



The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois Rocketry Association

Sept/Oct 2007

# NIRA In The News!



(The fact that this is one of the editor's rockets is surely just a coincidence!)



### THE LEADING EDGE

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Visit our web site & message board;  
<http://www.nira-rocketry.org/>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nirarocketry/>

The Leading Edge is published bi-monthly for members of the Northern Illinois Rocketry Association (NIRA) NAR Section#117  
Dedicated to the idea that rocketry is fun!



### Contributors this issue;

Articles Jim Basile, Tony Lentini  
Photographs Rick Gaff, Tony Lentini

## T Minus One Launch Windows

### NIRA

Oct 21

Theme: Fast Food; Bring & fly rockets made from any kind of food or drink containers.

Nov 18

Theme: Sci-Fi spacecraft; Any rockets which look like futuristic transportation. Rescheduled from the rained out August launch.

### Fox Valley Rocketeers

Oct 14

Stephens Farm

Nov 11

Stephens Farm

### WOOSH

Nov 3

Model & Mid Sport Launch at Certified Peat & Sod

Dec 1

Model & Mid Sport Launch at Certified Peat & Sod

### Tripoli

Oct 26-28

Midwest Power hosted by The Quad Cities club in Princeton Illinois

Nov 17-18

The Quad Cities club launch in Princeton Illinois

## Meeting Calendar

### NIRA

Oct 26

Monthly meeting Helen Plum Library

Nov 18

Monthly meeting Helen Plum Library

### Fox Valley Rocketeers

Nov 5

McHenry Public Library



CURT BRAUNHAUSER  
1995

Ensign Johnson suddenly comes to the alarming realization that he is the only red-shirt in the landing party.



## The President's Corner

Dear Fellow NIRA Members:

I would like to take this opportunity to present the goals and objectives I would like to implement as your President of this Club.

First goal is to increase the number of members who attend the monthly meetings. Typically, we have from 10 to 20 members present during a monthly club meeting. I would like to increase the number of members present to range from 20 to 40 members. I think that there is a great deal of talent in our membership that needs to be tapped. Prior to the next meeting which is scheduled for October 26, current active members will be contacting some of our inactive membership to attend the October Meeting. I hope to meet and see some new faces at our October Meeting.

My second goal is to increase our club membership. We currently have approximately 70 to 75 members (including family members) that belong to NIRA. Again I hope to double our membership. To achieve this goal NIRA will be implementing the following programs:

1. The Adopt a Hobby Shop Program will have NIRA members work directly with a designated Hobby Shop to allow us to have membership forms readily available for Hobby Shop Patrons to pickup and send in to NIRA. We have currently identified approximately 8 hobby shops that we will contact to enlist their participation. An extension of this program would be to host make and take programs at the hobby shop, model rocket building contests, as well as window displays.
2. Active recruitment of new members from the engineering colleges and universities in the Chicagoland area. We also envision extending this program to the junior colleges that offer pre-engineering programs as well as the smaller 4 year colleges in the area that offer degrees in the math, science, and education fields.
3. Collaboration with model rocket clubs in the area in hosting contests. We envision this collaboration to extend to other clubs that may have charters that would enhance or complement the model rocket area of interest.

To implement these programs will take active participation by the membership. This can be an exciting and rewarding time to be a member of NIRA. Keep in mind NASA has committed itself to return to the moon within the next ten years. We can expect a possible resurgence in youth interest in rockets and space that we as a Club must capitalize on.

I look forward to meeting and working with all of you. To the Planets and beyond!

Sincerely,

Jim Basile





### The Editor's Corner

Since Pat Butler's departure from our club, I have agreed to take over publishing NIRA's newsletter. You will of course notice some changes in layout and content, and I have a few ideas for new columns which I hope to implement in future issues.

The one thing which will not change is the editor's reliance on material from YOU, the club members. We need you to send in your reviews and photographs of club activities such as launches. Write a review of the latest new kit you've just built. Share plans for the newest scratch built home design you just finished. And definitely pass on any rocket or space related news you may have heard.

Some of the new features which you will be seeing in upcoming issues include "My Favorite Rocket" where everyone is encouraged to write in and tell us about that one kit in your fleet that you love to fly more than any other. The V.A.B. is a column where you can show off the kits you currently have under construction.

