“Congratulations! It’s a healthy baby boy. Early this morning a chip the size of a molecule was implanted into his brain. The information from the World Wide Web has been uploaded. His responses to our questions are hesitant and vague. However, some of the staff at Chip General have already heard utterances of the latest tragic news involving John F. Kennedy, Jr. along with rhetoric of Mr. Thornburg’s visions for the future of education. He is beginning his first “giant step” into the informational age!”

“Among wonders of this technology, your son may never have to attend school. His educational well being will be met at home, and within a very reasonable amount of time he will be self-sufficient. Regular up-loads are needed from the Internet in order for your son to grow and mature at normal intervals. Those of us at Chip General would be deprived of information without the Internet. The Internet has offered many educational opportunities, as well as moved us from the communication age to the informational area. We are all excellent managers of information with outstanding thinking and problem solving skills. As a last reminder, don’t forget to daily up-load, so your child has the educational opportunities and experiences required to live in this technological advanced society.”

Although today’s technology has not evolved as far as this short scenario, technology seems to have taken on a life of its own. When reflecting back on the beginnings of computer technology, the inspirational
game of Pong comes to mind. This one little white ball seemed to send the technological world bouncing. Soon, homes throughout the world incorporated the pure entertainment of Pong to input and output devices of Commodores, Ataris and Apple Iles. These entertainment devices moved quickly into more productive personal computers with capabilities for gathering information anywhere in the world. Like popcorn--the personal computers began popping up on business desks. And schools...they began to envision a future for their students. For the school of the future, if they are to continue as a focus place for education, the architectural structure of how or why we use technology with students requires rebuilding. Such a demand focuses on the restructuring of the educator’s mind, curriculum, and financing.

First, teachers willing to restructure their minds can begin their journey by embarking to the Campfires in Cyberspace by David Thornburg. Although many of today’s teachers have been to David Thornburg’s “campfire,” many have not gone beyond to the “water hole or cave.” Some heard the “roaring fires” other schools have built. As a result of their own restraint or the trickery of others, they never leave the sacred place that tells them and reminds them great technology education is happening. Frequently, educators return from the “campfire” with words that hold back technology within the educational structure. One can hear, “I don’t know how, I don’t have time, I am already doing...There is no workable equipment.”

As the nation reminisces over on the historical moment and words
“The Eagle Has Landed,” let us image in our minds how the seed may have been sowed for advancing technology so some day a man would walk on the moon. Not one person did all the creative nurturing, but a team with many members. Some were statesman, while others were scientists, technicians, or assembly line workers. Each member had to visit often the “campfire, water hole, and cave” to alter his or her thinking for creating an working environment with goals towards a man someday walking on the moon. Schools of the future must sow a similar seed to avoid disappearing.

In the school of the future, teachers yearn to move from the “campfire” to visit and experience the “watering hole” and “cave,” so they can rebuild the architectural structure of how or why we use technology. The “watering hole” is a place and time to gather and share information. It provides a place for peer and informal learning. Another part of this journey is a stopover at the “cave.” Isolated in the “cave,” teachers are to reflect and practice what they have learned. In the book by Roger von Oech, he speaks of developing one’s own creative thinking through ideas such as frivolous play, creative license, and exploration. The teacher of the future will take advantage of his ideas.

Next the school of the future continues to restructure though the curriculum. Today’s curriculum is much like the TV reruns. How many times are we to return to “the basics!” It is time to stop creating robots of our students that can only regurgitate information like the monstrous UNIVAC machine in the movie “Desk Set.” Curriculum restructuring begins with the premise that today’s students are the future leaders of tomorrow. Following
this assumption, we ask “What kinds of skills will these leaders need?” It is our job as educators to shape our students into creative individuals willing to take risks. Along with risk, they will need to be inquisitive thinkers, active learners, problem solvers, and information managers. The educational curriculum must carry today’s students in the future. It cannot be based on SAT 9 scores being demanded by the legislatures, but rather on the needs for creating productive thinkers for the work force.

Finally, financing the school of the future is going to take creativity. Deborah Aufdenspring, at teacher at Napa’s New Technology High School, touts a list with many contributors for their educational well being. The educational system of the future can no longer be a “welfare recipient.” As the California State Legislature attempts to wean many individuals from welfare, the educational system seems to become more and more dependent on State and Federal funding. Financing educational must come beyond the taxation structure of our society. Those corporations and businesses that benefit from the “goods” will willingly assist in footing the bill.

As school begins again, teachers will embark on their annual trek to the “campfire.” However, there students will not arrive in their classroom with chips making them Internet compatible. Hopefully, as the year moves forward into the future, teachers visiting the “water hole” and “cave” with their students will discover offerings that push beyond the basic learning. Only then will teachers for the future loudly explain-- “It is time for me to ask not what technology can do for me, but what I can do with technology to
prepare my students for the future. “Then all of us in education can
proclaim, “The Eagle Has Landed.”