Balls-24 Launch Report

How can one describe the Balls experience? You are at the worlds best launching site, hands down. At least six miles in every direction of absolutely flat terrain. No vegetation at all. A 150,000 feet standing waiver with sterile airspace. You'll see rockets flown that can be flown nowhere else: huge all metal rockets, Research motors of all sizes, and of course, the Party on the Playa, and lets not forget the Burners.

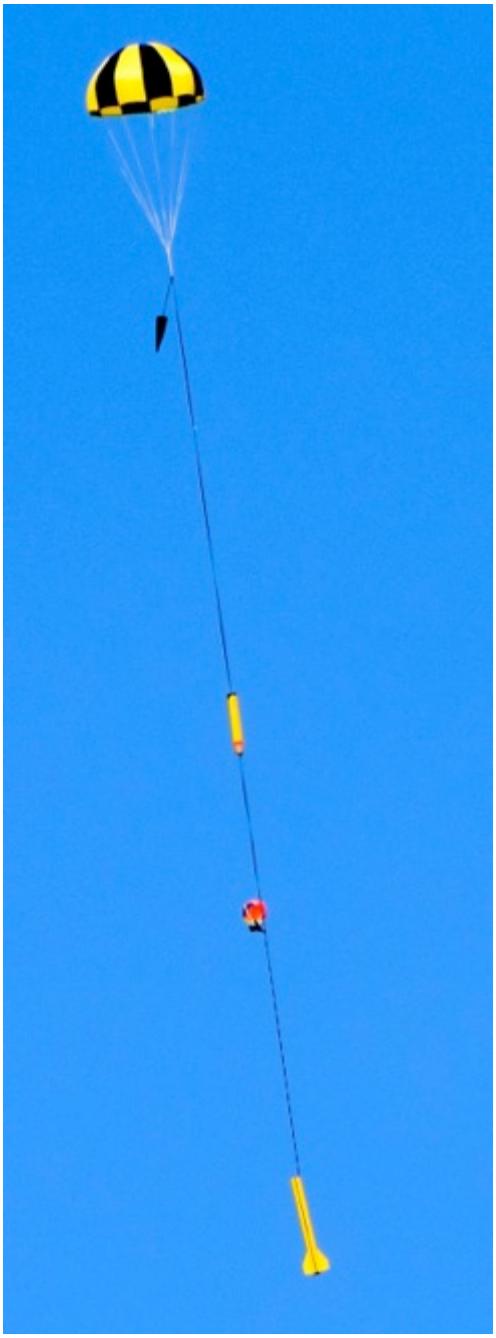
On the down side, it was unseasonably hot again this year, but with the exception of a bit of wind and dust on Saturday afternoon, we had three great days of flying. Many of the larger projects are flown up to a mile from the range head and unless you're out there when its being flown, the only info about the rocket you'll get is when they announce it right before the countdown.

We'll concentrate on some events that we were able to get pics of and rely on other particpants to supply links to photo pages of their projects.

First up is the "The Gerlach Project" which was an effort to bring model rocketry to the kids in the Gerlach School, all ten of them. With rocket kits and motors donated by MDRA and Quest Rocketry the students had a two-day building session with Tom Blazanin and learned the basics of model rocketry while they each built two rockets. On the third day the school held its first Rocket Launch in the football field behind the school. The students flew each of their rockets and some enthusiastic students flew more than once.

Chris Pearson donated all the LOC/Precision components to build a 5.5" diameter rocket; nine feet long. Dave Rose assembled it and Tom Blazanin painted it. Dave also fabricated a 3" L897 motor to power the christened "GERLACH K-12 ROCKETRY".

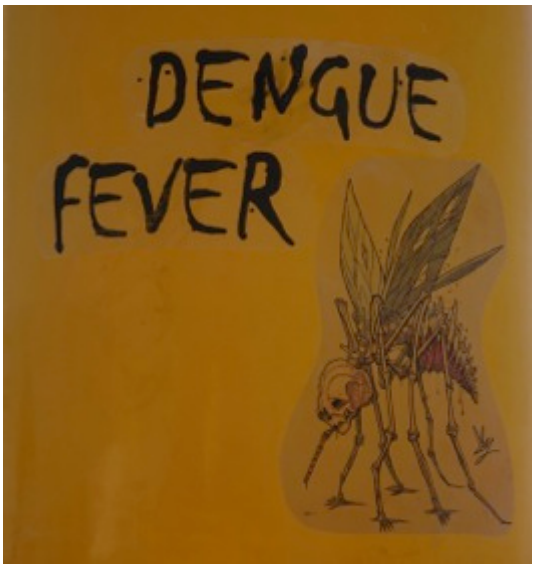
The kids where taught everything about the rocket and had the rocket on display at the Balls flight line and answered all questions people asked about their school rocket before it was taken out on the range for launch.



Tripoli Gerlach member Larry Benek had the honor to prep the K-12 on the pad and the kids screamed (below) as the K-12 headed skyward (far left) in a textbook flight to 8,639 feet with a perfect recovery under chute (center).

The recovered rocket was donated to the Gerlach school and will be displayed in the school building.

Plans are already being made for another, larger rocket to be constructed for next years launch.

