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**Journalist captures final full moon of 2018;
*Second walk into hayfield nets SpaceX rocket launch***



The Full Cold Moon of the night of Dec. 22 and the early morning of Dec. 23 is seen after being captured by a photographer standing in a hayfield in Levy County.

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By Jeff M. Hardison © Dec. 24, 2018 at 9:48 a.m.

LEVY COUNTY -- A Tri-County Area journalist early Sunday morning (Dec. 23) captured on film the final full moon of 2018 as well as making a video of the first launch of a rocket for a National Security Space Mission by SpaceX.

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Two more moon shots capture some of the moments of that final 2018 full moon.

Daily news website publisher Jeff M. Hardison was writing about a fatal hit and run early Sunday morning when he noticed through the western window of The Code Orange Office that the full moon appeared to be about 60 degrees above the horizon and it was dropping as the Earth turned.

“I stealthily sauntered into the bedroom and quietly grabbed the keys to the PT Newser (a 2008 PT Cruiser used for news),” he said. “The best camera for moonshots was in there at the time, and I did not want to awaken Sharon Hardison.”

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Having retrieved the Canon camera, he saw the message on the viewfinder that the batteries were in need of a charge. Returning inside, he started the charging process.

“That moon was going to be out of sight soon,” Hardison said. “That was about 7 a.m. However, I figured I could have a cup of coffee and complete the story about a driver who hit two people, killing one, before that driver fled the scene in Marion County.”

Story completed, coffee quaffed, and camera battery partly-charged, the intrepid, illustrious and prolific writer and photographer donned his bathrobe and put Crocks on his feet.

Hardison left The Ink Pad property and went onto the land to the south owned by a friendly neighbor, who has granted him permission to fly over the land with a drone and walk on it for photo opportunities.

Taking a picture of the moon through the trees of The Ink Pad property would have been possible, but the open field offered a clearer range for photography.



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An upward bound mist is seen rising from the hayfield, where it had just recently been in the frozen form of frost and then turning to water before becoming the vapor that makes clouds – destined to probably return to Earth in the future.

Needles the Community Cat of Jemlands escorted the man as he crunched across the frosty hayfield.

The December full moon is often called the Full Cold Moon, according to the Old Farmer's Almanac. The light frost in midwestern Levy County added to the fun of the adventure that morning.

Aiming the camera west at the last full moon of 2018, Hardison made his shot. Click, click, click.

“Then I remembered the SpaceX launch planned for 8:51 this morning,” Hardison said.

He returned to the hayfield with a bigger camera.

“I did not bring a tripod,” he said, “and with one arm working and one arm, my wrist and hand still in a restrictive splint after emergency surgery on Dec. 8, where there was a lot of metal added to fasten bones together, my video was a tad shaky.”

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This is a view provided by a SpaceX camera at 11 seconds into the launch on Dec. 23 on the east coast of Florida.

Photo From SpaceX via Twitter

<https://youtu.be/1EttoerYzXo>

In this video, the frost on the hay has become a misty steam rising from the warmth of the sun on Sunday morning in Levy County, and then the journalist turns the long lens to the east where the rocket is launching on the other side of Florida.

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These two photographs show the contrail left by the rocket – with the first one being relatively straight and the second showing that within seconds the slight breeze in that part of the atmosphere had moved the water vapor trail left by the rocket.

Sunday was the fifth time the Falcon 9 rocket had been prepared for launch by the Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (SpaceX) within a relatively short span of time.

The Sunday morning launch provided a point where all systems were “Go, for launch” when the countdown reached zero at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station at 8:51 a.m.

There was ignition and then liftoff! The United States Air Force’s first GPS III satellite

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launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station on top of the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

The very first launch was originally scheduled for 2014, but the payload had been stalled by production delays.

It was SpaceX's first National Security Space mission, as defined by the U.S. military, SpaceX said.

This was the first of 32 GPS satellites in production by Lockheed Martin to reach space. The SpaceX contract to launch GPS III, which it won in 2016, is worth approximately \$83 million. The satellite is expected to operate for 15 years.

The next GPS III satellite is due to launch in mid-2019.

The currently wounded journalist said he enjoyed filming a launch made by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and United Launch Alliance (ULA) in April of 2017 too.

The Orbital ATK CRS-7 launch in April of 2017 was named the S.S. John Glenn OA-7 Cargo Delivery Mission to the International Space Station in honor of the late John Herschel Glenn Jr.

ULA is the nation's most experienced space launch company with more than 120 consecutive launches and a 100 percent mission success rate.

That story and photos can be seen by clicking [HERE](#).

<https://youtu.be/p-zFXPq2nIw>

And to wrap this story, photos and videos up with a related and an unrelated moment in Christmastime history, here is a short musical video taken of a wonderful band performing at Gaylord Palms Resort in Orlando on Dec. 18, 2014. This video was created by Jeff M. Hardison, all rights reserved.