

STAR-DATE 3.87

Volume 1, Number 4
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STAR-DATE is published by the Albany Schenectady Troy Rocket Enthusiasts (ASTRE), Section 471 of the National Association of Rocketry. STAR-DATE is edited by Jeff Vincent, Box 95, New Scotland, NY, 12127, (518) 439-2055. Articles, plans, or suggestions for publication should be sent to me at this address. Advertisers should contact me for information on publication of their ads. STAR-DATE is provided to ASTRE members as a membership benefit. STAR-DATE is available at a low-low subscription rate of \$4.00 for eight issues (approx. one year). Send subscriptions to the same address.

EDITOR'S THERMAL

Hello again, everyone. Well, the weather outside has been almost tolerable here in sunny Albany. I've even been able to get out and start flying a few models. Another item which signifies the approach of the flying season is the appearance of the new Estes catalog.

There are seventeen new kits from Estes this year. Four are already available as fall releases: the Skinny Mini (a minimum length A SR), the Bullpup (a scale air-to-ground missile), Der U-3 (a maxi Red Max), and the Nimbus (an early favorite for Most Ugly New Rocket). Unremarkable releases include the Phaser, the Ninja (Most Trendy Rocket Name Concept, it should make an interesting martial arts weapon), the "new" Sky Hook (a new decal does wonders), the Transtar Carrier, the Arrow (a BT-60 model for the archers among us), and the Explorer (snatching the honors(?) for Most Ugly New Rocket).

In the slightly more interesting category we have the Long Shot (a minimum length B SR), the DART (a really dorky looking model), the Clipper (a

nice two-stager), and the Interceptor II (a descendant of the old Interceptor). The most interesting rockets are the Gemini Titan (a new nose cone and decal sheet for the missile), the Mini Mars Lander (Cutest Rocket of '87), the scale Jupiter-C (another nose/decal job, but quite effective), and the scale-like Geo Sat LV (probably real nice with clear plastic fins).

To make room for these new kits, sixteen models were cancelled this year. Among the casualties are the Titan II missile, the Marte missile, the Soaring Eagle flexie, and the D-Region Tomahawk. I can't understand why the D-Region was cancelled, it was a good Sport Scale model and a good kit. (Maybe my memory is fading, but doesn't it seem like it just came out?) You should find these and others as cut-outs at your local Kay-Bee soon.

One final product which deserves attention is the Ninja Starter Kit. In an attempt to provide a cheap entry-level package, they have created a really crappy launch pad. It uses three 1/4" wooden dowels as legs and has an 18" launch rod. A warning reads: "The Lunar Launch Pad is recommended for rockets no more than 16" long, or for rockets with body tubes no larger than 1.0" in diameter. Rockets should weigh no more than 1.5 ounces without engines. Rockets should use mini or standard size engines only, not D's. The Lunar Launch Pad should be used in moderate (0-5mph) breeze conditions only." Well, that sounds like a good all-purpose launcher. About the only thing they didn't mention is that the Lunar Launch Pad is intended for use only in 1/6 Earth gravity! Do yourself a favor and buy a real launcher.

Well, that just about does it for Estes and for me this time around. So, until next time - Adios, amoebas.

Jeff

United States Space Camp

by Pat Perrella

Enter the world of the ultimate, professional rocketeer: the astronaut! The U.S. Space Camp at the Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama is the only place in the country where anyone can "become" an astronaut and step into the fantastic world of the NASA space program. Throughout the year the camp is attended by students ages ten to seventeen who participate in a week of high tech activities. The Fall session is limited to the eighteen and over crowd, the Adult Space Academy, which I attended in November of 1985.

After absorbing the shock of 80+ degree weather and carefully interpreting our counselors' southern accents, "you all" are in for some more adventure. Official army type barracks with bunk beds, lockers, and standard issue sheets, pillow, and blanket! The trick was to get the bunk closest to the shower room! Meals were at the cafeteria at 7am, 12 noon, and 5pm. Class lectures, demonstrations, or mission rehearsals immediately followed our meals so "we all" quickly developed an efficient schedule so we wouldn't be late.

Our group of 40 campers were quite an interesting cross section of America. Several teachers, a mother of two who wrote children's fiction, a retired engineer, a flight controller, a window treatment specialist, two state workers from California, and a computer programmer from Alaska were among the class. Most were very friendly and all were eager to prove their worthiness to enter the world of NASA!

