

Rising to a Promise

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Professor Hamel walked into the exam room and announced, “Gentlemen, the President has just been shot.” To a man, we laid down our bluebooks and bolted to the nearest radio; life had just changed and calculus would never again seem so important to me, nor to any of my classmates. John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s life had just been stolen from us and it would take almost a day for the accurate description of that murder to be reported to the American public. It would take two more decades for us to realize that a true and factual accounting of that day’s happenings concerning our tragic loss would forever elude the American Republic. The last president I ever voted for had just been shot and killed; mathematics and physics failed to explain how and why this could possibly happen.

I had just become an adult; like my compatriots I was angry, frightened and confused; it was a lousy rite-of-passage, one of the darkest days in American history. We have had eight different Presidents since then, a couple of them (in my opinion) reasonably good. I have enjoyed an intriguing career, its aspects always hinging upon vibration analysis, mathematics, sensor measurement and signal processing; most of it has been wonderful. On at least one occasion, my professional life came to reflect tangentially upon the somber events of November 22, 1963.

I confess that I shall, forever, remain a “child of the 60s.” Although, to the intense relief of my daughters, I have ceased to wear my ragged bell-bottoms, puka beads, turtlenecks and peace-symbol cuff links in public, I still remember that era with pride and a sense of lingering membership. In those few hundred days of JFK’s elected reign, we had an American President who symbolized all that we, as a people, wanted to be. For a short period, we had a leader who successfully challenged us to rise far above normal human expectations and to accomplish really important things for mankind and for history, and we did.

APOLLO 11 Mission Commentary – tape 394/1 July 21, 1969 8:43 a.m. (CDT), voice of Terry White, PAO . . .

“This is APOLLO Control. Spacecraft Columbia has gone behind the moon on the twenty third lunar revolution. Be acquired again at – well, let’s see now, it looks like we don’t have acquisition table up yet for next rev. During this pass and the short conversation toward the end of the front side pass with Columbia, the network transmitters have been arranged so that the transmissions would not disturb the crew of Eagle who at this time should be asleep. Not since



Aaron Shikler’s insightful portrait of JFK.



APOLLO 11 Mission Insignia designed by Michael Collins.



Buzz Aldrin’s footprint in the moon’s crust.

Adam has any human known such solitude as Mike Collins is experiencing during this 47 minutes of each lunar revolution when he’s behind the moon with no one to talk to except his tape recorder aboard Columbia. While he waits for his comrades to soar

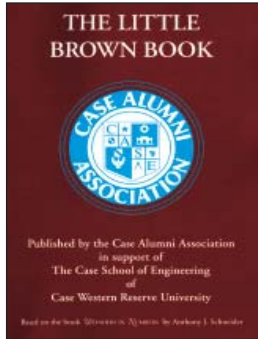
with Eagle from Tranquility Base and rejoin him for the trip back to earth, Collins, with the help of flight controllers here in Mission Control center has kept the command module’s system going “pocketa-pocketa-pocketa.” At 120 hours, 12 minutes ground elapsed time, this is APOLLO Control.”
end of tape . . .

JFK’s challenge led directly to the proudest day of the 20th Century for most Americans. On June 20th of 1969, Neil Armstrong and Edwin ‘Buzz’ Aldrin became the first men to walk on Earth’s moon. The three men of APOLLO 11 had done something incredibly brave and impossibly difficult. They had left the Earth, stepped upon another celestial body and returned. NASA was one year ahead of JFK’s challenge to put a man on the moon and return him safely to the Earth before the end of the decade.

The world will never forget Armstrong’s, “One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind . . .” proclamation, nor the image of Aldrin’s boot in the dust of the moon. But, it is possible that we have all nearly forgotten the heroism of perhaps the bravest member of that crew, USAF Lt. Col. (now retired Major General) Michael Collins. It was Command Module Pilot Collins who stayed behind, alone, on Columbia as the tiny Eagle descended to the moon’s surface. It was Col. Collins who was more isolated than any human on our Earth regarding the progress of his mission comrades. This is the same brave man who designed the mission insignia shoulder patch for APOLLO 11.

While the western-world enjoyed an adrenalin rush due to his team’s bravery, Mike Collins found the courage to sleep alone in a cold quiet void, awaiting the return of his comrades. To my mind, he displayed a special kind of courage. Sharing a bad happening or really difficult situation with a friend is far easier than bearing a tough circumstance alone. General Collins stood alone there and then. He displayed the “right stuff” worthy of the stars later placed on his shoulders. He was as much, and more, a hero as the men who first strode the moon’s bleak surface. If ever there was a fellow the United States could call upon, it was Mike Collins.

