

October 1, 2009
Volume 2, Issue 5

MTMA FLYER



Official Newsletter of the Mantua Township Missile Agency, NAR Section 606, Aurora, Ohio

Special Aurora
Fall Festival Edition

Is there life after
Estes?

History of
MTMA

Night Launch
4 Report

2009-2010 Launch
Calendar



From Your Sometimes Senile Editor

By Mike Nowak

Mike Nowak
NAR 19203

Is there life after Estes?

If there is a third certainty in life, it is that if you fly model rockets, you must have flown something sold by Estes. Estes kits and motors are readily available at Wal-Mart, Michael's and Hobby Lobby, not to mention your local hobby shop (if you can find one). It is sad to say that a significant proportion of modelers stop at that level as well. Boy, are they missing a lot.

One could easily miss out on the variety of model rockets offered by other manufacturers, high power rocketry, model rocketry competition, and other aspects of our hobby.

The good news is the internet. You can Google "Model Rocketry" and find hundreds of links to groups and manufacturers of kits, motors and supplies. These smaller manufacturers share a lot of unique ideas, but often have short runs of existence, never getting out of the garage or basement that they started from. Currently, my personal favorites are SEMROC, FlisKits, Balsa Machining Service, ASP - Aerospace Specialty, QCR, and LOC Precision. I am sure everyone has their own unique list of personal favorites. Rocketry Planet is another great place to get started. So is the National Association of Rocketry's website, NAR.org.

Sometimes there is no substitution for that human interaction. Sometimes you don't know what you don't know. That's where clubs like MTMA become useful. I still find that I can learn more in 10 minutes talking to someone that has special knowledge in an area of rocketry than I can spending hours on the internet. Every club has its culture, its personality. MTMA is family and fun oriented. We all like building and flying and sharing our experience with other members. This can really enhance your experience with the hobby, not to mention the friendships that you can make along the way.

This year, we will be spending time at the Aurora Fall Festival and hosting a day of flying as well. The hope is that we capture the interest of a few new members to share in the experience.

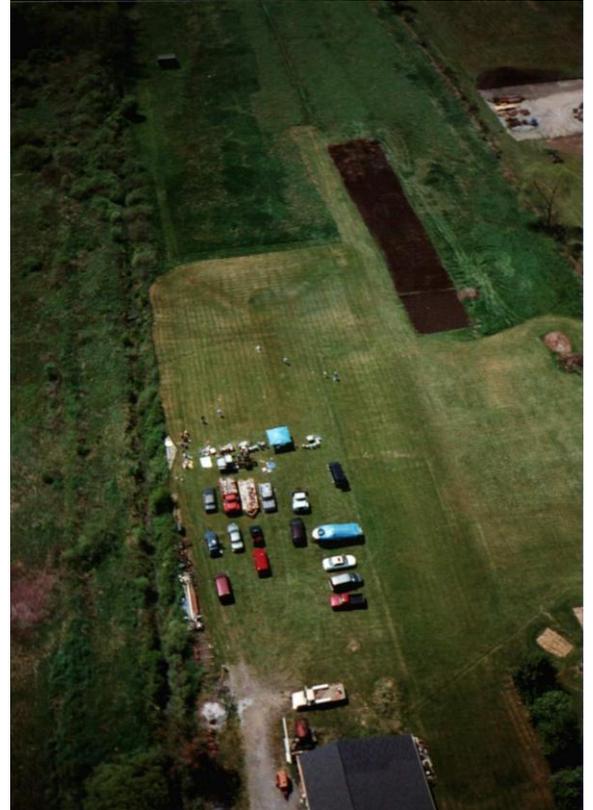
Cover Photo: *Daniel Cutlip's Successful Level 2 Certification Flight Heads Skyward on a J350 at GLRMR-IX*

A History of MTMA

By Mark Recktenwald and Mike Nowak

The Mantua Township Missile Agency (MTMA) was formed in the Spring of 1999, from a collection of rocketeers who met through the Usenet Newsgroup rec.models.rockets (RMR). Many of us posted there on a regular basis for a few years before and after that. One of the founding members of the MTMA, Tod Hilty, was a frequent contributor on RMR. In 1998, I ran across some postings on RMR by Tod that led me to believe he lived in the area. I did an internet search and found that he lived in Mantua, about 20 miles away from me. I sent him an e-mail and found that we both had business dealings in Kent. He and I met a few times in Kent, exchanged more e-mails, and finally decided to hold a local rocket get-together. We had found Chuck Straka through RMR, and Tod was also in contact with local fliers Bruce Levison (a former NIRA Member) and Randy Miller.

