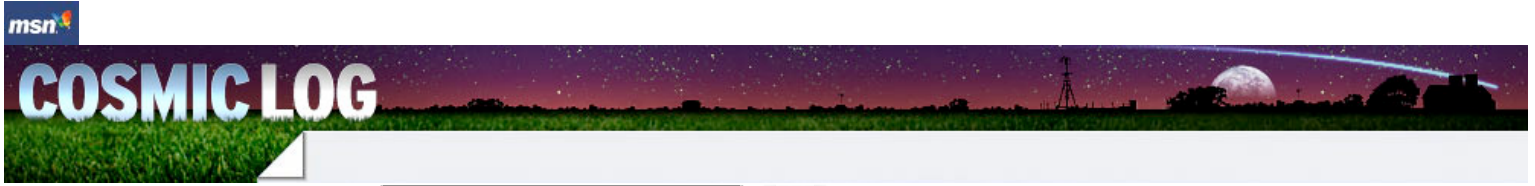


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ABOUT COSMIC LOG

Quantum fluctuations in space, science, exploration and other cosmic fields... served up regularly by MSNBC.com science editor Alan Boyle since 2002.



Alan Boyle covers the physical sciences, anthropology, technological innovation and space science and exploration for MSNBC.com. He is a winner of the [AAAS Science Journalism Award](#), the [NASW Science-in-Society Award](#) and other honors; a contributor to "[A Field Guide for Science Writers](#)"; and a member of the board of the [Council for the Advancement of Science Writing](#).

Check out Boyle's [biography](#) or send a message to Cosmic Log via cosmiclog@msnbc.com.

Moonshots on your computer

Posted: Tuesday, June 30, 2009 6:52 PM by Alan Boyle



Neil Armstrong / NASA

Electronic equipment and switches surround astronaut Buzz Aldrin in Apollo 11's lunar module, nicknamed Eagle, before the moon landing in 1969. Over the past 40 years there have been big changes in computers — and in the amount of information available on computers about the Apollo moonshots.

Forty years ago, the world watched the Apollo 11 moon landing on television sets and giant screens. This year, the tale of the moonshot is being retold on computer monitors and mobile phones. Here's a Top 10 list of online destinations celebrating the 40th anniversary of Apollo 11:

Voyage of the Millennium: Our three-part audio slideshow about the Apollo 11 experience is a decade old - but it's still a beaut, in my humble opinion. Photojournalist Roger Ressmeyer went through stacks of NASA images and selected his favorites, tracing the [buildup to Apollo 11](#), the [high points of the mission](#) itself and [its aftermath](#). In the audio soundtrack, he tells the story behind each picture. Maximize your browser window to make sure you have all the buttons to play the audio and click through the slideshow.

Apollo video online: Don't miss [this 43-minute documentary](#) from MSNBC's "Time and Again" about America's space effort and Apollo 11 in particular (complete with Huntley and Brinkley!). Here's a [10-minute Apollo retrospective](#) from NASA. For a different take on the TV coverage, check out the [BBC's archive](#) of Apollo coverage. Spacecraft Films' documentary, "[Live From the Moon.](#)" focuses on how Apollo played out on television. (I mentioned this show and others last week in my [Apollo video roundup](#).)

Apollo at 40 at NASA: The space agency itself has the biggest store of online material about the moon missions. NASA's [Apollo 40th Anniversary Web site](#) serves as the portal to [old and new goodies](#). There's a [separate Web page](#) devoted to the Apollo program. The [Apollo Lunar Surface Journal](#) is the jewel in NASA's crown, offering mission logs, photos and lots of "fun stuff." But wait ... there's more: Check out the [JSC Digital Image Collection](#) as well as the [Apollo archive](#) on the Human Spaceflight Web site.

Project Apollo Archive: [This Web site](#) would have to rank right up there with the Apollo Lunar Surface Journal as a must-see archive of moonshot lore. Kipp Teague has put together an exhaustive repository of imagery from before, during and after the Apollo missions.

We Choose the Moon: The Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum's [Apollo Web site](#) is offering a Twitter re-enactment of the mission, timed to tell you what happened exactly 40 years before. Actually, make that two re-enactments. One Twitter tale is told from the perspective of Mission Control, and the other Twitter feed takes on the crew's persona. You can also download a widget to track the time-warp mission, get e-mail updates and watch a video of President Kennedy's "We Choose to Go to the Moon" speech.