Space Campers learn the ins and outs of the space program and shuttle operations and learn to handle NASA training equipment and life support systems while in shuttle, space lab, space station EVA, and mission control simulations. Teams are selected and a pilot, commander, and mission specialists are designated, as well as a full team of mission control coordinators. Two complete two hour missions are

"flown" and the "astronauts" must act intelligently to launch and land the shuttle while performing the assigned experiments, launching satellites and handling unexpected problems that develop along the way.

It's amazing how the teamwork develops among people who barely know each other but must rely on one another for the proper execution of the mission. You can feel the tension during the communications between mission control, the shuttle, the space lab and the space station. It becomes much more than a game! Everyone wants the mission to be a success. There were quite a few humorous moments such as when one slightly overweight mission specialist couldn't make it through the airlock tunnel and another who couldn't reach the switches in the space lab was seen standing on a chair when the video camera was turned on the lab!

I served as Flight Director during our mission and was responsible for all the shuttle operations from the point of main engine ignition until the landing. It was quite an exciting experience and I can say I got the shuttle back to the earth successfully despite numerous problems. We suffered a main engine failure, an ATO (abort to orbit) scenario, numerous power failures, and transfers to auxiliary systems (once we found the proper switches). I really appreciate all the skills and expertise of the actual NASA team!

If you are interested in this unique experience and have quite a few dollars to spare (the cost is \$400, plus the cost of getting there) the address for information and an application is:

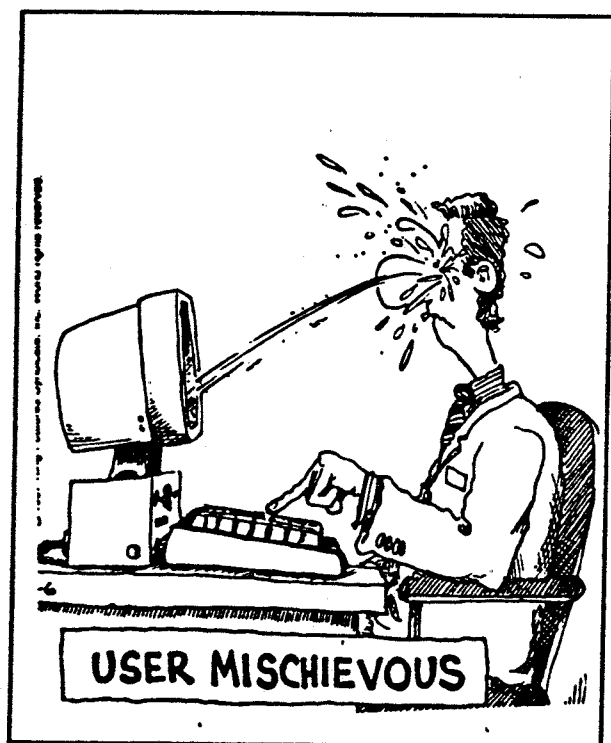
United States Space Camp
The Space & Rocket Center
1 Tranquility Base
Huntsville, Alabama 35807-0287

Also remember that Huntsville is the home of the George C. Marshall Space Center and the Redstone Arsenal, so you will see many rocket displays - a scale modeler's dream! The Rocket Park at the Space Museum is also loaded with rockets and early military missiles. There is a

fantastic museum with such goodies as Wally Schirra's Mercury Capsule, the Apollo 16 capsule, and a Dr. Werner Von Braun exhibit which covers the life of this famous rocket scientist. It's a great place and certainly not your average vacation. Where else can you walk around in astronaut "blues" and catch the admiring glances of passersby who think you are the real thing!

THE COMPUTER CORNER

Computer Terminology: #41



BALSA SCRAPS

WHERE WE STAND...At the last meeting the following policy was announced: At the current time, all official ASTRE launches will be held under FAA/NAR model rocket rules: i.e. maximum mass - 453gm (1lb), maximum propellant mass - 113gm (4oz), NAR Certified engines only.

FLEX-WING SESSION...Jeff Vincent will be conducting a flex-wing construction session at the April 14 meeting. People wishing to participate must reserve their kit(s) in advance (before April 1) at a cost of \$4.00 per kit. Contact Jeff for details.

HOWARD KUHN...will not be at the Pearl River Seminar. So those of you who want CMR parts should not plan on getting them at the Seminar. Send your mail order now to be sure you have the parts you need for Spring flying.

NOT SO NEW PINK BOOK...The word from Chas Russell (the new National Contest Board Chairman) is that the current Pink Book will remain in effect for next contest year ('87-'88). The new revision of the Pink Book is being prepared for the following season. This means we can start planning for our Summer/Fall meets now.

