

Going to the Moon

It was a time when summer seemed to last forever. The only summer camps we ever heard of or attended were a three-day, week at the most, camp with a church group or Scouts. We didn't have such things as sports camps, or art camp. We had to think up our own entertainment.

It was a time when the United States hadn't even put a man on the moon though they were getting close. We had already witnessed on our black and white television the take off and landing (better stated plop into the ocean) of man's first entry into space by Astronaut, John Glenn. Prior to Glenn's "surly bonds of earth" experience an unsuspecting chimpanzee made the trip. And no, there weren't any animal rights groups, or John Glenn would have been the first "guinea pig."

It was a time when my friend Kay and I spent many summer days and nights back and forth between our houses. She lived on the corner and I lived in the middle of the block. Her house had a driveway that made a slight turn into a covered area called a carport, and just beyond that was a cool, grassy courtyard enclosed on three sides by a painted cinderblock fence about four feet high.

Either her mother was getting ready to recover her sofa cushions any way, or she was just plain crazy, because from her vantage point in the kitchen she could observe all of our play in the courtyard and see that we were using her sofa cushions as gear. On one such occasion we hauled all of those sofa cushions out onto the grass along with a few old bedspreads, and no telling what else we dragged out.

Kay and I stacked the cushions one on top of the other like layers of cake. They were nice and high for our short legs and we soon discovered that if you sat on the edge of the cushions and pushed with your feet, you could get a nice motion of bounce going. We could even create the affects of some rough turbulence as Kay and I made our way into outer space. Who needed a monkey? Who needed John Glenn? We were going to the moon!

Years later, many years later, I was having a conversation with my twelve-year-old daughter. I asked her why she wasn't spending much time with someone who had once been a long-term best friend. She was telling me that they used to enjoy playing Barbie and other things and now it seemed the only thing they ever did was to play cards. She thought that maybe they had outgrown each other. I responded, "Oh you never outgrow a friend. Remember Kay out in California that I've been talking to lately on the telephone? We've known each other since I was six years old. Why we've even been to the moon together!"

Footnote: The saying, "History repeats itself" is true. When I was in the second grade, Astronaut John Glenn was the first American into space. When the daughter in this story was a second grader, John Glenn made his second flight into space.