

**CHRIS POTTER**

**Space exploration necessary**

*"The Earth is the cradle of reason, but one cannot live in the cradle forever."*

— Konstantin Tsiolkovsky

Konstantin Tsiolkovsky was a Russian visionary. It was he who in the early part of this century first investigated seriously the possibilities of space travel.

The above quotation helps put the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster, the Hubble Telescope fiasco and the Freedom Space Station cost overruns in perspective. Despite NASA's tragedies and blunders, humankind must realize that its future lies in space. Earth is a mere cradle.

The rotten state of the Apollo spacecraft outside Morrill Hall symbolizes the disenchantment with NASA. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's neglect of that priceless artifact is symptomatic of a widespread discontent with the space program.

Shorn of its spirit of nationalist adventure in competition with the Soviets, NASA's jaunt in space has lost meaning to most Americans. The Apollo program, which culminated in the first manned lunar landing in 1969, caught the nation's spirit in a way usually reserved for professional football or war.

Faced with pressing national and international issues, Americans are increasingly unwilling to spend their taxes on what appear to be amusing but far too costly flights of fancy. Like firecrackers, the benefits of space adventure now seem expensive, dangerous and transitory. The United States has broken off its love affair with space.

Interest in the heavens, though, will be rejuvenated. Far more compelling arguments than national spirit present themselves for a sustained comprehensive space effort — the sheer romantic challenge and the economic necessity foremost among them.

The wide following of "Star Trek" proves that some Americans still see an incentive to "boldly go where no



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more destructive than Hurricane Hugo that has lasted for hundreds of years.

But even the most romantic evocation of the marvels of space does not convince the hard-headed realists who point out that problems here on Earth demand priority. The vast majority of humanity lives in abject poverty and poor health. How, detractors ask, can the immense cost of space exploration be justified in light of humanity's plight?

These detractors fail to see the second compelling argument for space exploration, that of economic necessity. One glance at the rising population curve and a second glance at the Earth's resource list confirm that a growing number of people are relying on a dwindling supply of resources.

Space program detractors argue for short-term fixes to a massive economic and demographic problem. Space exploration offers a long-term solution. If people continue to reproduce at the rate they do now, they must look for food, water and other resources somewhere other than Earth. That is what space exploration offers.

We do not now have the technology to achieve the goals of space exploration on a scale suggested above. But science and technology inevitably proceed at a rate that society demands. Inspired by a worldwide economic commitment to space exploration, scientists and engineers will build the technology required.

Scientists and science fiction writers already have begun imagining the forms that human habitation in space will take. Huge rotating hollow wheels in space. Towns on the moon and Mars. Immense rotating rings strung around other suns.

Konstantin Tsiolkovsky was among the first to speculate on these kinds of space colonies. He was also among the first to realize that space exploration is not only whimsical adventure. If humanity is to overcome the problems posed by Earth's finite resources, it is a necessity.

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one has gone before."

But many of those Americans fail to understand precisely what that means. More than 400 years after Copernicus, most human beings still do not comprehend the basic structure of the universe they live in.

Even those who know that the Earth revolves around the sun probably haven't internalized it. It is a mere bit of trivia, answer B on a multiple choice test. But once people begin to really understand the astounding nature of the universe, they will realize that Earth is just a tiny snug little corner in a vastness that cries out to be explored and colonized.

Our solar system alone, almost certainly just one of millions, commands innumerable wonders. A gigantic burning star shepherds a huge flock of smaller planets, asteroids and comets. Each has its own personality.

Mars — a rusty little planet that once had rivers and seas and now bears a gigantic mountain that dwarfs Earth's tallest; Europa — one of Jupiter's moons, with its frozen sea that science fiction writers speculate may support a different form of life. Jupiter itself — host of a storm far

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Dr. Seuss taught us morality, obligations**

Wednesday was a day of mourning. It was a day of great reflection. This could very well go down in history as one of the saddest days in the history of the 1980s generation. Wednesday, Dr. Seuss died.

As I was flipping through the channels between classes, I happened to stop on CNN. The reporter was talking of a great and influential writer who had died. He was talking of a man who, through his writings, created a world of happiness and understanding.

Dr. Seuss created "Green Eggs and Ham," "The Cat in the Hat" and many other children's books that every single one of us read when we were children.

I remember reading of a cat that stormed a person's house and destroyed many things. I learned that it was wrong to destroy other people's things and take advantage of a situation where people were vulnerable.

I remember reading of a "Grinch Who Stole Christmas" and how, even though the Grinch was mean and destructive, we should try to love and care for people like him because usually they are people lacking attention.

Dr. Seuss, in the simplest terms, taught our generation the dos and don'ts of humanity and society. He is the reason why I don't take advantage of other people. He is the reason why I do try to think of a



Brian Shellito/DN

peaceful alternative to violence.

However, I guess the thing that hit me the hardest when learning of Dr. Seuss' death was the fact that I am no longer a child. Dr. Seuss was an influential tool for all of our kindergarten teachers back in the 1970s. Now we are the kindergarten teachers. Now we are the writers, and no matter how much I feel like the same child who read Dr. Seuss in the doctor's waiting room, I am now responsible for making sure a book like "The Cat in the Hat" is available for my children to read and learn from.

Wednesday, for all of us who

grew up in the 1970s and '80s, was truly a sort of rite of passage. Wednesday, Dr. Seuss died, and now he is expecting us to take charge. We are now the adults. We are the teachers. This is a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly. Dr. Seuss once said, "While you are the creators of children, I am the entertainer of children." Now, while we create our children, we must not forget who to entertain them with — the teacher, Dr. Seuss.

Chris Halligan senior arts and sciences

**Selleck resident should seek RHA's assistance**

I am happy to see that M.S. Wicklund is trying to resolve the problem he has with the Selleck Hall government and the Residence Hall Association ("Selleck floor dumps RHA," DN, Sept 23, 1991). This is the first time in six years that I have heard of a non-traditional student in the halls even caring enough to say something. Now we have one who is willing to take action.

But besides the problem that Wicklund is complaining about, there is another. That is that Wicklund is going about this all wrong. It isn't his fault. He just doesn't understand the dynamics of the system he is trying to work with.

RHA's purpose is to represent the residents of each hall and to

work toward making residence hall life better. The organization he is attacking exists to solve the problems that he is complaining about. I suggest that Wicklund, and any other residents who have a problem, start asking questions and learn who to go to with their problems.

I believe that they will get a much more friendly response and more timely action. There are many people in RHA who can help Selleck 5300 with its problem, myself included. I suggest that they seek assistance rather than being belligerent.

Larry Koubsky UNL graduate RHA-president, 1988-89



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