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Eastern Illinois departments partner to produce Moon landing documentary

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Journal Gazette-Times Courier

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FEATURED

Eastern Illinois departments partner to produce moon landing documentary



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A student walks past moon landing exhibits at Eastern Illinois University's Booth Library on Tuesday.

JARAD JARMON, JOURNAL GAZETTE & TIMES-COURIER



Eastern Illinois University hosts youth Science Festival Showcase

CHARLESTON -- Children excitedly chattered as they awaited the "Fire & Ice" extreme science demonstration Friday morning at the Eastern Il...



CHARLESTON -- It has been 50 years since millions of people gathered around their televisions to watch two American astronauts do something no one had ever done before: set foot on the moon.

To mark this time in history, WEIU-TV will be broadcasting a documentary called "To the Moon and Back" developed through partnerships between the station and Eastern Illinois University's Booth Library and history department.

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The one-hour program, set to air at 8 p.m. Tuesday, documents 12 Central Illinois residents' accounts on where they were when the first person landed on the moon. The program premiered last week at EIU's Booth Library.

Andy Cougill, EIU reference librarian, said Rameen Karbassioon of WEIU; Jonathan Williams, an EIU history graduate student; and he developed the project.

"What a started as an oral history project quickly evolved into a documentary as people around campus got excited about the subject," Cougill said. "We wanted representation from both the campus and community, and we wanted different age ranges for this project."

The documentary includes subject experts Ed Wehrle and Lee Patterson from the history department. Notably among the testimonies, EIU President David Glassman spoke on the subject.

"What is really neat is that while the facts and timeline of the event remain consistent, each individual was able to share their own experience," Cougill said. "Some were young children, others were raising families, one was even working in Lima, Peru, at the time."

Through these interviews, the crew involved in the project touched on all of what surrounded the event, including the Cold War, politics, media coverage and more.



Pictured is part of the moon landing exhibit at Eastern Illinois University's Booth Library.

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The documentary is only a piece of Booth Library's exhibit this semester on the moon landing.

Along with the documentary, displays related to the Apollo missions and the Mars mission, which has sparked a resurgence in interest in space travel, have been placed about the library.

Among these displays, EIU students connected to these NASA projects were highlighted, including Betty Jo (Moore) Armstead, who graduated from EIU in 1953.

Armstead started working as a mathematician and programmer as a part of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, the predecessor of NASA, in 1954, Cougill said.



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SIRIUS HITS ROCKS VENUS

The moon landing exhibit at Eastern Illinois University's Booth Library is shown.

JARAD JARMON, JOURNAL GAZETTE & TIMES-COURIER

She was among the first to learn the digital computing systems that came out in the '50s and '60s. She used her programming skills on the IBM 650 computer, which Cougill said was the world's first mass-produced computer, to calculate a trajectory to the moon in the late 1950s.

The trajectory project was shelved before the U.S. even sent Alan Shepard, who was the first American to travel to space, into orbit. It would be more than a decade before America made the moon landing, Cougill explained.

"Mrs. Armstead did some pretty incredible things during her career and she did it all with a degree from EIU," he said. "It is our responsibility to share her story and celebrate her achievements as a pioneer in her field."

Cougill said he is still unearthing more EIU connections to the space program. He will be adding more stories to the exhibit throughout the semester.

More information on Armstead is located on the north end of Booth Library.

Also a part of the exhibit, several groups across campus have sought to collaborate with the library to create programming related to the project.

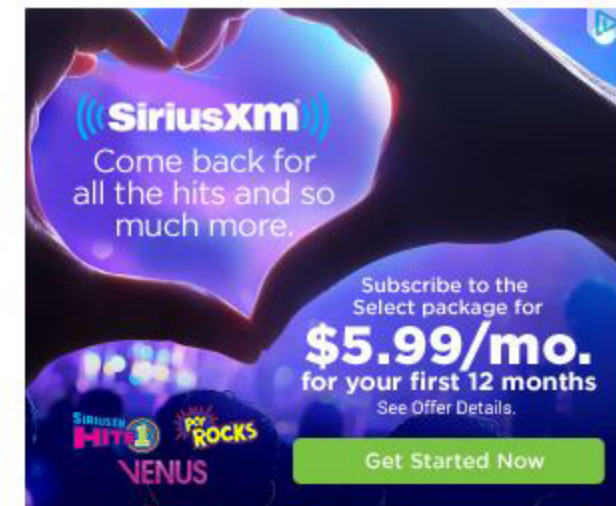
On the Shoulders of Giants: The Moon and Beyond events

Feb. 5, 8 p.m., WEIU-TV airs "To the Moon and Back: An Oral History of the Lunar Landing" documentary.

Early February | display of space-themed artwork by student of Chris Kahler, chair of Art Department | Booth Library.

Feb. 15, 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. | "Biological Effects on the Human Body During Spaceflight," presented by James "Joel" Knapper, NASA Solar System Ambassador, sponsored by EIU Department of Biological Sciences | Room 3080 of Life Sciences Building.

Feb. 21, 3:30 p.m. | "Baby Steps to the Moon," presented by Steve Daniels, chair of Physics Department | Witters Conference Room 4440 at Booth Library.



Feb. 28, 6:30 p.m. | **"Orion: Back to the Moon and Beyond,"** presented by Ann Over, 35-year veteran of NASA, retired deputy manager of European Space Agency Service Module for the Orion Project at NASA Glenn Research Center | Witters Conference Room 4440 at Booth Library.

March 3, 4 p.m. | **"One Giant Leap: A Musical Celebration for the 50th Anniversary of Apollo 11 Moon Landing,"** presented by the Eastern Symphonic Band and Concert Band | Dvorak Concert Hall in the Doudna Fine Arts Center.

March 21, 3:30 p.m. | **"How to Find Killer Asteroids,"** presented by Tyler Linder, astronomer at Linder Research and Development | Witters Conference Room 4440 at Booth Library.

March 27, 2 p.m. | **"Celestial Suite,"** presented by EIU Faculty Brass Quintet | Booth Library Atrium.

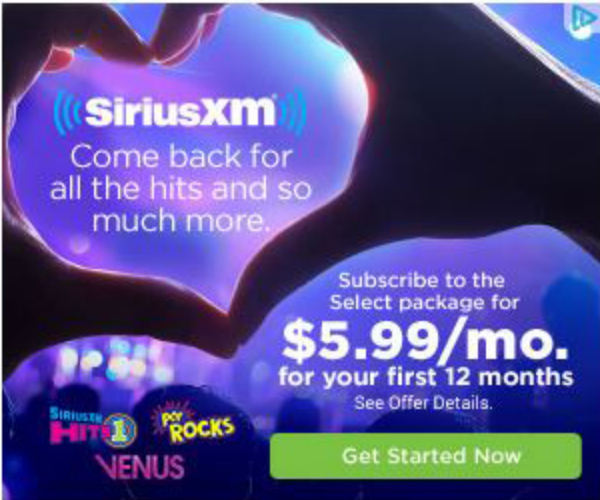
April 3 | **Model Rocketry Day,** sponsored by School of Technology

The choice to tackle this subject for the spring exhibit was a no-brainer for organizers.

"It's estimated that somewhere around half a billion people around the world watched the lunar landing in 1969," Cougill said. "It's one of those milestones of human achievement that if you were alive, you at least heard about... These momentous shared experiences tend to become very deep and meaningful memories.

"For younger generations, there is a resurging interest in the landing based on the new and exciting horizons of space exploration," he said, referencing the commercial space program Space X and the NASA Mars mission.

The exhibit will be open for the remainder of the spring semester.



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