

TRIPOLI

Vegas

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

September 1996

Balls '96 Report

by Les Derkovitz

For those of you who couldn't attend "Balls" this year, you missed both some awesome flights and some disappointing weather. This wind did come up Friday afternoon and even more on Saturday afternoon. Sunday started off as a big blow, so we packed up and took off and I doubt if anything worthwhile got off that day. (editor's note: about 10:30 on Sunday the wind died to an absolute calm and many rockets flew including Jim Hart's V2 on an M and the rocket car drag race between Brent's Landshark and Ky Michaelson's rocket car). Now for the good stuff.

A team from different areas in the country put up an R motor rocket on Friday morning. It was over a two year project,

costing in excess of \$20,000 and those guys paid the long distance phone bill was most of it. It was a 600 plus pound, all aluminum bird that was projected to get to 100,000 feet. It carried on board a video camera and a GPS receiver which were both linked to a ground station. Did it work, you ask—man did it ever. They had spectators about one mile from the pad which was hard to see

until ignition. At that point there was a big dust cloud forming that the rocket jumped out of for a perfect straight arrow flight. There was a roar—not that "hiss" like you hear from the smaller flights. Then over the CB came excited outbursts: "There's the curve of the earth," and "there's outer space." The down link fed video through apogee at the edge of space. The only negative was that the recover didn't work so the rocket came in ballistic about three miles from the pad. It was not only ballistic, but super sonic. First there was the sonic boom followed by the impact. The boom was loud. Last I knew, the team was going to rent a back hoe to dig it out of the six foot crater.

Balls was the place to be if you like to see and hear M powered rockets fly. They were going off about as often as regular rockets at one of our club launches. There were no really "big" projects this year like those 30 footers or 1,000 pounders. Instead there was a showing of traditional rockets high power rockets.

One notable flight was Ky Michaelson's P motor rocket. It was also all aluminum with the propellant grains cast by Urinsco and Johnson. Ky did the machine work on the motor and airframe. This rocket jammed out of its tower just a little farther out than the M line, and being that close to a P motor was a thrill. It was a perfect straight arrow flight which was tracked by one of the trackers, but lost in the sun by the other. Chuck Rogers said that based on the one closed track, altitude was somewhere between 46,000 and 80,000 feet. Ky will probably take the 46,000 and claim the record from Frank. What made this a very special flight was that recovery was 100% successful. It came down in two pieces—booster on one Kevlar chute and the nose on the other chute. The tracking smoke lasted till almost touchdown so everyone could see where it landed. With these two big flights, it's the first time motors bigger than an O were flown without going "bang." If you had to miss this Balls, I hope you get to see the next one.

**Come and Vote on our
Thursday Meeting
September 19th**

From the Editor

Can you believe it? This is the second newsletter now that has been delivered on time. We now have the club membership database on my computer which means I'm running labels and mailing the thing. Oh, this also means that if the newsletter is late, you know who to blame—me!

Hobby Town Discontinues High Power

Some sad news for club members—Hobbytown has quit selling and carrying high power rocket motors. However, they will still be selling the rocket kits and the lower powered consumer Aerotech motors. Seems that Ron Denton managed to buy out the entire stock of high power rocket motors (because Hobbytown wanted out). I imagine that Ron is set for life with rocket motors. If you ask nice, he might even sell you one of his extras at garage sale prices. It appears that the only local place to get high power motors will be Aerotech, the alternative being mail order.

National Rocket Car Association

At Balls the National Rocket Car Association got its head start with a drag race between Ky Michaelson and Brent McNeely. See Brent for an application or info on the new organization or check out the website at: wizard.com/~rocketcar.

Rocket Car Dragrace: Rocketman vs. Landshark

Brent's Landshark (which ran at the club launch at Delamar in May) and Ky Michaelson's rocketman rocket car ran a race on Sunday afternoon. Ky had challenged Brent to a drag race after seeing the Landshark run at Delamar. The drag race was to take place at Balls with matched motors, a finish line of 660 ft, identical Aerotech K-185 motors, with both cars running on 2,000 feet of cable. After the countdown, power surged out to the ignitors. Brent's motor lit about a second or two before Ky's. The Landshark was already about 30 feet out and picking up speed before Ky's car started to move. Needless to say, the Landshark with the decisive head start crossed the finish line well ahead of Ky's rocket car.

Renew Your Membership!

Many of our club members have not renewed their membership for the next year. If you have not renewed your membership you will be dropped from our mailing list. Please call Lance at 262-9131 if you have any questions about your status.

Visit Tripoli Las Vegas on the Internet
wizard.com/~planetds

Leadership List

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Launch Dates

September 21 El Dorado Dry Lake Bed
October 19..... El Dorado Dry Lake Bed
November 23-24..... El Dorado Dry Lake Bed
December 21..... El Dorado Dry Lake Bed

Meeting Dates

Every Thursday prior to a launch date

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