

## Space Age Questions- Where are the answers?

by Nancy Cramer

We recently watched the "Apollo 11" program on TV which documented the landing of the first man on the moon 50 years ago that day. But this feat, seemingly accomplished so effortlessly, took my breath away as the astronauts, Armstrong and Aldrin, stepped on the surface of the moon. I tried to imagine how they must have been feeling. Were they relieved that day had finally come, or were they wary about their safe return to earth, or... I could conceive of dozens of thoughts and emotions that might have raced in their heads. Or most likely, they were professionals, highly trained and dedicated to their mission, and proud to have been selected to be a member of the team. So their attention would be focused on their mission.

As I watched, I wondered what indeed was their mission; was it to establish a colony on the moon much as our ancestors once sailed to faraway, unknown lands to plant their flag and claim ownership? Or was it to prove that our scientists are the brightest and most capable compared to their counterparts of other nations? Or was it curiosity, a desire to find that "man in the moon" of primitive days?

Hopefully, it was as our President Nixon, in one of his finer hours, told the astronauts in a phone call that the people of the world were proud of this feat. That we would "redouble our efforts to bring peace and tranquility to the earth," and that all people were one. It would create a coming together of nations, although at that time we were still embroiled in the Vietnam war. This was a discovery to be shared and used for good works.

The real answer is doubtful, as the events of the last 50 years have demonstrated. President Nixon resigned in disgrace some years later to avoid impeachment and removal from office. We have participated in other disastrous and destructive wars; a world wide economic recession; the rise, and thankfully fall, of some dictators; although other leaders still keep their people in bondage

On the plus side, important breakthroughs have been made in medicine and technology, especially in the latter. Some inventions, not even dreamed when of Apollo 11 burst beyond the bonds of the earth are commonplace and taken for granted. The personal computer being one.

But, I ask people of every color and description, who speak more than 100 different tongues, and practice many different forms of obeisance to an unseen god-- I ask, have we progressed? Our recent history does not allow me to confidently offer a positive answer.

We are dividing, and we are conquering, but we are not uniting. Our house of democracy sometimes rests on shifting sands, rather than stout beams, leaving the foundation tenuous. Two and two no longer equals four, but is either "three" or a "five," depending upon which side of the dividing line you are standing.

Despite all these words, a faint flicker of hope is returning as I write. This hope does not resemble the mighty blast off of the rocket ship, but instead is a steady, slow growing beam that may with time become a beacon to all people in need of hope. Many are needy everywhere. We have the capacity to become more than we think we can. We can envision helping to fulfill the pledge that President Nixon referred to.

We can and we will.