


# TRIPOLI

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Official Newsletter of Prefecture #24 of the Tripoli Rocketry Association, Inc.

February 1995

## January 96 Launch by Dave Pacheco

The morning of January 20th, 1996 was clear and a little chilly. The previous few days had threatened bad weather, but it was perfect for the launch. When I arrived at the lake bed Les Derkowitz and Gary Rosenfield were hoping other members would be there to fly because they didn't bring any rockets for the January launch. While we waited for the others to arrive, we attempted to assemble the club's half inch launcher. This proved to be no mean feat in the morning chill. Since none of us had put this launcher together before, we were a little surprised to find how difficult it was.

While assembling the launcher we noticed a group of people gathering at the north end of the lake. Up until this time we seemed to be the only ones there. Rocket weather is also RC and jumping weather. We often see jumpers on Saturday mornings at the lake (as well as RC flyers). The jumpers chase group was setting up at the north end and just a bit more to the west another group was setting up. A Blazer raced out toward us with its headlights on and a good sized rooster tail. We were glad to see someone else. A gentleman got out of this car and asked us where a good place to fly was. We all kind of looked at each other and told him where the R/C people usually are. He thanked us and appeared to find his own kind later on.

After assembling the fiendishly designed launcher, we heard a rocket go off at one of the other groups. Blaine had arrived by then and we ended up sending Gary off as an emissary to the other group.

In the mean time, I had discovered that I had CA'd something that should not have been CA'd in my haste before

the launch. After some minor surgery my slightly shorter rockets were ready.

Brent showed up (coming from the other rocket group) and invited us to join the main group. We assured him we were not hostile, but merely embarrassed, and would be there soon. We loaded up the launcher in the back of the truck and crept to the other site.

While we were packing we heard, and saw, a wiggly rocket go up in an eerily familiar way (Steve's son deserves a new rocket).

Brian flew something interesting a little later. The rocket stayed on the pad but the motor pin wheeled into the air leaving a nice smoke trail about twenty feet over our heads. While this went on, Brent was busy putting together his J135 motor for his new Planet Design Orbiter (scratch built).

I started to assemble my new/old "Ultimate." This was the third incarnation for this particular set of fins. This time I had built the rocket with no centering rings.

Steve made history when he flew his rocket camera with an Aerotech Hybrid motor (supplied by Gary). Steve is getting quite proficient at camera rockets, including low earth orbits. We didn't know what he was up to because there was no announcement, but the launch was quite aggressive.

Brian again flew something a little smaller than usual and the result was a lawn dart. Brian's flights are usually perfect and two failures in one launch day show that even the best of us have something go wrong occasionally.

I finally got the "Ultimate" together with Blaine and Rick's help. It had a core H180 with 3 air start G64s and Adept alt2s50k (wishful thinking) and x-form drogue and a 5 foot main.

There was more stuff to go wrong on this flight than any maiden flight I'd tried to date. Blaine and Rick helped get the rocket on the pad and we all looked at each other and asked each other "Did we forget anything?" We didn't know but we figured we would soon find out.

We alerted all those in attendance including a family on a day trip that this was a heads up flight. The countdown went smoothly with no problems. I pressed the button at zero and the rocket leapt from the pad. After replays of the last two motor explosions on previous flights, my heart failing, an estimation of the size hole the rocket might leave in the ground, a replay of my friends asking "just why on earth do you waste your time and money on those things," a mental estimate on the replacement cost of all that hardware and electronics and recovery system parts, the air start motors lit with a cloud of smoke. The rocket continued to climb and started down, the drogue deployed. After a few seconds my heart restarted, the hole filled in and the replacement cost kept going down. At about 750 feet the main deployed and lowered everything gently to the ground.

Rick raced to the rocket and asked Blaine and me if we wanted a ride. "No, we'll walk; it's part of the celebration." Blaine and I exchanged high fives at least twice. It doesn't get any better than this. If they don't understand, I can't explain it.

Brent had finished prepping his motor and found out he needed a different forward closure for his motor (no one had one). He ended up borrowing a J275 from Brian and putting it together (thanks Brian!). After the walk

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to the launcher Brent tried to place his rocket on the pad only to discover a little epoxy had filled in the lug. As a result the lug popped off when he tried to get the rocket on the rod. We went back and CA'ed and taped it, but again at the pad it popped off. Finally we ended up taping on a new lug which looked mighty fine on his nice paint job. Back on the pad everything worked mechanically. On the first launch attempt, the Copperhead didn't fire. Cleaning the clips didn't help on the second attempt. Blaine volunteered an electric match which he guaranteed to light the thing. After installing it we had our third failure to ignite the motor (although we heard the pop as the match ignited). Finally Les offered his low-tech solution of a thermalite igniter. I guess I must be 'low-tech' then.

This time the igniter worked perfectly. Brent's rocket really jumped off with the J275 (thanks to Brian for the loan of the motor). A perfect match for this rocket. The rocket coasted and the parachute came out about three seconds too early. But things held together. Brent jumped in his car and went after it.

Blaine had been hiding a Kosdon something something in a PML something. He finally got it prepped and went out to launch it. It turned out to be a Dirty Harry reload and matched the rocket perfectly. Except for the blue chute. Why do chute makers make them in blue? And why are they supplied in kits? (Wrong+Wrong+?).

I had one rocket left, the re-shred-a-rator. I shot it on a J460 short with 25 feet of kevlar shock cord. The club has decided that bungee, elastic and rubber shock cords are passé—a thing left over from our A, B, C and D days. Now we make a couple of loops of climbing strap and masking tape it. Then we add a couple of more loops and tape it until the whole length is taped. Usually 30 to 60 feet of strap. The strap is lighter and smaller and hasn't failed this way.

The rocket stayed together this time except the screw eye pulled out of the nose cone. Next time I will cut a small hatch in the nose cone big enough for a fender washer and nut to bolt on the screw eye.

Brent returned with the Planet Design Orbiter. It had zippered the tube because of the short delay.

That more or less ended flying that day. The day started to chill and a mild wind was starting up. The RC guys were gone and the jumpers were all done. We would go if only we could figure out how how to get that &%#\$@ launcher taken apart.

*Editor's Note: If you have photos for a launch I would like to borrow them for the newsletter. Thanks!*

## Leadership List

President ..... Leslie Derkovitz • 875-1904  
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Prefect ..... Tom Blazanin • 388-9644  
Newsletter Editor ..... Brent McNeely • 873-8222

## Launch Dates

February 17 ..... El Dorado Dry Lake Bed  
March 16 ..... Delamar Dry Lake Bed  
May 18 ..... El Dorado Dry Lake Bed  
June 22 ..... El Dorado Dry Lake Bed  
July 20 ..... El Dorado Dry Lake Bed  
August 17 ..... El Dorado Dry Lake Bed

## Meeting Dates

Every Thursday prior to a launch date

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