Apollo at the Smithsonian: The Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum serves as the main repository for Apollo artifacts, so it's only fitting that the museum has opened a [virtual exhibit hall](#) commemorating the moonshots. You'll find an interactive timeline, images, videos and podcasts - and a [plea for personal recollections](#) about 100 items in the museum's collection.

ApolloPlus40 on Twitter: Like the Kennedy Library, the journal Nature's Web site is [tweeting Apollo 11 events](#) in a 40-year time warp. The Nature News staff is also [blogging about Project Apollo](#) and its legacy.

Apollo 11 on Facebook: You just knew there had to be a [Facebook page](#) for the Apollo 11 mission. You'll also find Facebook pages for [moonshot memories](#) and last weekend's "[Echoes of Apollo](#)" radio experiment. NASA's latest moon probes, [Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter](#) and the [LCROSS moon-smashing spacecraft](#), have their own pages.

Bad Astronomy: Are there still some people who think the moon landings didn't really happen? If so, you should point them toward astronomer Phil Plait's [classic guide to debunking moon-hoax claims](#). Did I mention that Phil is a [blogger and author](#), too? Consider it mentioned.

CollectSpace: Robert Pearlman's [online journal](#) provides Apollo anniversary news you won't find anywhere else - such as this week's reports about the \$1,000 Apollo coffee-table book and Chocolatque's moon-rock candy collection. The discussion forums let Internet users trade gossip about Buzz Aldrin's whereabouts or debate the relative merits of space memorabilia. [CollectSpace's link list](#) covers a lot of the Web territory I've missed, but feel free to pass along pointers to other online resources in your comments below.

Update for 9:30 p.m. July 1: Chris Willis of Footnote.com wrote in to let me know about the [Moon Landing Memories](#) Web site launched in cooperation with Florida Today. The site provides access to Florida Today's 1969 archives and NASA documents such as the [lunar module manual](#). Web users also have an opportunity to add their own thoughts and pictures.

More Apollo resources:

- [Apollo on rewind: Top 10 moonshot videos](#)
- [Apollo in sharper focus: The best lunar literature](#)
- [Buzz Aldrin's journey](#) (and [his rap video](#))
- [More space history on msnbc.com](#)

During the editing process, the entry for the Project Apollo Archive temporarily went missing, but I'm glad to report that the Top Nine list is back to a Top 10. Join the Cosmic Log corps by signing up as my [Facebook friend](#) or [hooking up on Twitter](#). And if you really want to be friendly, ask me about my upcoming book, "[The Case for Pluto](#)."

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Such memories! None of the science fiction stories before Apollo 11 foresaw the video transmissions back to Earth in real time (well, real time less a couple of seconds, more or less). I've still got my green lapel button, an icon of the indicator showing Lunar contact on the control panel of the LEM, that Grumman passed out immediately after landing.

I've not seen any mention of a very scary situation with the Eagle. A heat exchanger in the fuel system that was supposed to transfer heat between the helium pressurant tank and the fuel tanks froze, causing the pressure to reach dangerous levels. There was a real fear that the heat exchanger would rupture with a catastrophic mixture of the hypergolic fuels. We spent an around the clock session to determine both the extent of the danger, and a way to defuse the situation. Fortunately, the problem dissipated without intervention, and we all went home and went to bed.

W. Sitze, Las Cruces, NM (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 12:15 AM)

Navy Chaplain John "Bud" Piirto, a classmate of mine from Seminary, was the individual who delivered the Prayer aboard the Hornet at the landing of the astronauts. In his remarks, he asked that the same innovation and enthusiasm which characterized the Operation might be directed toward a search for world peace.

I wonder where he might be and how I might reach him. Last I heard of him was that he was seen fishing in Idaho.

Chaplain (Col) Duane Westfield-Ret, Salem, MA (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 1:27 AM)

Hey, Alan! When is "The Case for Pluto" coming out. Is there a place where we can preorder?

[ALAN ADDS: Thanks for asking, Tim! "The Case for Pluto" is due to come out in November (the official publication date is Oct. 26 ... that's when it's due to show up at the store). You can pre-order from Amazon or Barnes & Noble or Borders ... I've included links to those bookstore sites below, and if you have a different favorite online bookstore, let me know and I'll pass along a quick link for your store as well. Stay tuned for the Facebook fan page and the dedicated Web site.]

<http://bit.ly/ab-on-amazon>

<http://bit.ly/ab-on-bn>

<http://bit.ly/ab-on-borders>

Tim Rommes, Washington, UT (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 1:43 AM)

i recently came across your blog and have been reading along. I thought I would leave my first comment. I don't know what to say except that I have enjoyed reading. Nice blog. I will keep visiting this blog very often. The post from <http://www.watches-space.com> wholesale watches Company.

janet (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 4:55 AM)

All the videos in the BBC Archive say they are "Not Available in Your Area". Why New Jersey????