YE OLDE EDITOR...took advantage of the great weather on February 22 (45 F, calm, and sunny) to do some flying. While I had to wade through the foot deep snow in the backyard, the flying was good. I made three test flights with the new mini Tasmanian Devil I built at our construction session. After trying it with a 1/4A, 1/2A, and A3, I'm convinced you need a mini-B to fly it (just kidding). Best duration was five blazing seconds.

BOOK REVIEW...If you act quickly, you may be able to pick up a copy of Bill Gunston's "Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rockets and Missiles" at your local Price Chopper. (I guess they're diversifying.) This book has over 250 pages of information on military missiles of the 20th century. Each missile has a short description and a photo (usually color) or drawing, a great source for Sport Scale modelers. It's a bargain at just ten dollars. Pat Perrella also reports that a book on the Space Shuttle (with numerous color photos) is available as well.

FINE SCALE MODELER...is a bi-monthly magazine which covers the modeling hobby. While it concentrates on plastic models, many articles cover items applicable to model rocketry. The thing that separates FSM from most other modeling magazines is that it teaches modeling techniques, not just how to build a particular model. Each issue has a basic article on one technique, such as airbrushing, decal techniques, or metallic finishes. It helps you to get the most out of your modeling efforts. It's available in good bookstores or hobby shops or by subscription.

ASTRE CALENDAR

March 15 - GODDARD III GSSS Open meet.
North Branch Park, Bridgewater, NJ.
1/2A IPD, A B/G, A ISD, B ELD, B HD, C
SRD, and Pred Dur. Meet fee is \$6.00
(A/B) or \$10.00 (C). Contact Bob
Kreutz, 1301-A Comanche Ave., Point
Pleasant, NJ, 08742, (201) 892-9148.

March 24 - Club meeting. Meetings are
held in room 223 of the Classroom
Building of Fulton-Montgomery Commu-
nity College. The Board of Directors
meet at 6:00pm and the general meeting
is 6:30 - 9:00 pm. This month we will
be discussing beginning competition;
from an explanation of the competi-
tion process to what's hot and what's
not. It's a great opportunity for any
one thinking of competing this year.
We will also be accepting orders for
the flex-wing construction session
(April 14).

March 28 - Sport launch. Dust off the
cobwebs and bring out your models for
the first launch of the year. Unoffi-
cial contest - Drag Race. (So bring
your own launch controller and pad).
We will be flying from 12 noon to 4 pm
(weather permitting). (Snow date -
March 29).

April 3-4 - Pearl River Modroc Seminar.
Pearl River Middle School, Pearl
River, NY. A weekend of discussion
groups, raffles, films, launches, and
a free commemorative kit. Contact Dick
Nelson, Pearl River Middle School, 520
Gilbert Ave., Pearl River, NY, 10965.

April 14 - Club meeting. Jeff Vincent
will be conducting a flex-wing con-
struction session.

April 18 - Apollo-16 Section meet. 1/2A
IPD, A ISD, A SRDur, B HD, Sport
Scale. Unofficial event - 1/2A R/G.
(Sleet date - April 25). Contact Jeff
Vincent.

May 5 - Club meeting.

May 9 - ASTRO-5 Open meet. Pred Dur,
1/2A IPD, B SD, 1/2A HD, D ELDur, 1/2A
IB/G, Plastic Model Conversion. (Rain
date - May 10). Contact Jeff Vincent.

June 2 - Club meeting.

June 6 - MINUTEMAN II CMASS Open.
Acton, MA. 1/2A IB/G (rigid-wing), A
HD, B SD, B ELDur, B R/G, D SRDur.

Contact Chris Tavares, 11 Ontario
Drive, Hudson, MA, 01749, (617) 562-
9484.

early-mid June - Sport launch.

June 20-21 - WUBBA-10 Regional meet.
Center Valley, PA. F SRDur, B HD, A
R/G, C ELDur, Sport Scale, 1/2A B/G,
1/2A PD. Contact Art Rose, 8 Sandusky
Rd., New City, NY, 10956.

late July - ASTRO-6 Open meet. Events
to be announced. Contact Jeff
Vincent.

August 2-7 - NARAM-29 National meet.
Fountain Valley (L.A.), CA. See AmSpam
for details.



FROM THE PHOTO ARCHIVES:

A giant Mercury Redstone model at
the MIT Model Rocket Convention (circa
1980). The model features built-up balsa
and Monocote construction and is powered
by a cluster of four D12's. The capsule
is equipped with three mini motors in the
escape tower. These motors boost the
capsule and it is recovered separately.
They did not ignite and the main chute
tangled, resulting in a rapid increase
in entropy.

