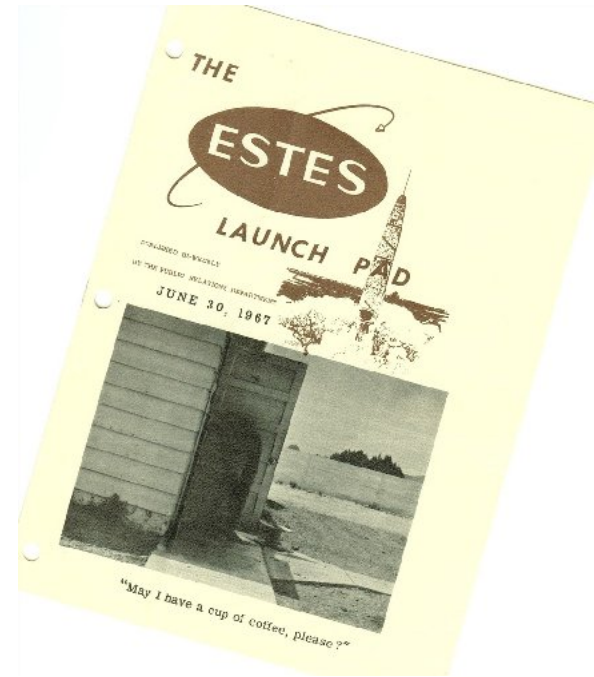


Beginning in 1966, Estes Industries published the *Estes Launch Pad* as an insert for employee pay envelopes. The original instigator and editor was Norman Avery, Estes' PR Director. When the Personnel Department became a separate entity, editing duties passed to other people, but the publication stayed true to the pattern Norm set.

Much of the content of these issues may seem mundane, but they are a window onto the very real lives of the people who together made Estes Industries a success. We see the happy times with births, marriages, promotions and achievements, but we also see the tragedy as employees lost loved ones in Vietnam, in traffic accidents, and to devastating diseases. We hear of new hires, some of whom became significant figures in the hobby of model rocketry, but we also see where employees' lives were cut short by accidents.



Throughout it all, the *Launch Pad* provides evidence of a company where people were valued, where creativity and responsibility were nurtured, and where enduring friendships were created. Vern and Gleda Estes cared deeply about both their customers and their employees, and made many wonderful memories for many people.

The issues I've reproduced here span from the publication's beginning on April 22, 1966 through the end of 1970, a time that some consider the "golden age" of model rocketry. I'm indebted to Sylvia Gasser, who collected and bound these issues for me while she was my secretary (and who delighted many of her fellow workers with her creative hand-made greeting cards on their birthdays and other special occasions). In these issues you can find clues as to the release dates of some models as well as the publication dates of some catalogs.

Bill Simon

Mount Vernon, WA
January, 2008