



I'm reading a terrific book, Craig Nelson's "Rocket Men," which is the story of the race to the moon.

The irony that strikes me is, I'm really enjoying turning pages in a great big hard-backed 400 something page tome, not squinting at it on a computer screen, Kindle, or smartphone, none of which we could so effortlessly take for granted if it had not been for the Apollo program.

There is no question that technology improves daily life. For example, now that I figured out how to make it stop speaking in Greek, I love my portable GPS system for my car. True, it occasionally will take you the long way, but hey; how many of us have taken shortcuts we heard about third hand, only to be wandering the wilderness for hours? The long way is better than the wrong way, by far.

From inventions such as the printing press, penicillin, microsurgery, and those beer tabs you don't have to rip off the can anymore, technology is surely the grease that makes our world easier to enjoy.

I don't really hate technology so much as I am somewhat befuddled by the important stuff and annoyed by the frivolous. I have no problem with computer-assisted microsurgery. But I would love to find the guy who invented those computer phone dialers for telemarketers and strangle him with an old-fashioned curly telephone cord.

Nonetheless, there are things I hope will never fade away. Books, for starters. If you are a reader, then you know the pleasure not only of immersing yourself in a couple of hours of good writing, but you understand the sybaritic soul of holding the book, taking it with you to the beach,

stretching out with it on the couch on a Sunday afternoon. There's a reason someone invented wide margins, good wine, and huge, claw footed bathtubs.

Newspapers are another, for many of the same reasons, not the least of which is they are currently how I make my living.

The late, great Lewis Grizzard once waxed lyrically, saying that to get the first newspaper warm and fresh off the press is to hold a newborn in your hands. I don't know about all that – all I know is that I don't care how small they make a computer; I still don't want to take it to the bathroom.

But think of some of the other things technology tends to override. For example, with such standard features as caller I.D. – which thankfully seems to have largely rendered telemarketing useless – has anyone made a prank telephone call in the last two decades?

Actually, I received one the other day, but only because I didn't look at the number before I answered the phone. It wasn't, "Your goat's in my garden," or "Do you have Prince Edwards in a box," but it was pretty funny... especially considering the caller, who will remain anonymous as long as he races to his bank account and transfers a whompin' donation to my favorite charity – me.

And I don't even mind an online payment. How's that for accepting technology?

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