Our first launch was held on May 16, 1999, at a former sod farm (Pichan's field) in Mantua Township, Portage County, Ohio. Our old launch reports, announcements, and other club banter can be found on Google's archive of RMR with a search for "MTMA" in the subject header. The following fliers were in attendance for that inaugural launch: Tod Hilty, Mark Recktenwald, Chuck Straka, Bruce Levison, Randy Miller, and Stan Mikush (Randy's brother-in-law). There were quite a few non-flying observers on-hand as well: Tracy Laux (a friend of Tod's), and all of our wives and children. Everything culminated with burgers, weenies, side dishes, and home brew at Tod's house afterward.



Aerial view of MTMA's First Launch at Pichan's Field

Two more launches were held in Mantua that summer. In the fall, we held two launches at the Summit County Fairgrounds field. After our first launch there on September 25, 1999, everyone came over to my house for another "grub and suds" and we watched as the kids launch a few more small rockets in my backyard. Barry Lynch was added to the ranks of MTMA member after we read a post from him on RMR regarding a basement bomber accident here in NEO in October 1999.



MTMA's First Launch at Pichan's Field

On January 26, 2000, The MTMA sent an application to the NAR for the Charter of MTMA as a NAR Section. Tod Hilty was listed on the application as the President with Randy Miller as the Advisor. At an organizational meeting on March 13, 2000, we decided to hold bimonthly section meetings on the last Monday of odd-numbered months. It was also decided to hold monthly launches on the second Sunday of each month with rain dates of the fourth Sunday of

each month. This schedule was chosen specifically to alternate with the Skybusters' launch dates of the first and third weekends of each month. At our first (and only) bi-monthly meeting on March 27, 2000, the MTMA Bylaws were ratified unanimously. Additional Section officers were chosen to round out the slate. The full list of officers was:

Tod Hilty, President

Randy Miller, Advisor

Chuck Straka, V.P./Secretary

Mark Recktenwald, V.P./Secretary

Stan Mikush, Treasurer

We never did get around to having any more bi-monthly meetings. Most of us had families with small children, and the casual once-a-month rocket-picnic launches were what most of us were interested in.

The MTMA held its first launch as an official NAR Section on Sunday, April 30, 2000. This was also the first launch at our new Pioneer Trail site in Mantua Township, an un-planted farm field. The weather was excellent, summer-like and not too windy. A lot of great people showed up with a lot of great rockets for a great launch! This launch was also the public debut of the club's first rack launcher, a four pad system built by MTMA member Chuck Straka that he named "Trigger" that is still tucked away in his garage. The twelve launches held in 2000 were divided between the Summit County Fairgrounds field and the Pioneer Trail field.



Participants at MTMA's Second Launch

On September 20, 2000, the MTMA Group was created on eGroups (now Yahoo! Groups), to manage our e-mail list. Prior to that, the list was maintained manually and

had grown to over 60 addresses.

Most of the nine launches held in 2001 were scheduled at the Pioneer Trail field; however, during a Level 2 certification flight on October 28, 2001, David Donald Waner's 2.1-inch-diameter rocket failed to eject and pranged an El Camino about a half-mile down the road. We never flew at the Pioneer Trail field again. During 2001, MTMA members Wolfram (Wolf) von Kiparski (past President), Larry Gracefo (past Vice President), and Mike Leffler (past Secretary) joined the club.

On July 14, 2002, the MTMA held its first model rocket competition event, the Ohio Open Rocket Tournament, at the Summit County Fairgrounds field. Details of the events and results can be found at <http://home.windstream.net/astronwolf/oort1.html>. The MTMA held four other launches in 2002, all of them at the Summit County Fairgrounds field.

In April of 2003, Wolf secured a new high-power capable field in Montville Township, Geauga County, Ohio. The Montville field is a large open field, formerly farmed, located on the south side of U.S. Route 6. All five of the 2003 launches were held at the Montville field. Two competition events were held there in 2003, the NEO Local Meet on July 26 and the Ohio Open Rocket Tournament-2 between September 13 and November 22. Details of the events and results of these meets can be found at <http://home.windstream.net/astronwolf/neolocal1.html> and <http://home.windstream.net/astronwolf/oort2.html> respectively.