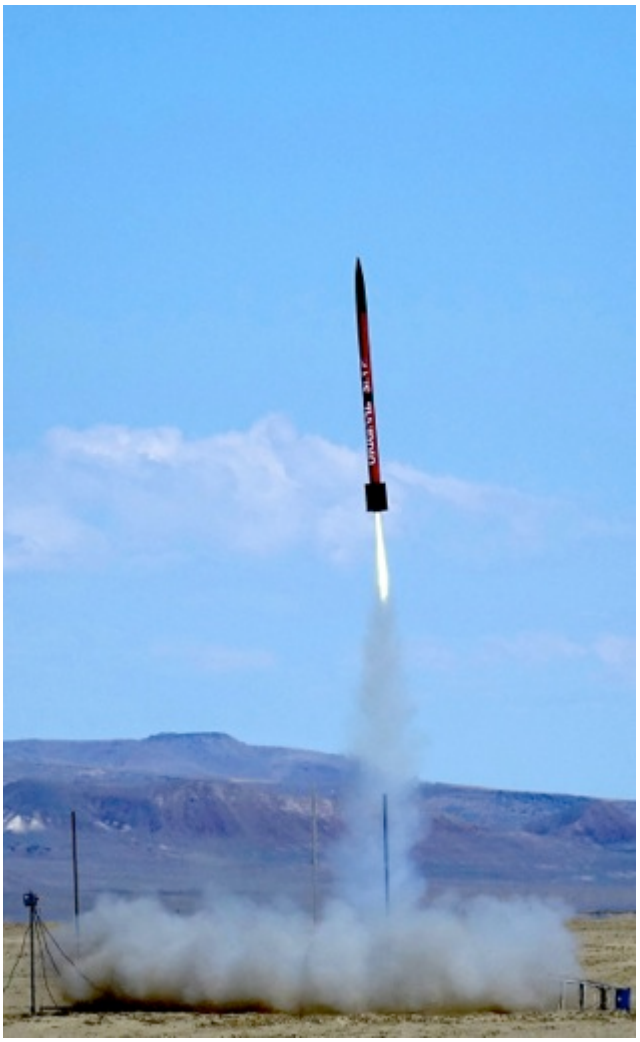


This was a typical large scale project: Jim Cornwell's Dengue Fever Mosquito (left). Based, of course on the Estes Mosquito, except on mega-steroids! That rocket is actually about 12 feet tall!

Powered by an eight inch diameter O7500 motor, shown (below left) with Jim, it was one of the few large scale projects I actually got photos of at take-off.

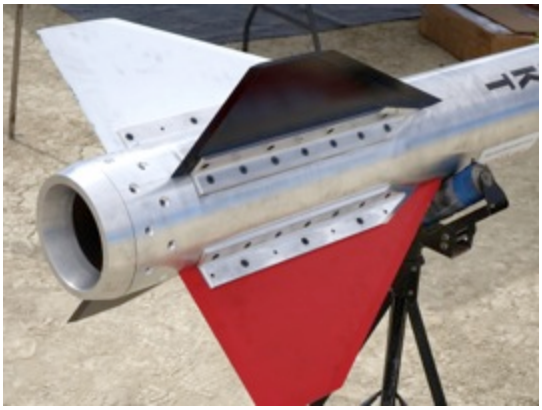
George Pike (left) poses with his 5.3” diameter tube-fin rocket named “Original Sin” on the launch pad.

Flown with a 98mm Research 90% M1900 Slow Green motor, the rocket took off perfectly (right) but stripped the fin-tube off at about 2500 feet and then proceeded to sky-write until the motor burned out. The recovery system deployed and the airframe was recovered safely but slightly damaged.



NOTRA member Ken Good (above left) on the way out to the launch pad with his “Hermes” 4” diameter rocket powered by a Research M2107 NASSA Red motor, which flew to 17,863 ft. at Mach 2.1. Chris Pearson (above right) proudly poses with his newly acquired Darque Star “Obsidian” almost all aluminum rocket. Chris will be returning with it next year to fly it with a baby N motor. Fully loaded with propellant it would come out to be an “O” motor.

Ken Finwall (left) poses with an original US Rockets “Swarm” kit. The rocket was equipped with a central 3” Research Blue motor and the 12 (yes, 12) 29mm outboards (above) consisting of 6-G40 and 6-G80 motors were timed to air start in a staggered sequence. Unfortunately, due to an electronics problem, the outboard motors didn’t air start, but the rocket had a good flight on the central main motor and was recovered safely.



Pictured (above left) is what I believe was the Q10,000 project. And another pic showing the business end of the rocket (above right). I am hoping to get more info from the project flyers.

I was hoping that more people would have posted links to their Balls-24 photo pages by now. We will send you the links as more go up on the web.

Here is a link to the video of James Donald’s 110K ft. launch: https://youtu.be/uBkfVT14S0Q
And here is a link to the pictures he took at Balls: https://traphx-jd.smugmug.com/Balls-24/

Here is a link to the web site for Photos by Nadine: http://photosbynadine.com
Her web site is a bit out of date, but you can order the 2016 Rockets of High Power calendar now. They make great holiday gifts for your favorite rocketeer!

Photos by Chris Pearson and David Wilkins