The promi.ze of economic "spin-offs" from the lunar gear into other areas was touted by NASA, and indeed there were some. If you burn 27-odd billion dollars, you generate some heat, but pitiful little was it. It turned out that most outer-space products, fuels and all, are geared to extreme temperatures, vacuums, acceleration and weightlessness. But no use have no use for our earthly schools, hospitals and buildings.

Finally, we were informed Apollo would provide a peaceful outlet for the world's superpower contest. This would unite the nation, and enrich the human spirit. But at the cost of keeping one of NASA's missiles from catching a cold, Nixon achieved more for peace through his Ping-Pong diplomacy with Mainland China and in SALT talks, than a decade of space jumps.

The nation surely was divided more over these years than in the proceeding decade, among other things over the objectives of the space race, which polls show about half of America never came to accept. The notion that this spectacular sport, which reaches the people of the world seated before their TV sets, would humanize them, is so simplistic it rebuts itself.

The space community is still drawing more per year for its space antics than many domestic missions (most recently, it got us committed to having Skylabs). The space budget should be cut below the half-billion mark, focused on near space and economical manned efforts (weather control, communication satellites). Every school child, citizen and inebriated politician should be required to study what Apollo taught us. Then we can cease chasing moons in the quest for a new America.

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