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A moon visitor tells the kids all about it

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD

The months he spent preparing for four flights in space apparently did not prepare former astronaut Capt. James Lovell for telling the boys from the girls.

During his brief recent appearance at Greenfield Elementary School, which is attended by Southfield children living in the Birmingham School District, Lovell called upon the children for questions and asked "that young lady right there" for the first question.

"I'm a boy," the youngster replied. Lovell, the first man to travel twice to the moon, was in town for an appearance at the Birmingham Rotary Club. An astronaut from 1962 until he retired from the Navy in 1973, he flew two Apollo and two Gemini space flight missions.

He was also the command module pilot for the six-day journey of Apollo 8, man's maiden voyage to the moon, Dec. 21-27, 1968.

LOWELL NOW is president of Fisk Telephone Systems, Inc., of Houston, and is the national advertising spokesman for the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Co., Newark, N. J.

Gayle Thompson of Mutual Benefit's local office and a Greenfield School parent, arranged for Lovell's appearance at the school.

Faced with a sea of young faces from the gymnasium floor, Lovell said he was getting to be "a professional talker to classes."

Plans are being made to go to Mars, he said, and "it could happen about the time you get to an age where you might be thinking about that trip. I may be talking to someone here today who may be on the first flight to Mars."

Lovell apologized to the youngsters for not showing up in his space suit and said he probably "would be a lot warmer if I had." In answer to one child's question, he said he did not have to wear the suit at all times while in space.

HE TOSSED the children a gigantic math problem when one child asked how many gallons of gasoline it takes to get to the moon and back.

"It takes five million pounds of liquid fuel," Lovell replied. "You will have to convert that to gallons."

One forward-looking girl asked how

much she would earn if she became an astronaut, how old she would have to be and at what age she could retire.

Starting salary probably would be around \$12,000-\$14,000, "depending on your education," he said. "Remember you have to study hard." There is no retirement age, he added. He also predicted "women will be in space shortly."

Asked what he was "most scared of" in space, Lovell said it was not UFOs "because I don't really believe in them." He also saw no Martians, he added.

The most frightening incident in his numerous space flights was an explosion on Apollo 13.

"I WAS A little scared about not getting home," he explained. "That was my biggest worry."

Another youngster asked how far it is to the moon and how long it takes to get there. It is 240,000 miles and takes three days, he answered.

"But it only takes eight to 12 minutes to get into space," he added. Also, it takes two hours to go completely around the moon and only one and one-half hours to circle the earth, Lovell said.

His total time in space is just under one month and his longest single flight was for two weeks, he said in answer to other questions.

Lovell talked about sleeping in space and said "the best mattress in the world is space. You have to fold your hands together; if you don't your arm just floats away."

"WHAT COLOR is the earth from space?" one child asked.

"It looks exactly like a globe in your school, except there are a lot of clouds so you can't see all of the land," Lovell replied. "You can see the ice at the poles and the deserts very clearly and the water is very blue."

Lovell confirmed that footprints left on the moon by other astronauts will be there 100 years from now, in answer to another question.

Because he did not have time to give autographs to the children, the left-handed Lovell signed his name in a book from the school library and also left a message in the school office which was to be duplicated and distributed to the children.

Obituaries

PEARL PIKULINSKI

Services were held Wednesday, Jan. 19, in St. Ives Catholic Church, Southfield for Pearl Pikulinski, typesetter for the Observer & Eccentric newspapers for the past seven years.

Mrs. Pikulinski died Jan. 15 in William Beaumont Hospital following a short illness.

She is a former employee for the Southfield News.

Mrs. Pikulinski leaves her husband, Stanley of Southfield, and three daughters.

Mrs. Rod Shaw of Kingsville, Ont.; Mrs. Stephen Pravel of Milford and Mrs. Stanley England of Ypsilanti.

Also surviving are her father, John R. Parsons of California, two brothers, John R. Parsons Jr. of Illinois and Quentin Parsons of California, and a sister, Shirley Waik of California.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the building fund of St. Ives church.

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