

Re: Back to the moon? When?

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- *From:* Quadibloc <jsavard@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 28 Nov 2007 14:56:24 -0800 (PST)
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On Nov 28, 8:41 am, simberg.interglo...@xxxxxxxxxx (Rand Simberg) wrote:

On Wed, 28 Nov 2007 06:26:33 -0800 (PST), in a place far, far away, Quadibloc <jsav...@xxxxxxxxxx> made the phosphor on my monitor glow in such a way as to indicate that:

The approach to risk in space should be one that leaves no ambiguity, but instead makes it resoundingly clear:

– the astronauts themselves are brave individuals who were willing to face the hazards of space, and

– we, on the ground, did everything we could as best we could to get them back safely.

Then space will remain forever unaffordable.

Perhaps I should have inserted the word "reasonable" in my second point, then.

As long as space is unaffordable, and astronauts are celebrities, we do want people to have confidence that should anything untowards happen, it won't be because of negligence bordering on the criminal.

I don't think that's an unreasonable thing for the general public to ask.

I don't expect space to become so "affordable" that people from India or China will be going there in "steerage" class – 10% to 30% risk of fatality in exchange for a 90%+ cost savings. Thus, I didn't consider

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that kind of situation in my comments.

If suborbital rocket plane rides are becoming 'affordable', maybe eventually they'll be improved enough to make a rendezvous with an aluminum/oxygen rocket launched from the Moon in LEO, or various other approaches to improving rockets being tried will make a difference. I don't expect them to be outrageously dangerous, but, yes, someone will be the first to try a new approach believed to be suitable for sending people up.

I'm not saying not to take risks, just that risks to human life are always, even in the service of space, to be minimized (within reason), always recognized as an undesirable, although to some extent unavoidable, part of space exploration.

Risk is the enemy, not to be embraced.

John Savard

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