

January 2015

# WHAT'S UP



Newsletter of the Syracuse Rocket Club / NAR section 566  
Volume 10 Number 1



## WHAT'S UP WITH *WHAT'S UP*

What's this? *What's Up!* Right. The official newsletter of the Syracuse Rocket Club, *What's Up*, is back again after an absence of a couple years: Back with a new editor, a redesign (a work in progress), and the same old goal: to keep the members, other clubs, and anyone else curious enough to click the link abreast of what's happened, what's happening, and what's going to happen in hobby rocketry in central New York.

I'm making this up as I go, and nothing's set in stone. But I'd like to get an issue out every three months or so — preferably not much less often and maybe a little more. I'll be including launch

reports, recaps of monthly meetings, and announcements of club events. Of course. But other stuff too... Kit reviews, anyone? Swap section? Notes on what we're building? Scale data? Rocketry-related fiction? Humor? Cartoons? I'm open to suggestions.

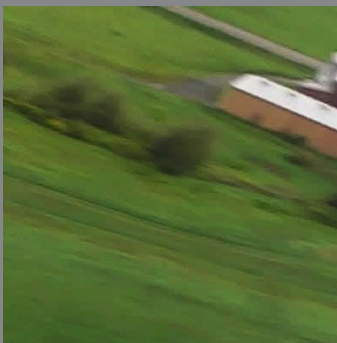
Right about here in your traditional "Hi, I'm your new editor" piece one typically inserts the phrase "This is YOUR newsletter" followed by a plea for people to submit articles and photos. And since it's traditional and you've all read it before, I won't belabor it. I'll just say, if you've got anything, please send it! If you want to

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3... 2... 1...



## Flying at Weigand's Field

Top: Abby Riffle preps a Flying Colors. Middle: Rich Holmes's Bad Cholesterol takes off. Bottom: A view of the field and barn from the top.

# 2014: THE LAUNCHES

*The Editor apologizes for the editor-centric nature of the following report. Had he known he was going to be doing this summary, he would have taken more notes on what other people were doing, too.*

The club launches of 2014 were notable for a number of reasons, but number of flights, number of motors, total impulse, and other such statistics are not among them, as a comparison of the 2013 and 2014 stats (page ?) will show. Reason: Mother Nature. The scheduled first launch of the year, on May 17, was canceled due to the rain we got in the preceding days; the ground at Weigand's Field was too wet and muddy for use. And we went out the way we came in, with a canceled launch on October 18, called once again on account of rain. The month before, on September 20, we did get a few rockets into the air, including a plastic model conversion contest winning flight by Dennis Friend, but strong and gusty winds left too few narrow windows for safe flying and we packed it in early. So we lost essentially three of our six scheduled launches.

But let's say rather that the glass was half full.

Had the May launch gone as scheduled I would have shown up with seven new rockets built over the winter and spring. By the June launch there were nine — two of which, though, I had flown in the interim. So I wanted to fly all of them, and I wanted to participate in (nearly) every club launch contest and theme this year, and I also decided I was going to do NARTREK Bronze, so I for one had a lot of flying to do by the time June 21 rolled around.

June's theme was Dual Deploy. The May contest (dual D eggloft duration) was run — along with the June contest (target duration) — at the June launch. The winners were Scott Sellers (eggloft) and Tim Catterson (target duration). Not only didn't I win either, but my SRC Caution rocket lawn darter and destroyed itself trying for the target duration prize. And the Estes Yankee trying for the NARTREK streamer duration came back to earth noseless, while the Ventris, coming in to what looked like a nice gentle

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Mark Riffle pushes the button

# 2014: THE MEETINGS

Monday nights at Walt's Hobby Town can be a noisy and raucous occasion, what with all the model racing cars zooming around (and hardly ever getting lost, exploding, or destroying themselves in crashes — what's up with that, anyway?) Nevertheless, we have our meetings there the first Monday of each month (second Monday when the first is a holiday).

