year I spoke with the Manager of the pool to describe staining of the toilet stalls. When asked if they cleaned the bathroom he was emphatic that it was cleaned by the staff. When I asked what was used he announced "WD-40"! WD-40 is not a disinfectant... it is a lubricant. I was absolutely repulsed! I suggested that proper cleaning should involve a bleach product, such as any generic brand. It could be diluted and very inexpensively cleaned while disinfecting the facility.

This year again, I have noticed "staining" of the walls, not embedded stains, but visibly removable ones. I e-mailed Mr. Hertell and received no response. I asked a campaigning councilman and a town official if they would speak with someone at the pool to rectify the situation, yet as late as yesterday, the facility is still not clean.

It seems that hundreds of thousands of dollars can easily be spent to recreate and upgrade a beautiful facility, but it is even more important to keep clean what is being used. I have spoken to a number of parents, mostly moms who strongly agree.

Please Memorial Pool Management, may we have a clean women's room?

Robin Ince,
Westfield

Are Downtown Parking Regulations Helping or Complicating Situation?

Parking. We're all tired of talking about it, hearing about it, searching for it, guessing about the next restriction and peeling tickets off our windshields. In our view, the increased regulation and changes are making matters worse.

Maybe everyone is trying too hard and losing track of the goal - which we thought was to help the situation. We think that the myriad of downtown Westfield parking rules, excessive regulation and ticketing are not helping matters. The efforts, although perhaps well intended, have become counterproductive. We think this is hurting business, commuters, apartment renters, visitors, residents and employees. The cost of administering and studying the situation has ballooned. We're hard pressed to think of who is being helped.

Case in point - Has anyone thought about the apartment residents? Even though the downtown area is literally surrounded by metered parking - Elm Street up to Cowperthwaite; Ferris Place - not to mention all the roads in the downtown and the parking lots - with the regulation, there is no place for them to park.

Recently, Barry Somers, the director of parking, decided that some of the residents who possessed permits for the employee parking lots on North and Central Avenues and Elm Street would not be permitted to renew their permits. The reasoning behind this is that these residents do not work in Downtown Westfield.

There is no overnight street parking downtown; there are plenty of signs posted for that. The ordinance, which regulates all of the parking lots, states that there is no parking in any lot overnight, unless it is signed by the Police Department. We were unable to find a sign stating that overnight parking was allowed. The question remains, where are residents supposed to park overnight and what harm is done? Better yet, where are they supposed to park during the day if they work at night?

It was a former councilman's opinion that the rent rates were so low in town because there was no parking. There are few people who would agree with that statement, with rents for one-room apartments

upwards of \$750 a month.

Our questions are...if these folks work out of town, and all that they are using the permit for is to park overnight, what's the problem? Why wouldn't the town want to make a profit - or better yet, focus on the needs of its citizens? Even if they are parking there during the day, how many downtown residents could be home during the day? What if a resident is home sick from work? Should they be running down to feed the meter in their bathrobe and slippers?

In the lot behind the Rialto, the town has installed new parking technology. These new machines will eventually replace the meters in that lot. The good thing about these new machines is that it will allow for four-hour parking. The "not so good" things are numerous. First off, it will eliminate eight-hour parking in the lot, which is terribly inconvenient for anyone wanting to spend more than four hours in downtown. Secondly, right now, when someone pulls out of a space, and you pull in, you can see how much time is left on the meter. With these new machines, you won't be able to see how much time is left. You must start from scratch. It's a de facto rate increase.

The meter readers won't have to walk around to look at the meters. They will be able to print out a piece of paper, telling them each space that is over due. Will it become likened to EZ-Pass, and will you receive your ticket by email?

We think that Westfield should become user-friendly and reverse the trend. We see no reason to charge for parking at 8 a.m. and ticket a person who's picking up bread at Panera's or buying a cup of coffee at Robert Treat. We don't think restaurant patrons and moviegoers should be subject to ticketing at night.

We think that the municipal parking lots should be made available at night for the apartment residents.

