

THE NEW BERN MIRROR

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WELL DONE

Television, saturated with a monotonous blending of inferior programs and asinine commercials, experiences a few shining hours. When those hours do brighten the scene, more often than not the illumination is provided by good reporting.

News coverage of notable events is a field where the medium excels, and once again this was impressively demonstrated when Apollo 11 left the earth and found safe harbor in the bone-dry Sea of Tranquility.

Wisely, the three major networks pooled their efforts to a considerable extent, and collectively did a far better job than they could have done independently.

Of course, television had a lot going for it in this instance that newsmen don't always have. Provided the identity of members of the moon team well in advance, NBC, CBS, and ABC had ample time to prepare background material on the three astronauts.

Interviews were taped at a leisurely pace, days and weeks prior to the launching, and airing them at intervals gave anchor commentators like Walter Cronkite, Frank McGee, Chet Huntley and David Brinkley a welcome respite from marathon stints at the microphone.

Most of the tapings were informative and entertaining, and in good taste. Cognizant of continuing hazards confronting the three spacemen, from blast off to splash down, commentators were in no mood to be overly jocular. It was serious business, and the knowledge that any one of several "ifs" could mean tragedy made it so.

Houston's cooperation was a boon to more than 2,000 reporters representing 56 countries who were assigned to the monumental story. For once, an anxious world was joined in common bond, praying audibly or silently in varied tongues for fellow humans, involved in a fantastic mission.

Come what may, success or failure, the world would know. That is the American way of doing things, a way so strikingly different compared to Russia's secrecy in promoting its space program. Rest assured that hundreds of millions around the globe are acutely aware of the contrast, and admire a nation so obviously determined to, in the slang vernacular of the day, tell it like it is.

Second guessing the Soviets or anyone else is hardly fair, but in the afterglow of recent events it is abundantly clear that Moscow was ill advised when it sent Lunar 15 into orbit around the moon. From the outset, the challenge to Apollo's manned flight appeared petty and something less than sporting.

Russia's prestige suffered severely when failure occurred, and no amount of explaining that Lunar 15 had completed all the functions intended can possibly erase this fact. With little to gain and much to lose, the Kremlin went for broke on a reckless gamble, and came away from the table empty handed.

Meanwhile the moon, unperturbed, keeps on shining and acting like nothing extraordinary has happened.

NIH THE SEARCH FOR HEALTH

A REPORT FROM
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
BETHESDA, MARYLAND

Retinitis Pigmentosa

Retinitis pigmentosa is an inherited disease that usually produces its first symptom—night blindness—in children. Over a lifetime the disease gradually decreases the ability to see at night and cuts down on the amount of side vision, until the effect is similar to that of blinders used on horses, or what has been called "gun barrel vision." The loss is caused by changes in the retina, the innermost layer of the eye which receives light and generates nerve impulses.

There is no known treatment that can halt the progress of retinitis pigmentosa in a person who has the gene for this disease. In many cases, however, retinitis pigmentosa does not progress to complete blindness.

Many patients keep their reading vision throughout their lives, although it may be restricted to a small central part of the visual field. Only a small number of cases result in total blindness.

The disease can be diagnosed by an ophthalmologist using an instrument called an ophthalmoscope. Looking into the interior of the eye, if the disease is present, he can see many black pigment deposits scattered throughout the retina, but particularly around its edges. This extra pigment is characteristic of the disease, as the name retinitis pigmentosa suggests, but in rare cases the pigment may be absent.

A useful tool that enables scientists to distinguish retinitis pigmentosa from other diseases retinogram (ERG). This device records electrical impulses that the retina gives off when light strikes it. Electronic computers used with the ERG help pick up even the weakest electrical signals of a retina damaged by retinitis pigmentosa.

Many scientists are conducting research to find out how retinitis pigmentosa affects retinal tissue. They have observed that the rods and cones, which are the specialized light-receiving cells of the retina, become less active. Those used for peripheral or side vision are particularly affected. Because there is greater damage to the rods, which are used to detect shades of black and white in dim light, night vision is also

damaged.

The deteriorated light-receptor cells are replaced by an overgrowth of the supporting of the blood vessels and the part of the optic nerve that passes through the retina. This atrophy further damages the ability of the retina to function.

Why these changes occur is still unknown. Some abnormality in the biochemistry of the eye or of the body's metabolism may be responsible. Some scientists think the disease is due primarily to a change in the pigment-producing tissue of the retina, or to changes in the small blood vessels that supply nourishment to the outer layers of the retina. Once the cause is pinpointed through research, it may be possible to find ways to prevent the disease or stop its progress.

The National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke (NINDS), one of the National Institutes of Health, conducts research in retinitis pigmentosa at its laboratories in Bethesda, Md., and supports other studies in research centers in various parts of the United States. For more information on progress in overcoming this and other visual disorders, write to this paper for the new NINDS pamphlet, "Eye Research."

Largest scallop on record was brought in to Digby, Nova Scotia by Capt. Leon Longmire. There was half a pound of meat in the huge shell.

G.I. Loans
Under a law that went into effect May 7, 1968, the maximum Veterans Administration guaranteed home loan limit was increased from \$7,500 to \$12,500. Veterans who have previously used \$7,500 entitlement have a remaining entitlement balance of \$5,000, provided that eligibility for a G. I. Loan has not expired.

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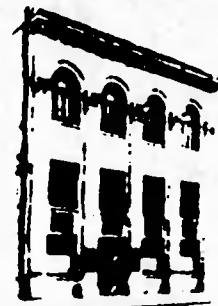
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