Starting this issue look for the first installment of 'Member Spotlight'. This is a chance to tell everyone about yourself, and your involvement in our hobby. Write a short biography, and if you need help coming up with things to write about, try answering some of the following questions;

- How and when did you get into model rocketry?
- How did you find out about NIRA?
- What's the most powerful rocket you have flown?
- Have you ever flown in an NAR competition event?
- What do you do for a living?
- Did you get into rocketry as a child, teen, or an adult?
- Do you have a favorite kind of rocket?
- How many rockets do you currently have?
- What's your most memorable rocket moment?
- Do you have any favorite Sci-Fi TV shows or movies?

And of course, be sure to send in some photos of some of your rockets!

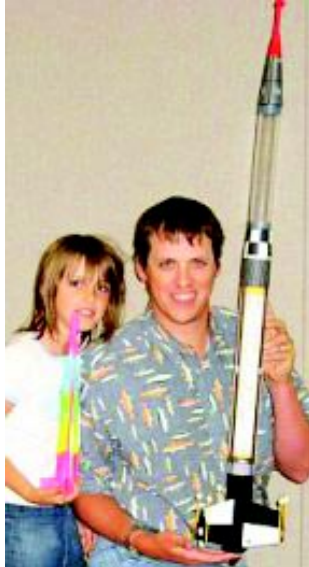
Tony Lentini



NIRA commemorates the 50th Anniversary of Sputnik

## Model Of The Month

We've got a little catching up to do with this issue, so here are the last four monthly winners!



June winners; **Marc Mitchell** won Adult with his scratch built *NIRA Loft 1*.

Daughter **Katie Mitchell** won Youth with her **Katie Kopter**.



July winners; **John Hojek** won Adult with his *Magnum*.

**Angel Cooper** won Junior with her *Echostar*.

**Jimmy Basile** won Youth with his *Big Daddy*.



August winners; **Tony Lentini** won Adult with his *Ring Hawk*.

**April Cooper** won Junior with her *Baby Bertha*.



September winner; **Adam Elliot** won Adult with his *Spindrift*.

## Member Profile:

### Anthony Lentini

As a kid in the mid '70's I was enthralled with all kinds of Sci-Fi from Star Trek & Star Wars, to Space 1999. In fact, after watching Salvage-1 on TV, an old grade school friend of mine and I first thought of building our own rocket. I thought it would be pretty simple if we used parts from my Dad's oxy-acetylene cutting torch. It's perhaps for the best that we couldn't pursue that beyond the planning stages. My dad just wouldn't let me disassemble the torch for the parts I needed.

In junior high, one of our science teachers set up a display in one of the hall cabinets including model rockets and pages from an Estes catalog. We never did have a rocket club that year, but I got a copy of the catalog and would go through it over and over, confident that someday I would own each one of those kits.

I got my first actual rockets from my mother later that summer. She had spent the afternoon garage sale shopping, and bought me a box filled with model rockets. These included an X-Ray, Drifter, Ranger, Wac Corporal, Honest John, Apogee II, and a plastic Alpha-1 baking soda rocket, most of which I still own today.

I didn't actually get a chance to fly those rockets right away, but soon afterwards I found out about NIRA and the annual Labor Day launch. I think they were either on the news or in the newspaper when I first heard of them. It was there that I met Rick Gaff, Bob Kaplow, Tom Pastrick, and a fellow with the unusual name of 'Bunny' who was club president.

I remained a member of NIRA into my high school years, during a time when the club was focused on competition and winning the NAR championship. I attended a number of meets in Wisconsin and Indiana, learning about flying different kinds of rockets, and attended NARAM 24 in Orlando. But I soon decided that I really didn't have the time or budget to get into competition very seriously, and decided to just stick to sport flying.

I actually met my best friend in high school because of model rockets. After a drama club meeting I was sketching an Estes Starship Nova on the blackboard when this guy recognized it. We struck up a conversation, found out we had a lot of similar interests, and stayed best of friends ever since. (Even if he did drop out of rockets soon after.)