Very few members from the Medina/Akron/Kent area made the trek to the Montville field in 2003 and the Pioneer Trail field was lost. Folks were still not sure of the impacts of new BATF regulations and motors were scarce due to the Aerotech fire. All of these factors led to a complete cessation of launching in 2004.

Wishing to return to launching, I posted a message to the MTMA Yahoo! Group in May of 2005 inviting all interested members to meet me at the Stow High School to join in a Boy Scout Space Exploration Merit Badge launch I was running for my son's Boy Scout Troop. Current MTMA President Bruce Levison showed up with his clan and a Skybusters Dad and his two sons showed up as well. A section meeting was scheduled for June, officers were elected, launch dates at the Summit County Fairgrounds field were approved by the Summit County Agricultural Society, and the MTMA was back in the rocket business! Seven launches were held at the Fairgrounds in 2005.

A new element was added to the MTMA experience in 2006: our first ever Night Launch was held at Pichan's field in Mantua Township. Rockets ranging from A to G wowed the crowd through an afternoon to evening launch. A fireworks display by the neighbors at their 4th of July picnic added to the excitement. Nine other launches were held that year at the Summit County Fairgrounds field and the membership quickly grew.

Another first occurred in 2006; the MTMA published its first newsletter, MTMA Flyer, which can be viewed on our website.

Eleven launches were held in 2007, ten of them at the Summit County Fairgrounds field, while our second annual Night Launch was held at Pichan's. Our night launch was a little later in July than the previous year, so there were no fireworks to enjoy this time.

Most of you are familiar with saga surrounding the Summit County Fairgrounds field in 2008 and the work done to secure permission at the Harmon Flying field in Aurora so I won't go into that again. For those unfamiliar with the story, see the cover article in MTMA Flyer Volume 2, Issue 1 located on the MTMA website.

In 2008, we held a 9th Anniversary launch and our third annual Night Launch at Pichan's field and eight other launches at the Harmon Flying Field in Aurora. The night launch was held on July 5th, so the neighbors once again put on a spectacular fireworks display.

2009 has been an exciting year. We changed our official website to www.mtmarocketry.org. In addition to hosting sport launches twice monthly, beginning in March, MTMA became active in hosting and attending NAR sanctioned competition at the Harmon Flying Field in Aurora. We were able to fly our 10th anniversary launch at Pichan's, but two night launch attempts were cancelled due to inclement weather. Competition rocketry has returned to the MTMA in a big way. Three open meets and the Ray Harmon Memorial Regional Meet were flown at the Harmon Flying field. Contestants from out of state, including Pennsylvania and New York attended, and



Andrew Kleinhenz Anxiously awaits his Level 1 Certification flight at GLRMR-IX

two National Champions were participants. MTMA was well represented at NARAM-51 in Johnstown, PA. Rachel Nowak placed third in A Division, Brian Guzek won the B Division National Championship and Mike and Nick Nowak, competing as the Jedi Knights, placed 6th in T Division. Overall, MTMA placed first in Ohio and 6th nationally.

We also participated at Skybusters' GLRMR-IX. Speaking of GLRMR-IX, it must be noted that three MTMA members successfully completed high-power certifications in Amherst this year. Andrew Kleinhenz and Ted Schaetzle certified Level 1, while MTMA Treasurer Dan Cutlip certified Level 2.

MTMA President Bruce Levison successfully completed high power Level 1 Certification at LDRS. Congratulations!

I'll wrap up this retrospective with a retrospective. Of the original MTMA members, Bruce Levison and I are the only ones still active in the club. Tod Hilty still flies rockets but mostly with his children's scout troop and schools. Chuck Straka may not have flown a rocket in years, but he is one of the judges for the LAC Newsletter Award. Stan Mikush flew with Skybusters for awhile after the loss of the Pioneer Trail field but hasn't been active in a few years. I am sure Tracy Laux is still observing something, somewhere, but he no longer observes our rocket launches. Sadly, Randy Miller passed away suddenly on October 21, 2007. Perhaps he can put in a good word for us with the Rocket Gods and help keep our rockets out of the rocket-eating trees in Aurora!



Rachel Nowak, 2nd from Left, with Her 3rd Place A Division Trophy at NARAM 51

Report on Night Launch 4

By Mark Recktenwald

Two attempts were made to hold our annual Night Launch in July at the Pichan field in Mantua Township, but both were cancelled due to heavy rain earlier in the day of the launch and soggy field conditions.

