

HOME NEWS TRIBUNE

— News that hits home in Central Jersey - thnt.com —

[Weather](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Apartments](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Classified](#)

Story Search

[Back Issues:](#)

Subscribe Now!

Columnist

S

- [FRONT PAGE](#)
- [NEWS](#)
- [NATION/WORLD](#)
- [OBITUARIES](#)
- [COMMUNITY](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [OUR LIFE](#)
- [PULSE](#)
- [TEEN SCENE](#)
- [WOMEN ON THE RUN](#)
- [50+](#)
- [TRAVEL](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [OPINION](#)
- [COLUMNISTS](#)
- [PHOTOGRAPHY](#)
- [SERVICES AND JOBS](#)
- [E-MAIL UPDATES](#)

E-mail article Print

Subscribe Get e-mail alerts

Space travel safeguards the species

Advertisement

Home News Tribune Online 10/14/05

HAYM
BENAROYA
Be Counted

The devastating impact of hurricanes Katrina and Rita leaves us with many lessons. The first of these is to be individually prepared for disasters. However, that is not always possible, especially for those with modest means or without the ability to evaluate and choose contingencies. For these cases, government at all levels must assume the burden. If there is any justification for government, it is to defend the citizens of this country.

NUESTRA COMUNIDAD

It appears clear that while the federal government was late in understanding the magnitude of the Katrina impact, it relied on New Orleans and Louisiana officials to have done their parts at the outset of the storm. It is my opinion, when all the investigations are completed, that local corruption will rival incompetence as a major reason for the slow response. One only has to think of how homeland security funds are

CONTESTS

Win a Grand

EDUCATION


Newspaper in Education Program

MERCHANDISE

Newspaper Store

PROMOTIONS

Earn \$600/mo.
Kid Stuff Club
Teen Scene Club

MARKETPLACE Local Coupons	source of pork and patronage to understand how all those years of planning and financial infusions really did very little good. It was the
ADVERTISING Product Rates	Wal-Marts and Home Depots, as well as insightful individuals, who had the plans that saved people and property.
LISTINGS Submit Club/Bar Schedules In Remembrance and Thank You Hot Properties	Another lesson from this profound tragedy is that regardless of how technologically sophisticated we become, there is always something that can tip the delicate balance of our society. Greater
GANNETT NJ NEWSPAPERS Asbury Park Press Gannett State Bureau Courier News Courier-Post The Daily Journal Daily Record Ocean County Observer Times Beacon Newspapers	technological sophistication goes hand-in-hand with greater vulnerability; we depend on layers of technology in our everyday lives. From distribution systems for goods, to communications systems for information, to infrastructure systems for water and energy, we are beholden to a vast network of technologies, and the people who create and run them, for our very survival.
Other Gannett Newspapers  Advertisement	One of the goals of a space program that places a significant number of people on the Moon and Mars is to safeguard the species; with people populating the solar system, a devastating event will not wipe out the human race. A lunar facility would help us track potential comets and asteroids, giving us enough lead-time, perhaps years, to plan a deflection of the offending rock.
	Such impacts span a huge range in severity and frequency, and the means to predict and mitigate these impacts vary accordingly. The probability of a "dinosaur-killer" impact is about one in 1 million this century. The probability of a civilization-ending impact is larger — a bit less than 1 in 1,000 this century. The probability of a small or Tunguska-class impact (near the lower size for penetration

of the atmosphere, but still large enough to destroy a city) is higher still: There is approximately 1 chance in 10 of such an impact this century. At 7:17 a.m. on the morning of June 30, 1908, a mysterious explosion occurred in the skies over the Tunguska River valley in Siberia. It was caused by the impact and breakup of a large meteorite, at an altitude roughly four miles in the atmosphere. Its effects were felt in a significant way 50 miles away.

But planetary defense is only one reason to settle the Moon and Mars. There are numerous economically viable reasons to return to the Moon. Space exploration is a venture, I believe, that can affect all of us in very positive ways, creating technologies throughout our society, and creating jobs for us, our children and their children.

Haym Benaroya is a resident of East Brunswick. He is a professor at the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Center for Structures in eXtreme Environments at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. He was the fifth reader to join the Home News Tribune's "Be Counted" roster of columnists.

 [E-mail article](#)  [Print](#)

 [Subscribe](#)  [Get e-mail alerts](#)

Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) • [Cars: Cars.com](#) • [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) • [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)

Copyright © 2005 Home News Tribune. All rights reserved.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). (Updated June 7, 2005)

Site design by [Home News Tribune / Contact us](#)

[USA Today](#) • [USA Weekend](#) • [Gannett Co. Inc.](#) • [Gannett Foundation](#)