My interest in rockets began to wane as I got closer to college, but I did help buy out one of our NIRA members who was auctioning off his whole collection. I acquired a partially completed Omega and Phoenix, (larger than most of the rockets I owned back then) and a couple of spacecraft type rockets. I worked on a few of them, but shortly afterwards, I too left the hobby behind, and a lot of unfinished rockets went into big cardboard boxes along with my flyable rockets for years of storage.

Once in a while I would trek out to Glen Ellyn to visit the Labor Day launch and say Hi to everybody, but it wasn't until I saw the three part documentary

on Tripoli's LDRS launch on cable TV that I really felt the old rocket bug biting again.

I took the old rockets out of storage, and began to make some needed repairs to my older kits. I also began to make new rockets out of some old parts I still had, and new parts when I bought an Estes parts bundle kit. Things had to go on hold again as I spent a lot of that summer selling my house and moving to my new place in Hanover Park. But I did a lot of research, and learned more about how much the hobby had changed since the mid-eighties. I also found out that the tag 'B.A.R.' had been hung on me when I wasn't looking.

I finally reconnected with NIRA last fall, but I didn't have any rockets, new or old in flying condition. I spent most of the winter building and rebuilding about forty different rockets and gliders, including many I've gotten from Jim Z's site. I've also become interested in older designs, and kits from the '90's which I had missed out on. I used to avoid gliders because I hated sanding airfoils, but I've built a few reproduction Estes and Centuri designs, and discovered the interesting (and sometimes hazardous) things you can do with bodies made from paper shrouds.

This of course brings up my most memorable rocket moment to date. The time I set my reproduction Centuri Point on the pad, and couldn't understand why it just sat there smoking when I pushed the button. The answer? Where there's smoke, there's fire. I'd never heard of a 'Bernoulli Lock' before, but I now consider myself somewhat knowledgeable on the topic.

This winter I plan to finish rebuilding the last of my older rockets which got damaged in storage over the years. I also have a list of rockets from different sci-fi media I'd like to try



and scratch-build. On some of these I plan to make the bodies out of printed paper shrouds and cardboard, so watch out next spring!

These days I am a computer graphic artist, animator, illustrator, and former desktop publishing artist. (Which still comes in handy sometimes!) I still enjoy good Sci-fi like the new Battlestar Galactica, Farscape, and Babylon 5, as well as 'Trek and Star Wars. I still also enjoy Anime. I've also begun to collect more classic American Scientific baking soda rockets and Parks water rockets toys.

Yup, judging by these and my fleet of older & reproduction kits, I guess you can say I'm really into Retro-Rockets!

### Some of my Rockets

**Right;** Some of my *original* rockets bought from a 1979 garage sale: L to R: *Drifter*, *Apogee II*, *Ranger*, *WAC Corporal (rebuilt)*, and *X-Ray*.

**Left;** My reproduction rockets & gliders: F to R: *Mach (MIG) 10*, *Nighthawk*, *Delta Katt*, *Silver Hawk*, *Flying Jenny*, *Eagle*, *Zoomie*, *X-21*, *Falcon*, *Raven*, *Invader*, *Spaceplane*, *Spaceman*, and *Red Eye*.

**Middle Left;** My paper shroud rockets: L to R: *X-24 Bug*, *M2Q2*, *Vulcan*, *X-30*, *Point*, (half re-built) *Space Clipper*, and *HL-20*.

**Bottom Left;** Spacecraft rockets: F to R: *Colonial Viper*, *Shuttle*, *Nova Scout*, *Nova Starship*, *Intruder*, *Orbital Transport*, *Space Probe*, *Vindicator*, *Falcon Commander*, *F-61*, *Satellite Interceptor*, & *X-20 Starblazer*.

**Bottom Center;** Some of '80's rockets: L to R: *Polaris*, *Mini-WAC Corporal*, *Avenger*, *R2D2*, *Phoenix*, *Tasmanian Devil*, *Omega*, *Super Flea*, *Mosquito*, & *Javelin*.

**Bottom Right;** My custom design rockets (mostly made from leftover parts): F to R: *Corona*, *Pug*, *Bullnose*, *Flare*, *T-Bone*, *T-Bird*, *Hornet*, and *Mercury*.



