

In Memoriam: "This terrible accident will become a larger national and world tragedy if we retreat from our advances and our adventures."

The following guest editorial is written by Denny Guehler for What's Happening.

Seven bright lights, we barely knew, no longer shine. Seven brave, brilliant, beautiful lives are gone in an instant blinding flash.

A shocked world feels a rare collective sadness and mourns a newfound loss. The awe we felt with Alan Shephard and John Glenn, with Gus Grissom and Yuri Gagarin, with American astronauts and Soviet cosmonauts meeting in space, and with Neil Armstrong on the Moon has been all but replaced by technological "business as usual." The human drama, almost forgot-

ten, is once again on center stage. The awe has returned!

For a few moments, we've shifted our focus from budget deficits and economic indicators, from mortgage payments and grocery bills, from hot wars and cold wars, from East-West impasse and Middle Eastern stalemate to searching the stars for answers in the heavens and searching our hearts for answers here on Earth.

This terrible accident will become a larger national and world tragedy if we retreat from our advances and our adventures. If we allow this event to deter our peaceful exploration of space, the subsequent discoveries of our new perceptions of Spaceship

Earth, and ultimately the searching for new dimensions within our souls, then their sacrifice will be for naught and truly tragic.

If we allow space to become a military reservation for East or West, to become a playground for generals be they American or Soviet, rather than the province of scientists and teachers, journalists and actors, philosophers and engineers and poets who share with humankind the wonders of their experiences and perceptions, then humanity will lose one of history's greatest opportunities.

We can best honor well-lived lives by living well ourselves and sharing opportunities for a better life with others. We can best

honor fallen heroes by taking inspiration from their heroism and becoming heroes ourselves. Not everyone can be an astronaut, or cosmonaut, or a teacher in space. But opportunities for heroism abound in everyday life: in the classroom and in the courtroom; on stage or on the athletic field; in the home and in the marketplace; in City Hall and in Geneva; or helping someone next door or on the street who needs a helping hand.

Let us not forget their sacrifice or our sadness. Let the sorrow in our hearts become a new-found courage! Let us dare to move forward! Let us dare to rise above mediocrity! Let us dare to become heroes!

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