

Seniors Recall Apollo 11 Moon Landing 50 Years Later



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WBBM Newsradio/Bernie Tafoya

CHICAGO (WBBM NEWSRADIO) -- The 50th anniversary of American astronauts landing on the moon for the first time ever is an event that's still fresh in the minds of many people who live at the Smith Crossing retirement community in Orland Park.

Tom Ryan, 85, said the moon landing is memorialized in his family by a picture his wife Rosemary took, as their five children were lying on the floor watching TV.

"She was home with our five kids who had chicken pox and they were watching the event on TV," he said.



Ryan said, to him, the moon landing “shows that we could organize and keep ahead of the competition to accomplish that goal.”



Gary Thelen was 28-years old at the time. He and his wife had been married a few months and thought it a good time to replace their 12-inch screen TV. Thelen was a tech at Argonne National Lab then.

“We went out and bought a 19-inch TV...mainly so I could see the moon landing,” he said.

Howie Groves, 88, was fascinated by America landing on the moon. He kept up with it as best he could while working two jobs.

What about a trip to Mars?

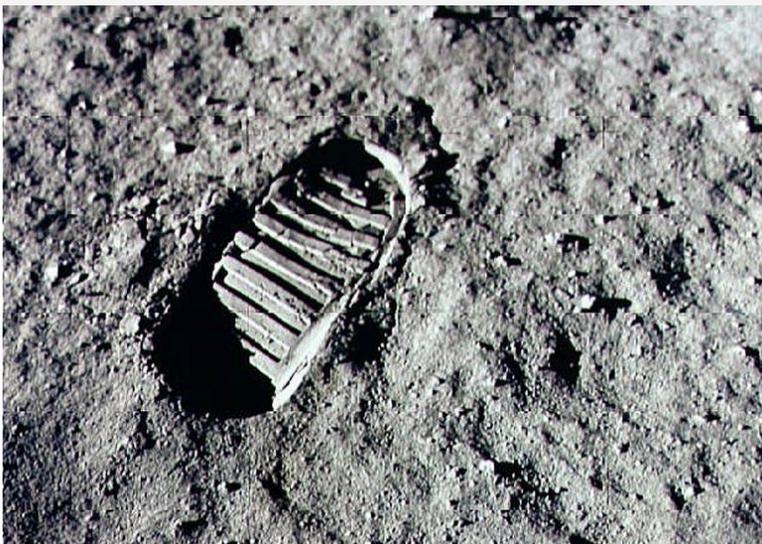
“If they can do it...why not?” Groves said.

Sandy Gerdy, 76, remembers the moon land well. She was in the hospital giving birth to her son, Jim; that “moon baby” is celebrating his 50th birthday this weekend.

“We’re going to give him binoculars,” Gerdy chuckled when a reporter suggested he be better able to see the moon now.

Martin Monahan, 76, was also in a hospital where his father was dying of Parkinson’s disease.

“My perspectives were that that’s great because it means that, with that kind of advance, we can take care issues like Parkinson’s,” he said.



Monahan is disappointed there’s still no cure for Parkinson’s.

Leo Frainier, 86, a self-confessed sci-fi geek was a chemistry doctoral student and fascinated by space travel.

“This was just mind-boggling. I couldn’t believe that these people were a quarter million miles away and they were walking on the moon,” Frainier said.

Frainier said man walking on the moon is still the most amazing event he’s ever seen.