## September Launch Pic's



A pair of flying TARDIS's (or is that TARDI?)



One TARDIS is not tardy off the pad.



Bob counts down...



... and rockets soar up.



Jon showing off his rockets.



Great shots of one of Ken's crowd pleasing rockets.





Mark keeps the scouts in line on the field



What do you do when the wind  
knocks the pad over?



Keep on flying of course!



Rick demonstrates some pyramid power.



Adam's Titan III lifts off.



Rick contemplates the wisdom  
of static testing another motor.



Rick's demonstration clearly shows why you shouldn't use motors which  
have had their certifications withdrawn.



## All The News That Fits To Print

### NASA, NASCAR to Merge!

Reprinted from 'The Onion'

CAPE CANAVERAL, FL—In an effort to generate excitement and public support for America's struggling space program, NASA announced Monday that it will join the wildly popular NASCAR racing circuit in time for the regular 2008 season.



The Space Shuttle Endeavor (#17) prepares to make its move on Dale Jarrett (#88) during its qualifying run for the Purolator 500 in Murfreesboro, TN.

“Despite all our efforts to stir up enthusiasm, Americans still view the space program as boring and a waste of money,” said NASA Director of Public Relations Boyd Connington, explaining the merger with NASCAR. “We’ve tried everything—record-setting manned space orbits; discovery of lunar ice formations; photographic evidence of life on Mars. But nothing we’ve done has captured the public’s imagination quite like the thrill of seeing Ricky Rudd fly around a track at upwards of 170 mph.”

The NASACAR Space Shuttle, which boasts such sponsors as Sunoco and Gold Bond Medicated Powder and is piloted by veteran driver Ernie Irvan, made its debut Sunday at the Slick 50 300 at the Talladega Speedway in Talladega, FL. Despite averaging 2,300 mph, the shuttle finished dead last in its inaugural race, largely due to a mid-race pit stop that took nearly two days.

“Several ceramic heat shield tiles came loose on the far turn in lap 103,” said NASACAR pit crew chief Ken Orton, explaining the shuttle delay. “That kind of problem normally takes several weeks to repair, but in the world of auto racing, you just don’t have that kind of time.”

Despite its unimpressive debut, the shuttle has met with a surprising amount of resentment from veteran NASCAR drivers.



Ernie Irvan (center) and the crew of the Endeavor are in high spirits as they barrel down the straightaway during Sunday's Slick 50 300. Despite a race budget of \$8.1 billion, mechanical trouble caused the Endeavor to finish last.

“I know it ain’t neighborly,” Jeff Gordon said. “But I ain’t sure I approve. Your NASCAR stocker’s s’posed to be an American body type with a 350-inch engine in her, puttin’ out around 800 horse. Now, that Space Shuttle, she’s American all right, but I seen under her hood, and them Cape Canaveral boys got a cluster ‘a seven solid fuel rocket boosters in that thing what generate 750,000 pounds of boost. That’s ‘bout sixty ‘leven billion horse, that is. That ain’t fair.”

“It’s a big ‘un too, that Endeavor,” said 30-year NASCAR veteran Dick Trickle. “She’s sure’n hell hard to pass in the turns. Good thing her pit stop tire changin’ takes three hours, or she’d win the whole damn dance.”

NASA hopes to cash in on fan interest with a line of souvenir merchandise. A series of NASACAR racing T-shirts, hats, collector plates, buck knives, lighters and other paraphernalia will be sold at the races and on the Home Shopping Network. Country music superstars Brooks and Dunn have recorded “Fastest Rocket In A One-Horse Town,” a song inspired by the NASA team’s exploits, for the next NASCAR music collection, *Hotter Than Exhaust Plasma III*.

As an added promotion, before each race, Ernie Irvan will drive the Endeavor past the grandstand and use its manipulator arm to throw free T-shirts, baseball caps and sponsor coupons to fans. Among the most popular NASACAR T-shirt slogans are “I’d Rather Push a Shuttle Than Drive a Chevy”

“We’re very excited about our future in racing,” said NASA’s Connington. “And with our per-race budget of \$8.1 billion, we should hopefully place in the top five pretty soon.”