

Monologue

Idle Hands

By J. Dana Haynes

Last year, as the space shuttle Columbia was making its second-of-three, unpowered landings in the deserts of California, about ten of us were sitting around a television, watching with excitement and anticipation. We were at work, but all activities had ground to a halt as the multi-ton megalith sailed in as easy as you please, to a perfect three-point landing.

"Blast," one of my friends said, "I wish that dumb thing had crashed."

At first, I thought Gene, my friend, was joking. But as he stood and left the room, I realized he was dead serious.

I went after Gene and asked him what he meant.

"What good is that thing?" he asked. "Listen, how much money did you spend on taxes last year?"

I gave a rough figure and he laughed. "I paid five times that. And I resent seeing my hard-earned bucks wasted on a billion dollar truck when the country can't even feed its people!"

Actually, Gene had a good point. Times are tough, and space flight is expensive. The question remains: can we afford to finance the National Aeronautics and Space Administration when the economy is as shaky as it is.

The answer is a resounding yes. For NASA is one of the few organizations in the federal government which turns a profit. And as any businessman can tell you, the more money you put into a profit-making operation, the better you return.

NASA turns a profit through the launching of satellites, and the renting of time on these amazing devices. But it also makes money through the fantastic, ground-based inventions it has brought to the world. Things such as tin foil, asbestos, CAT (computerized axial tomography) and PET (position emission controlled) scans and most of the artificial organs that have saved hundreds of lives.

One of the latest experiments to bear fruit, according to the February issue of *OMNI* magazine, is glasses for the deaf.

It sounds like a joke, to be sure. But it's not. NASA engineers have worked out a design for glasses which absorb the sounds of speech and feed the sounds into a mini-computer. The computer in turn translates each sound into an image. Twin lasers on the ear-peices of the glasses focus the images onto the lenses, creating holographic (three-dimensional) pictures.

Each consonant would have its own shape, and the shape will appear in a different quadrant of the lenses, depending on what vowel follows. For instance, a square may represent the sound "D." If it appears in the upper right-hand corner of the glass, then the wearer will know that the word being spoken begins with "DA..." The next image will give the next consonant, and together they will spell a word.

One may think such a system would be impractical. After all, the power pack, computer, lasers and image inducers would all take up considerable space, in theory.

But part of the miracle of this invention is the micro-circuitry that will make it no larger than a normal pair of glasses and a hearing aid.

This device is still a few years away from mass marketing, and is only mentioned here to dispell the idea that NASA exists solely to put men on the moon (a trip, incidentally, which probably won't be repeated in this century).

When nearly 55 cents out of every tax dollar goes into our massive military budget, organizations like NASA should be funded to the hilt, even if it's at the expense of a nuclear submarine or two. Building an MX missile system may make some people sleep better. But if the U.S. is the great, humanitarian country that we tell the rest of the world it is, then more thought should be given to using tax-payer's money to benefit the people of the world. Not subjugate them.



Lottery a likable solution

"Mrs. Larkin, Congratulations! You have just won the Arizona State Lottery! You are now \$700,000 richer!" Now I am not sure if that is the way that the contest judges told her that she won, but I am sure that Jan. 17, was a very happy time for Mrs. Larkin and the town of Des Moines, Washington.

Kristi Blackman

Mrs. Larkin is the first person I have ever known to win anything like a lottery, not counting my Aunt Rozella's neighbor who was the \$5000 instant winner for the Pepsi contest. Mrs. Larkin had no idea she would be the one to win, after all there were 196,000 others in her

category.

Wouldn't it help out Oregon if we had a lottery? I'm sure it would. It would create jobs and boost morale, plus there would be more people coming into Oregon during the time of the game-of-chance and putting more money into Oregon than will be going out.

Last week I read in the *Oregonian* about the man and his family who sit everyday along the sidewalk in the transit mall and ask for donations, because he has been laid off, his unemployment has been used up, and he cannot find a job to support his growing family. Just think how many jobs are involved in a lottery? There are people who need to organize the rules of the game,

then a company would have to make the tickets. There would be a need of printers, distributors, an advertising team, tourism would be accelerated, the possibilities would benefit everyone.

Merchants would benefit from the businesses due to the fact people would be drawn into stores, shops and taverns not only to buy a ticket but in the process maybe find something that catches their eye. Personally I have never walked into a grocery store and not bought something, many other people in this state are as compulsive as I am.

Well, are we going to be winners or losers? Let's all be winners, and see if we can pick Oregon up off her knees.

Dialogue

Kudos for blood donors

To the Editor:

I would like to thank each individual who took the time to donate blood on January 24th. We came very close to a record turnout for a Clackamas Community College Blood Drive. The American Red Cross was able to collect 101 units of blood, which is seven short of the Clackamas record of 108 units. Dennis Donin, ARC staff consultant, was so impressed with the effort that the blood-mobile will extend it time at

Clackamas by two for spring term.

The addition of two volunteer typists helped to make the blood donation process a smooth one. There was a waiting line for the first hour, but after that it was open for people to donate at their leisure.

Three people who deserve special recognition are: Emma

Espinal (Blood Drive Committee chairperson), Debbie Haugh and Deanna McKeever (volunteer typists). Volunteers are extremely hard to come by these days, and I feel we all owe the donors and the volunteers a debt of appreciation. Once again, thank you for helping to save human lives. Sincerely, Paul Nastari, President, ASGCC

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Clackamas Community College