ASTRE CONTEST SCHEDULE

Come join the Albany Schenectady Troy Rocket Enthusiasts (ASTRE), the upstate New York NAR section. We'll be flying a busy schedule of meets this Spring and Summer and we hope to see you there. Whether you're a beginner or a grizzled veteran, you'll enjoy yourself.

ASTRE's field is a rancher's hay field about ten miles west of Amsterdam, NY (see map). While the terrain is not perfect, we have over 100 acres at our disposal in the immediate area and much of the surrounding area is open for easy recovery. ASTRE's launch system is a four pad satellite system equipped with 1/8" and 3/16" launch rods. You are welcome to bring your own launch pad to be used with our launch controller.

Our meets will be flown from 10 am to 6 pm. Sport Scale and Plastic Model Conversion turn-in will be by 12 noon. Spot Landing and Predicted Duration events may be limited to a specific window. Sport flights will be permitted, although contest flights shall have precedence. Ribbons will be given for First through Fourth places. The open meet entry fees are: A Div - \$2.00, B Div - \$3.00, and C Div - \$5.00. Be sure to bring your NAR card (and have your parent or guardian sign your CB-1-70 entry blank if you are under 21).

If you need additional information, write or call:
Jeff Vincent, Box 95, New Scotland, NY 12127, (518) 439-2055.
Chuck Weiss, 883-8805 (local).

March 28 (raindate March 29)
Sport Launch (12-4 pm)
Unofficial event: Drag Race

April 18 (raindate April 25)
Apollo 16 Section Meet
1/2A Int Parachute
A Int Streamer
B Helicopter
A Super-roc Duration
Sport Scale
Unofficial event:
1/2A Rocket/Glide

May 9 (raindate May 10)
ASTRO-5 Open Meet
Predicted Duration
1/2A Int Parachute
B Streamer
D Eggloft Duration
1/2A Helicopter
1/2A Int Boost/Glider
Plastic Model Conversion

late July
ASTRO-6 Open Meet
Events to be announced

ASTRE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ NAR # _____ JR LDR SR (circle one)

Membership dues are \$4.00 per year Junior (under 16 as of Jan 1)
\$6.00 per year Leader (under 21 as of Jan 1)
\$10.00 per year Senior (21 or over as of Jan 1)

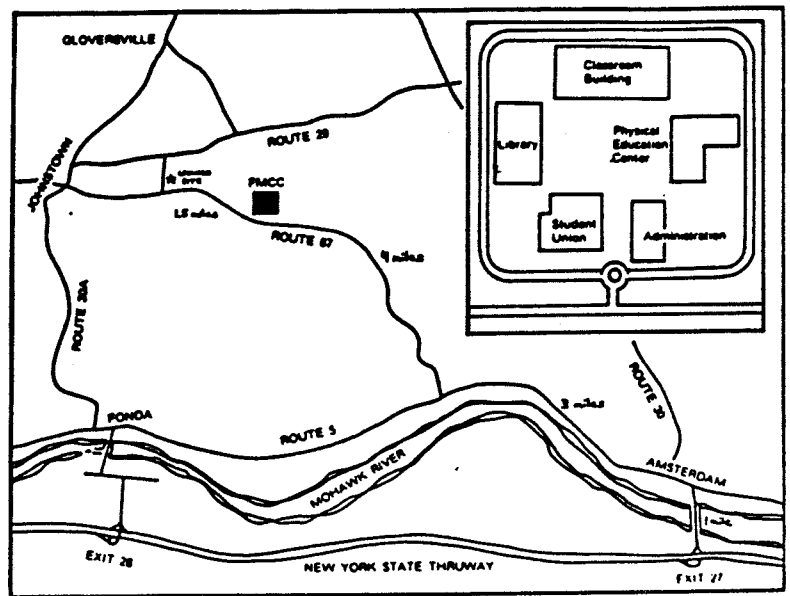
Make dues check or money order payable to Pat Perrella
Send to: Pat Perrella, 16 Country Club Dr., Gloversville, NY 12078.

"I pledge to abide by the NAR Safety Code in my rocketry activities."

Signature _____ Date _____

HOW TO GET THERE

- * Take the Amsterdam exit (#27) off the Thruway.
- * Take a right and follow Route 30 North for one mile.
- * Take a left at the second light after the bridge (Route 5 West).
- * Follow Route 5 for 3 miles. Take a right onto Route 67.
- * Follow Route 67 for 4 miles and FMCC will be on your right.
- * To find the flying field, continue 1.5 miles on Route 67. Take a right on the small road by Ed's Auto Service (look for the plane). After 1/2 mile you will see JBJ Equine on your right. Follow the driveway and park in the parking lot and walk to the range.



⑥

ASTRE
Box 95
New Scotland, NY
12127