

## A Letter from the Publisher

This month will mark the unscheduled arrival of Skylab on earth, as well as the tenth anniversary of mankind's arrival on the moon. These twin aerospace milestones are the subject of this week's cover story, which also looks toward the uncertain but potentially dazzling future of the U.S. space program. To see further ahead, TIME commissioned Science Author and Visionary Arthur C. Clarke to supplement the story with his view of man's long-term prospects in space.

TIME's own aeronautics expert, Washington Correspondent Jerry Hannifin, contributed voluminously to this week's Skylab story, which was written by Senior Writer Ed Magnuson, and to Science Editor Fred Golden's accompanying report on space exploration. A licensed pilot and irrepressible space buff, Hannifin has been covering NASA since it was NACA (National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, until 1958). Recalls Hannifin: "We used to talk about the 'new' turbojet engines, and, gee whiz! a supersonic airplane even seemed possible." Over the years, he met Rocket Wizard Werner von Braun, covered blast-offs from Cape Kennedy and

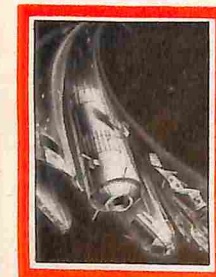


Hannifin with Apollo 10 Commander Tom Stafford

Wallops Island, Va., and interviewed a universe of scientists and astronauts. To track Skylab, Hannifin returned to several old haunts: the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., the Johnson Space Center in Houston, the Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va. But he was haunted by the sight of a souvenir displayed at the North American Air Defense Command facility near Colorado Springs: a 10-lb. container from a Soviet Soyuz that had hurtled through the atmosphere dangerously intact a few years ago, just as hundreds of Skylab chunks were expected to do this month. Said Hannifin: "That 'bottle,' as big as a mixing bowl, had spent a couple of years in orbit, re-entered and was not even scratched. That's been on my mind lately."

Also on Hannifin's mind was a sentimental visit he paid this year to an old friend: Baker, who along with the late Able became the first monkey astronaut pair in 1959. Hannifin found Baker at NASA's space museum in Tranquility Base, Ala., playfully while others venture ever deeper into outer space.

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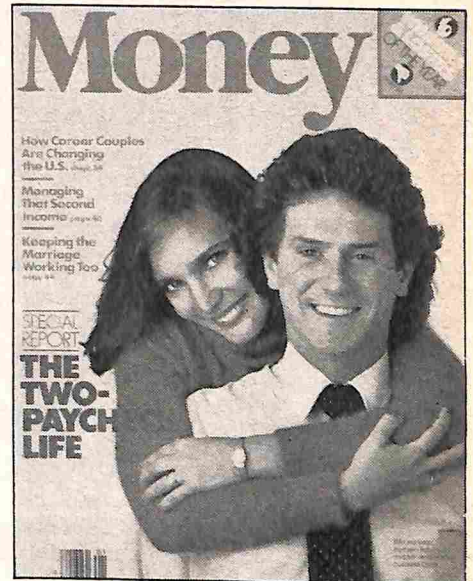
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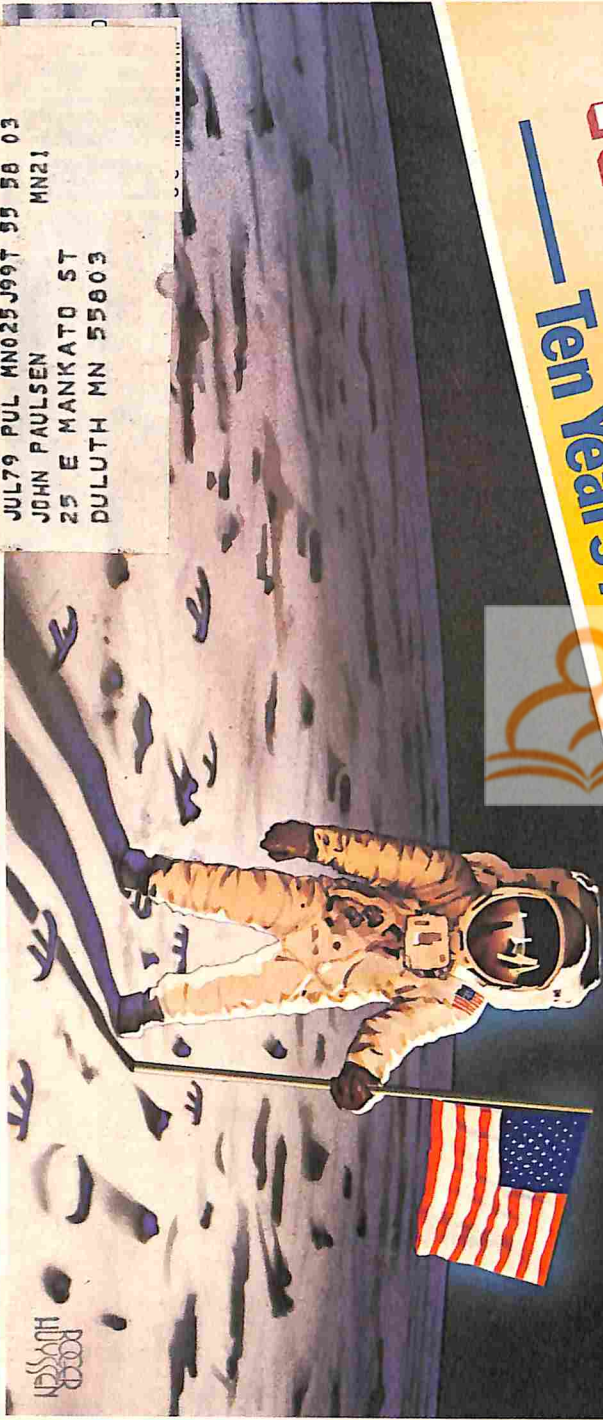
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