Some among of us have let APOLLO 11 memories fade. Other readers were born too late to revel in its occurrence. Both groups would be well served by reading (at least) chapter 12 of Anthony J. Schneider’s *The Little Brown Book*. This is a terrific compendium of science, mathematics and history bound together by wonderfully readable prose. Personally, I will never forget that landmark evening. I enjoyed a nude swim in



Tony Schneider's insightful tome, available at www.SandV.com.

Between the horror and the joy of these two earth-shaking events, an important happening of slightly smaller scale and import occurred. The first issue of *Sound and Vibration* was birthed and delivered to 8,000 new readers. Jack Mowry gave up his marketing position with Danish instrumentation giant, Brüel & Kjær and started a fledgling enterprise. B&K supported their expatriate's effort with a full-page advertisement. They have done the same, or better, for every subsequent issue for forty years.

That premier thirty-two page issue was supported by 12 advertisers; most of them are still in business today. Sadly, we have lost some giants. The General Radio Company was a proud American social experiment conducted by technical intellectuals, as well as a major purveyor of fine innovative instruments. They supported our first issue and enjoyed a 40-year lifespan from 1930 to 1970. Proud names such as Zonic, Federal/Nicolet Scientific and Ling Electronics grew then vanished during the lifespan of *Sound and Vibration*.

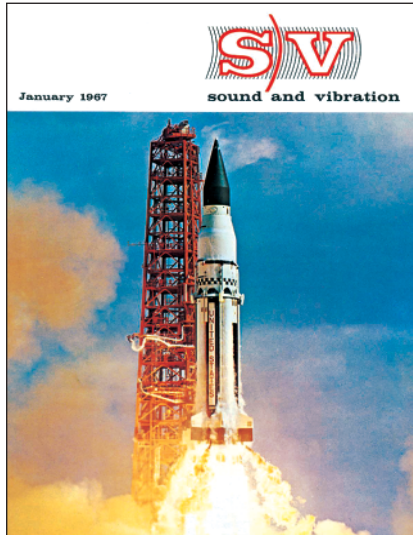
Even that international electronic instrumentation giant, the Hewlett Packard Company, suffered growing pains during this era. After 60 years of successful business, the tail wagged the dog and the vaulted HP name exited to market commodity personal computers, while the instrument business was left to reestablish itself under the Verizon-like invented name, Agilent.

Many new firms have come and gone during the lifetime of this magazine, my own Fox Technology among them. Many of the new enterprises spawned show promise of survival and growth in today's harsh economic environment. We are pleased that more than a few of these are still run by gentlemen.

For four decades, S&V has been published every month without fail. We have been guilty of making latent mailings, but never of failing to deliver an issue. Everybody associated with the magazine is proud of the consistently high quality of its content. We have labored hard and lovingly to make this happen in good times and in bad. We think we have risen to the challenge and

a small Michigan lake with a very heavenly body most appropriately named Vikki Moon. Some ironies will never be outlived, nor forgotten. Some loves will remain forever unrequited.

Between the



The first issue of *Sound and Vibration* magazine.

promise of our first "Publisher's Notes," which follow . . .

Something for You

With this issue of *Sound and Vibration* we have completed the first step in bringing to you an effective new medium for technical communication. Unlike the Saturn lift-off on our front cover, our launching of S&V was certainly not filled with fire and brilliance. On the contrary, its modest arrival on your desk or in your mail box has generated reactions from our staff that could only be described as satisfied relief.

We have a big job to do – with the next issue and every issue this year. Your support and cooperation have been appreciated in giving us the information that is required to build our initial circulation list. The same kind of support will help us further develop both circulation and editorial content that will meet your needs in our field.

Sound and Vibration is well identified in terms of the phenomena it intends to cover. But, these phenomena touch our lives in many ways. Our living environment, transportation, national defense, the space program, personal hearing conservation, entertainment, research, education – they are of some importance to all of us. Our intent will be to provide just such diversified coverage.

Like the Saturn vehicle, S&V requires preparation and fuel to accomplish its mission. We are looking forward to working with many of you to provide the kind of information that is needed – information that is accurate, imaginatively presented, and, most of all, useful.

Jack Mowry
January 1967

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