Special permission was obtained from Aurora Parks & Recreation Director Mr. James Kraus to hold our Fourth Annual Night Launch at the Harmon Flying Field in Aurora on the evening of Saturday, September 12, 2009, from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm.

Weather conditions during the early part of the day were clear and warm, but a bit breezy. Wind speeds were forecast to drop in the early evening and after sundown. The setup crew arrived at 6 o'clock to set up the launchers and attach glow sticks to the equipment and all obstructions on the field. By 7 o'clock, a fairly large crowd had gathered to get in some daylight launches in the last minutes before sundown.

Flying was suspended just before sundown for a safety briefing with all in attendance. Night launch rules were explained to all; the most critical being that all rockets must be continuously illuminated with glow sticks, strobes, LEDs, etc. visible from all sides of the rocket. Spectators

were asked to take a seat, personal flashlights were equipped with filter material, the glow sticks throughout the field were activated, and the new launch control light source was switched on. Previous Night Launches at Pichan's in Mantua Township had the benefit of nearby electrical power for lighting in the range safety/launch control area. With no such luxury at the Harmon Flying Field (so far the only drawback to this lovely facility), a battery-powered low intensity light hood was fabricated to illuminate the launch control panel and the safety check-in table.

Over the next three hours, a variety of interesting flying spacecraft were presented for check-in and launching. The rocket illumination source of choice this year was the glow stick (or several glow sticks) in clear payload bays or secured to the outside of otherwise standard rockets. A handful of rockets were flown with steady-burning or flashing LEDs. MTMA member Ted Schaezle was the most prepared for the event as he flew over a half-dozen different models with various means of illumination. Ted also provided some of the highest flying models during the Night Launch with at least two cluster models including a cluster of three D-motors! MTMA President Bruce Levison and the author brought out the obligatory Estes Hijax models. A simple LED blinker or glow stick in this model's clear payload bay make it an excellent night flyer in stock-built form. The author also brought along a couple saucers loaded with LEDs-- the first was his previously-flown saucer made from Hefty Serve 'N Store Bowls with 16 assorted color LEDs added for this event. The author's second saucer was made from a plastic cake container from the Giant Eagle Bakery. This 11-inch-diameter saucer features a clear cover and a 29 mm motor mount. Internally-equipped with blinking high-intensity blue LEDs and steady burning yellow LEDs, this saucer was launched on a 7-second-burn Apogee F10 motor!

The Night Launch was a great success. Two new members joined the club that evening. There were a total of 10 paid families and over 25 people. Lots of friends and family came to watch. Counting daytime and night launches together, over 53 flights were made--so much more than anyone expected that we ran out of Flight Cards and just started keeping a tally count at the safety check-in table. We launched until about 10:45 and were off the field around 11:15. We had no visits from any of the neighbors nor were there any complaints.

With the success of this Night Launch at the Aurora Field, there was talk of possibly holding two Night Launches next year, at Pichan's in Mantua Township in July and at the Harmon Flying Field in Aurora in September.

2009–2010 Launch Windows

October 10	Aurora Fall Festival	Sunny Lake Park
October 11	Fall Meet and Sport Launch	Harmon Flying Field
October 24	Launch	Harmon Flying Field
October 31	Launch	Harmon Flying Field
November 14	Launch	Harmon Flying Field
November 27	Annual Turkey Shoot	Harmon Flying Field
December 12	Launch	Harmon Flying Field
Jan 9, 2010	Section Annual Meeting	Twinsburg Library
May, 2010	National Sport Launch	Alamogordo, NM
July, 2010	NARAM-52	Pueblo, CO

"To get the most up to date launch information (including rainout dates), check our website www.mtmarocketry.org or subscribe to our Yahoo Group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MTMA/> and receive instant email updates."

MTMA Flyer

The official newsletter of the Mantua Township Missile Agency, published eight times each year (we hope!)

MTMA Officers for 2009:

President: Bruce Levison
teflonrocketry1@yahoo.com

V.P./Advisor: Mark Recktenwald
markrecktenwald@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Daniel Cutlip
danielcutlip@yahoo.com

Secretary/Newsletter Editor: Mike Nowak
MikeMNowak@gmail.com

MTMA Flyer
Mike Nowak
2349 Coventry Road
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

