

# Remembering one giant leap to the moon this month

By JENNIFER COLTON

This month marks 50 years since Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin took a giant leap for mankind after landing on the moon on July 20, 1969. Millions of families huddled around black-and-white TVs, watching the Saturn V rocket launch and staring wide-eyed as Armstrong took his one small step onto the surface of the moon. Fifty years later, our children are several generations removed from those who watched the lunar landing in real time, so commemorating the event is not only about fun – it's about learning how important the space race was in its time.

To celebrate at home, start that discussion. If an older family member remembers the landing, ask them to describe the experience. Maybe you can't pinpoint the Apollo landing sites, but use a telescope to study the moon close-up. Experiment with making impact craters and compare those to the ones on the lunar surface.

On NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab web site you'll find a history of the space program, as well as space-themed activities you can do with your kids. There's everything from making a cardboard, rubber-band-powered lunar rover to tracking the phases of the moon ([www.jpl.nasa.gov/edu](http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/edu)). For older children and teens, experiment with photography and capturing the best image of the moon or go on a research scavenger hunt to discover just how much of our modern technology got a jump start during the space race.

However you choose to commemorate the anniversary, the most important part is making sure you have the conversation. Those interviewed for this story consistently



said youngsters today don't understand how important it was.

"It was huge," says Ann Madigan, a former teacher and librarian. "I was thrilled at the time. I thought it was wonderful, and I think people need to talk to kids about it. It was important and it only happened because there was a lot of effort made. We did it because it was hard and it was worth doing."

Many who remember watching the moon landing in 1969 worry that advances in technology – some of which grew out of the space race – have made the event seem less real. But that technology also enables your family to re-live the event. An online search for "Apollo 11 anniversary" will lead you to many video compilations, from interviews with the astronauts to aerial photos of the landing site on the moon.

At 1 p.m. on Friday, July 19, NASA will present "Giant Leaps: Past and Future," an opportunity to learn

about space exploration with interviews, videos, and tours – including plans to return to the moon by 2024. You can find details and the live stream at [www.nasa.gov/nasa-live](http://www.nasa.gov/nasa-live).

With the moon landing in mind, local libraries have centered their summer reading programs around the theme "A Universe of Stories." They are offering crafts, activities, and special presentation all summer, such as teens making space pizza and theatric performances of "My Mother the Astronaut."

"There are so many opportunities out there," says Stanfield librarian Cecili Longhorn. "We're trying to introduce kids to as many of them as we can." Stanfield is joining other Eastern Oregon libraries this summer in hosting the University of Oregon's Museum of Natural and Cultural History program "Our Place In Space," a presentation with hands-on activities. You'll find more

details about library events in our calendar section or contact your local library about specific programs they are offering.

Across the country, there are lots of museums and galleries celebrating, including some in the Northwest:

- In Portland, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) is dedicating the whole month of July to the anniversary, with live planetarium shows on the Apollo missions, streaming videos of current NASA missions, IMAX showings of "Apollo 11: First Steps Edition," and on-the-floor science demos related to space science throughout the museum. They'll also have special presentations like Meet a Scientist – Space Edition on July 13, Rocket Day celebrations on July 15, and space-theme activities, virtual reality experiences, and demos on July 20.
- The night of July 20, there's a special version of OMSI's Star Party – a Lunar Viewing Party at Rooster Rock State Park. Warm clothing recommended.
- The Bechtel National Planetarium in Pasco is currently showing "Apollo 11: Man's First Step onto the Moon," a short, full-dome film about the historic mission
- The Museum of Flight in Seattle is hosting the Smithsonian's "Destination Moon: The Apollo 11 Mission" exhibit now through Sept. 2, featuring almost two dozen artifacts from the mission.

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*Jennifer Colton is news director of KOHU and KQFM, and mother of three, based in Pendleton.*