Although comical to observe, we think that the regulations that cause employees to move their cars on the outskirts of downtown every two hours should be rescinded.

We believe that there are several other simplifying measures that can be taken to help commuters and others. What do you think?

N.J. Property Tax Reform Ought to Be On November Ballot; Trenton Hear The Cry

The State Legislature appears set to ignore - again - the need to address New Jersey's antiquated property tax system and, in effect, let local municipalities: It's your problem, not ours.

Bills in the legislature that would authorize a state ballot referendum on whether to hold a state constitutional convention to address property tax reform appeared to have some momentum earlier in the year. But matters have stalled as legislators ran up against deadlines for the state budget and for their summer recess. It looks like there is little time left for legislators to act in time for the question to be printed on ballots.

A constitutional convention would have prepared proposals to amend the state constitution and to revise state statutes, all revenue-neutral. It might have helped eliminate inequities, improve application, reduce property taxes as a share of overall public revenue and reduce community dependence on property taxes.

A few towns are aiming to keep this issue alive. The Scotch Plains Township Council introduced an ordinance last week that, if passed, will place a non-binding public question on the township's election ballot in November asking voters if they favor holding such a convention. Maplewood is planning to include a similar question on its ballot, and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities is urging other towns to follow suit. Perhaps Trenton will hear the outcry.

This newspaper, over the past few years, has called for property tax reform in New Jersey. We believe it is out of date, unfair and out of control. Senior citizens are driven from their homes, and property owners are caught in a revolving door of increases from the schools, the counties and the towns. It would be interesting if property owners could set a limit on the taxes by vote in November, including maximum debt obligation, and let the competing interests figure out how to slice up the pie.

The system goes back hundreds of years to a time

when property owners were considered to be people of substantial means. It's not that way anymore. It is not like income tax, where one pays according to their income level.

Consider the case of two neighbors, both living in similar homes that are assessed, for tax purposes, about the same. One homeowner is young and earns \$100,000 annually; his property tax bill is, for instance, \$8,000, or about 8 percent of his income. His neighbor is a senior citizen who has lived in his house for several decades and depends on a retirement income that is much lower than his younger neighbor, which makes his own property tax bill of \$8,000 harder to swallow. How fair is this? And what is the elderly neighbor to do? Move out of his house, and to where? If seniors leave and families move in, the school systems will face financial chaos.

The state's over-reliance on property taxes has, according to a study released last week by New Jersey Policy Perspectives, led to more than 20 percent of the state's municipalities being under financial stress. According to the report, the average property tax rate in New Jersey in 2000 was \$2.32 per \$100 of assessed property value, while the national average was just \$1.21.

If this issue is important to you, contact your representatives in the state legislature and express your opinion. Ask them where they stand and what can be done. Senators Bagger and Suliga, Assemblymen Kean, Munoz and Green and Assemblywoman Stender need to tell their constituencies where they stand on this matter, and what, if anything, they did this year to help, and why.

After the Scotch Plains Township Council hopefully passes the ordinance next month, it would be useful for those favoring and opposing a constitutional convention to educate the public, some of whom may not be fully familiar with the particulars of the matter. The bottom line is that voters should be able to express themselves on an issue that affects everyone.

Letters to the Editor

Fanwood Resident Opposed to Proposed Verizon Cell Antennas

Fanwoodian's should be outraged! Verizon Wireless wants to not only set a new precedent and put 15 cell phone antennas atop the existing transmission tower between Elm Avenue, Oak Court and Paterson Road in a residential area, but they also want to put a 30 feet by 11.5 feet base station at the foot of the tower where neighborhood children play.

Are we to trash Fanwood's own ordinance, which restricts Telecom Companies from "sighting" cell tower in other than commercial or industrial zones? This does not faze Verizon who is intent on expansion into this residential zone. Nor does fitting the proposed tower with antennas less than 275 yards from another one already fitted and serving Nextel and Sprint seem to bother them at all.