There's generally a featured presentation or topic of discussion. Dennis Friend went to bat three times in 2014, talking about rocket finishing in January, plastic model conversion in September, and staging techniques in October. Some very informative stuff there! We also had a review of equipment setup and takedown procedures in March, a swap & share parts exchange in April (though at any given meeting, Dennis is likely to have something along to give away), a presentation on reloadable motors in May, and discussions of gliders in July and rocket preparation for night launches in August. (You notice how the topics often relate to the following launch's theme or contest? It's like

those college review sessions where the professor says "This will be on the exam...".) December saw the holiday celebration and annual club awards. There were presents for all, and cookies, some of them rocket shaped.

Aside from all that, we tended to club business including (re-)election of officers, use of our NAR grant money to purchase a new launch controller, and the club's participation in activities such as the MOST's Rocket Team Challenge, the Ying Tri Region Science and Engineering Fair, and Walt's Secret Santa event.

I learned a lot at these meetings, and had a good time. I mentioned the cookies, right? For those for whom Robert's Rules of Order is not their preferred bedtime reading, our meetings are refreshingly informal. Check one out sometime if you haven't.

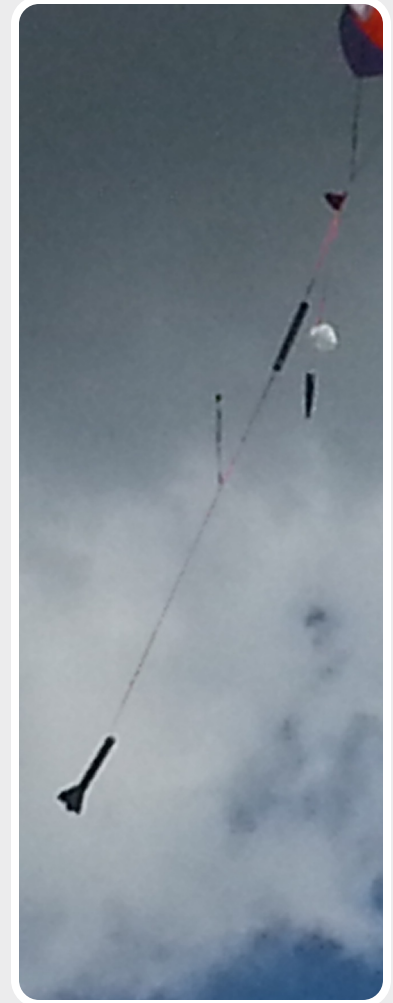


## ... There it goes!



Rich Holmes's Ventriss gets going on a smoky motor.





**NYPower 18**  
 Above: Mark Riffle and Paul Gagnon haul Paul's Level 3 rocket to the away pads. Right: Back it comes!

# 2014: WHAT ELSE WE DID

There's a lot that goes on in the SRC besides just the monthly launches and meetings, and a full writeup of all of them would... hmm... would provide a lot of material for future newsletters, so I should just briefly summarize for now, right?

During the winter of 2012–2013 we met on several Saturdays at Walt's to work on the club's latest project, an upscale of the Starlight Saber tube fin rocket. We'd hoped to have it ready to fly for NYPower or URRF, but chief instigator Karl Weaver was out of action during the spring and we shelved it for the time being. We'll finish it up this winter.

Four SRC members — Jennifer Bailey, Paul Gagnon, Scott Sellers, and James Shattell — attended NARCON in February in sunny and rockety Cocoa Beach, FL. The rest of us wished we could. It sounded like they had a great time.

Several of us got to some of the regional launches around us: we had contingents at MARS's NYPower 18 (where Paul Gagnon had a successful Level 3 certification flight) and URRG's URRF 2. Paul also went to Red Glare and BALLS.

As in previous years, we provided technical assistance for the Museum of Science and Technology's Rocket Team Challenge. About a hundred middle and high school teams took part, building, painting, and ultimately launching about a hundred mid power rockets bearing eggs, cameras, and altimeters. An incredibly rewarding event.

James Shattell, Scott Sellers, and Rich Holmes took part in various outreach activities including school rocket launches, TARC, and a rocket demo in Syracuse's Barry Park. My, those kids love rockets! Several of us also staffed tables at the Ying Tri Region Science and Engineering Fair, and Walt's Secret Santa event.



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write up pages of brilliant prose, great! If you can't write your way out of a phone booth, that's fine too: That's what an editor's for. Scrawl something on a napkin and hand it off to me. I'll take care of making all the typos, spelling mistakes, and grammatical errors so you won't have to.

