

November Launch Report

Last weekend NOTRA had a launch at the Kleinhenz/O'Reilly launch complex in Middlefield. It was a last minute announcement as the crop of corn on the field had only been harvested on Thursday. It was scheduled the same weekend as an OAMC launch, but only one NOTRA member made it to Springfield to fly. As it turned out, the weather conditions were much better up north, with broken clouds at 10K feet and moderate winds whereas Springfield was stuck with an 1100 foot cloud ceiling which didn't allow much high-power stuff to be flown.

This launch was the first time that Tom Blazanin and Jim Callahan, members of Tripoli Pittsburgh attended, if only to watch. Dave Cooper also came from Warren. Several MTMA members also were there to fly along with a number of spectators. This was the first NOTRA launch held under the new TRA rules provision that allows NAR-only members to fly at a TRA Research launch. The weather was chilly with winds gusting to 7 mph, but the field was dry as they didn't get any of the snow those of us who live further west had gotten earlier in the week.



First off the pads was Dan Ledenican PML kit flown with a CTI G106 sparky motor (left). Because of the concern of field fires caused by sparky motors at other launches, we took the precaution of having a 5 gallon water fire extinguisher on hand. Fortunately, it was not needed.

Second off the pads was Andrew Kleinhenz' "Blue Bird of Happiness" flown on an AT J275 (right). Being concerned about a low thrust motor and weather cocking, Andrew decided to launch it straight up. It had a great flight to almost 4K feet; unfortunately, it went straight up and landed in tall trees at the north end of the field. It took him several hours to get it down. Andrew also flew an Estes Nike Smoke with an AT F40 motor. Andrew complained that guys who were using apogee ejection were keeping their rockets on the field but even though he used electronics, he wound up in the trees!



Jim Seibyl from MTMA did his L1 certification flight. The first attempt was thwarted by a misplaced O-ring causing the pyro ejection charge to fire on motor start-up. Fortunately, little damage was done to the rocket, and it didn't even get high enough for the electronics to arm, so after the flight it was sitting on the ground happily

beeping with neither ejection charge being fired. At least Jim didn't have to re-prepare the AV bay! The second flight was picture perfect and Jim became a newly minted L1 flier.

Bruce Levison flew his highly modified Aerotech Arcas HV on an ATG75J but lost the nosecone, which apparently was cut through by the 200lb capacity hemp shock cord he had it tied to in the upper payload section. He later spotted the nose cone far away in the plowed field next to where we were flying but decided to order a new LOC nose cone instead of going after it in the waning sunlight. Next, he flew his Aerotech Astrobee D on an AT H165R. The delay was too long and the parachute ejected a few seconds past apogee resulting in a four inch long zipper on the upper end of the body tube.



I brought three rockets to fly, first was my blue Crayola rocket (left) flown on a Road Runner F60, second was my 3" modified hybrid rocket flown on a Research 54mm J375 using NASSA K2 Fast propellant which hit 2600 feet. The third was my 4" diameter Katana EX (right), autographed by Burt Rutan, flying a Research J435 also using Fast propellant. Because of the angle we had to use to keep the rockets on the field it hit only 4K feet. I'm glad I didn't use the K motor I brought for it, as it probably would have broken the waiver. Both rockets landed safely on the field, however far away.



David Sears was the last flight of the day with his HyperLOC 835 kit flown with a 54mm Research J450-ish white motor. I had a great flight but it landed right on the edge of the trees on the south side of the field. By this time it was almost sundown and I left before he retrieved it. It might have had to wait until Sunday to be recovered.

The days flying was interrupted by Cheryl Klenhenz discovering three white kittens that had been abandoned on the farm several days earlier (right). I (Chris) decided to take them home and get them adopted. Happily the veterinarian says they are all healthy and will be going to their forever home tomorrow.