David A, Hopewell, NJ (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 10:23 AM)

Thanks Alan for this article that brings back some good memories of the 60's. Hard to believe it's been 40 years since Apollo 11's moon landing. I remember back then that the onboard computers were really high tech but now look laughable considering today's home computers. There have been some great shows on the space race and I always enjoy taking a trip back in time watching them. I look forward to seeing our next moon landings and it's a shame that it's taken so long.

Eric, Salinas, CA (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 10:50 AM)

I can't wait for us to go back to the moon. If we can have people live there in a closed environment, then we can figure out ways to clean up the messes we make here. I would like to travel to the moon, but I doubt that I will live long enough to see a permanent base there (or cities like New Berlin noted in Star Trek: First Contact).

S.B. Stein E.B. NJ (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 1:25 PM)

I see the playbacks of the grainy, distorted, staticky, black and white television signal of the first steps on the moon, and I think wouldn't that look cool in 1080p!!

Joe, Kalamazoo, MI (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 3:35 PM)

As Neil DeGrasse Tyson says - Pluto had it coming. It's not a planet, never has been and never will be. There are moons that are bigger than Pluto. I, for one, won't be buying your book and you just lost all credibility with me. Goodbye.

absolutelynot (Sent Wednesday, July 01, 2009 11:43 PM)

Hm, there are moons that are bigger than Mercury, too (Ganymede and Titan). As I note in the book, if they came after Pluto ... they'll be coming after Mercury next!

One thing I very much like about Neil is that he isn't deadly serious about the planet war. His standard lines about "Pluto had it coming" and "Pluto is much happier where it is" are jokes ... Pluto is what it is, regardless of whether we call it a planet or a puppy, and I don't think planets have feelings (unlike puppies).

I'm always happy to talk about this debate, Absolutelynot. I'm sorry you'll miss out on what I hope is a credible debate in the book, but I'm happy to see that the issue still apparently touches some deep emotions.

Alan Boyle (Sent Thursday, July 02, 2009 2:05 PM)

I wonder what the inside of the LEM would look like in present day considering all the advances in electronics and computing if it was re-fitted. You'd think that the astronauts would have a lot more space.

Aside from the first landing video...the later ones that show the lander blasting off was real neat at the time. I also was intrigued with the demonstration of Newton's laws concerning 2 very unequal masses (feather and hammer) falling equally in a vacuum and gravity field. I believe Galileo was the first to indicate this effect using two unequal mass lead balls being dropped from the tower of Pisa.

Thomas Ashby (Sent Thursday, July 02, 2009 3:26 PM)

I've visited the wechoosethemoon.org site and IT IS COOL. I can't wait for it to blast off on Thursday.

Mark, Richmond, VA (Sent Monday, July 13, 2009 12:00 PM)

IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY THAT EVERYONE WAS SO EXCITED ABOUT THE MOON LANDING. I had just started my new job with KSC. A group of our fellow workers had gathered at this place on the beach called the APOLLO LOUNGE The crowd was a very exciting one to say the least. Then all eyes were watching the TV'S AROUND THE ROOM, IT WAS SO VERY QUEIT , THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN EVERYONE IN THE PLACE WERE HUGGING, LAUGHING AND ALSO SOME HAD TEARS POURING DOWN THEIR FACES.

What a wonderful time that was for the space workers, and everyone who had stopped by to help share that feeling.

At that moment i knew my dream had been fullfiled.

It was a wonderful time for us all.

I will always be thankful i was a part of that history.

[ADA \(LANE\) PUCKETT COCOA,FL. 32922](#) (Sent Thursday, July 16, 2009 12:08 PM)

swing that hubble telescope to traquility base and zoom in and prove the point that we were there, as in lunar landing and usa flag still standing

jerry farmer littleton co (Sent Monday, July 20, 2009 2:27 AM)

I watched the landing on the moon from Martin Place Sydney,with my Mum & Dad and 6 brothers and sisters,it was a wonderfull feeling the excitment as a kid it made you feel so proud,its just not fixion its happening,today yes I'm glad I was their and being part of History.

Susan Blake Sydney NSW Australia. (Sent Monday, July 20, 2009 10:58 AM)

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Your name, city and state (John Doe, Seattle, Wash.):

Your e-mail address (jdoe@msnbc.com):

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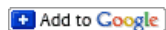
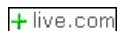
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