They claim they have a "Gap in Service" and want to serve Fanwood better. Unfortunately, they want the resident surrounding the proposed cell tower to forget

the growing number of scientists, doctors, and engineers that disagree with the supposed safety of F.C.C. allowed radiation limits as well as their measuring criteria. Not only that, but any truthful real estate agent will tell you that the perception amongst potential home buyers is that of danger and uncertainty with regard to microwaves emitted. Property devaluation would be given, but the health impact would be uncertain for years to come.

Despite the fact that Verizon admits service to Fanwoodian's by other wireless companies is very good, they seem to feel that having the very next tower up from the one off South Avenue smothered in antennas is essential to servicing the majority of the people of Fanwood. Nonsense! How many cell companies do we have to accommodate? We're only a small town! What is essential is that the citizens of Fanwood be allowed to continue the quality of life they bargained for when they bought their homes in Fanwood 10, 20 and 30 years ago. We don't need to sacrifice our homes.

Come to the zoning board meeting at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, July 24 at Fanwood Borough Hall and be heard so that this application for a variance is rejected, before it's too late.

Tom Bradow
Fanwood

More Letters to the Editor
On Page 5

Fanwood Resident Vows Not to Shop In WF After Receiving Parking Ticket

Editor's Note: This letter was sent to the Westfield Court Clerk and copied to Mayor McDermott, The Downtown Westfield Corporation, Panera Bakery and The Westfield Leader

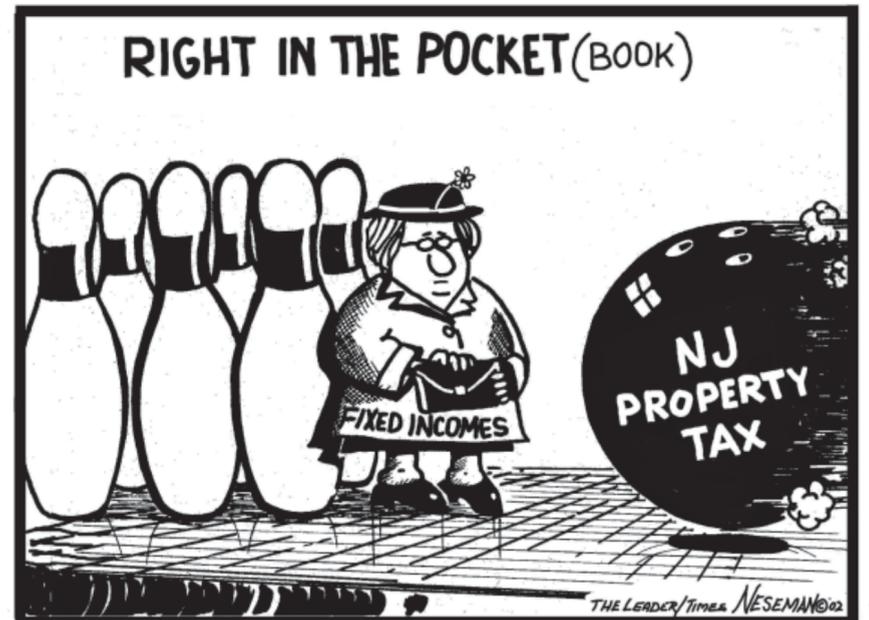
Enclosed, please find my check in the amount of \$13.00 to pay the above fine. I hope that you enjoy cashing it. Enjoy it because it is the last money that the Town of Westfield, or any of its businesses, will see from me.

I am a resident of Fanwood who usually spends over five hundred dollars a year shopping in the stores in your Town. In this day and age of competition for my busi-

ness, and with empty store-fronts on Broad Street, I would think that the Town would not have ticketed hawks out on a half empty street looking to assault business patrons with a ticket at 8:04 a.m. Obviously, I was wrong. It is equally obvious that Westfield does not want, or care about, my business.

To the owner of Panera Bakery, my apologies; although your coffee and breads are delicious in the morning, the Town has driven me from your door. It is unfortunate that this ticket will ultimately cost you, and your brother merchants, more than thirteen dollars through the loss of my business.

John M. Deitch
Fanwood



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