

At Michigan Space Center

Solar system opens to students

Ever wonder how the astronauts go to the bathroom in space?

Or what foods they eat while traveling out in the Milky Way?

And what is a black hole in space?

A group of Southfield students who were only a year old back on July 20, 1969 when Neil Armstrong stepped onto the surface of the moon set out to answer those questions recently.

The young people, all fifth graders at S. Beale school, are too young to recall seeing a single space shot on television.

Their science teacher, Sister Patricia Hewitt, took the helm in a six week study on Galileo's and Newton's principles of gravity, motion and inertia.

She also helped them to follow through by taking them on a trip to the Michigan Space Center in Jackson.

There they viewed the displays including rockets, satellites, space suits, space movies and even bits of moon rock.

The field trip was meaningful for the group whose studies of scientific goals such as Newton and Galileo helped them grasp some of the principles which have made space flights possible.

"With these principles they are able to see the order within our solar system and how we can put satellites and space ships into orbit around our planet and the moon," said Sister Patricia.

WHEN recent events in the news from Rome were viewed live via satellite and President Carter disclosed an American "spy in the sky" surveillance apparatus, the children were very interested.

But the trip to the Space Center was the outstanding event for them. The fifth graders made the trip with the Southfield Community Education "Super Saturday" program.

Heather Duncan and Megan Maynard bought little packets of freeze dried ice cream which came in vanilla, chocolate and strawberry flavors.

"It was sweet, but not like licking a real ice cream cone," said Heather.

Jamie Twigg thought "it was great



Left to right, Mike Dniewke, Scott Beltinck, Ken Okford, Steve Menovick and Jamie Twigg (with back to camera) crowd behind Derek Schultz for

to see the real Apollo spacecraft" and Christine Petrus touched a piece of the honeycombed outside heat shield, burnt when the Apollo 9 made it's re-entry into the earth's atmosphere.

Pushing a button to start your own private movie pleased Regina Dettloff and Donna Moriconi, while Steven Monovick compared the type of space suits used on the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo missions.

"All the children were fascinated with how astronauts eat and go to the bathroom in space," said Sister Patricia.

They saw the actual Apollo 9 Command Module flown in space in 1969 by David Scott, Rusty Schweickart and Michigan astronaut James McDivitt, Jr., one of just 14 in existence in the world, and the Mercury Capsule, often referred to as a Volkswagen in space.

Other youngsters who made the memorable trip were Laura Van Buskirk, Sharon Cowley, Mike Cateel, Matt Batcheller, Jean Wassenberg, Cathy Hill and Kristen Panasuk.

Also, Jeanine Doyle, Derek Schultz,

Matt O'Neil, Mark LeBay, Scott Beltinck, Katie Niehaus, Meredith Walsh, Julie Nowak, Sara Welage, Carrie Gukera, Laura Bernard, Beth Carroll, Matt Plescow, Tim Drummond, Mike Dniewke, and Ken Oldford.

Next September, the students will see their first live space launch when the U. S. sends off the Space Shuttle. Many of the fifth graders bought models of the Space Shuttle while they were at the center. To culminate their studies and their trip, they recently launched their own rocket.

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