For this issue I have no slush pile to work from. Or rather, none but my own. I'll try to highlight some of what's

*Launches / Continued from page 2*

landing under chute in the tall grass, inexplicably popped a fin. My other flights went fine, though.

The Syracuse Rocket Club did well with our weather modifications on July 19. Skies ranged from partly to mostly cloudy, but the clouds were high. Temperature in the mid 70s to 80. Winds mostly light, though a little challenging for gliders at times. This being the month where the theme was gliders and the contest was 1/2A glider duration, that was relevant.

For my first contest entry I launched my new Semroc Swift BG on a 1/2A6-2. And the glider didn't. Glide. Deployment was after apogee, with the rocket nose down, and the glider just dove straight to the ground. I tried again with my Edmonds Deltie, but the first time I mistakenly loaded a 1/4A and the second time it Red Baroned, so no win for me. The winner was Scott Sellers.

I did get two successful NARTREK flights in, and I got all of my rockets back, only one damaged. Others weren't so lucky. Tim Catterson had a motor cato. Paul Gagnon launched two high power rockets; one disappeared and one landed on the barn roof. Mark Riffle's Leviathan had the audacity to get caught 30 feet up in a tree in full view of the flight line. On the other hand Mark's Cluster Duck was a success with seven black powder motors, and so was his LOC 429-SS launched on a two G106 Skidmark cluster with two F15-0 air started a second after burnout — easily the coolest launch of the day. There were other good flights, and better yet there were a number of people making their first flights

happened in the past year or so. Most of 2013, unfortunately, is going to be lost to history, unless someone else wants to take it on. Some of what's here is adapted from posts from my blog, a form of double dipping I may well exploit now and then in future issues too.

As for distribution, it's going to be mostly electronic. My plan is to make it available as a PDF file via a link on

including some kids — one family apparently left with the intention of going straight to Hobby Lobby to buy a launch set. So a good day over all.

That brings us to August 23, the annual Family Picnic and Night Launch, our biggest club launch of the year with food provided, free launching, door prizes, and even a porta john. Friday evening some of us were there setting up the big tent, the pads, and some of the other infrastructure. Saturday I got there sometime before 9:00 and left about fourteen hours later. Long day.

The weather wasn't quite what was advertised. The slight possibility of sprinkles early followed by afternoon clearing was instead heavy overcast all day and three rain showers — all fairly brief, fortunately, but they did cut into attendance and launch time. Things finally cleared up in the evening and there were stars overhead for the night launch. Winds started off moderate but became pretty calm later.

The theme was odd-rocs, and there were, indeed, some oddities there including my Rocketarium Retro Rebel and my scratch The Rocket Doctors Recommend Most. The contest was TARC Rules; I entered, I successfully launched my Bad Cholesterol twice with both eggs coming back intact both times, but I posted an unimpressive score. The winner was Roger Forrell.

A welcome feature of the launch, and a first for the SRC, was the presence of an on site vendor. AMW was there, with Gloria Robinson and Robert DeHate providing plenty of reasons to part with our cash. The

the SRC web site, and I'll send an announcement to the mailing list when each issue is posted. I'll send hardcopy versions to the judges of the NAR's LAC Newsletter Award, because why not, and bring a few printed copies to launches and other events to hand out to newcomers.

Sound good to you?

opportunity to nab some kits and motors without having to pay postage was certainly welcome. Robert also made a notable flight, a big saucer flying on a very long burning sparky J. That's a Bingo on the coolness card right there.

The night launch was the second for our club, and many members stepped up the standards this year, with a Leading Edge Alien, a Bad Azz White Wizard, and a scratch build around a flashing toy magic staff or something that had a beautiful flight impersonating a UFO.

After that we took down the equipment and the big tent. In the dark. That was interesting.

It was also, aside from a few mostly unsatisfactory flights in September, the end of the truncated 2014 launch season. What we lacked in quantity of flights we partially made up for in quality... but please, can we have some better weather in 2015?





# FINDING A FIELD

The Syracuse Rocket Club is fortunate to have a good field available to us every month, May through October, for our launches. Milton Weigand has been generous enough to let us fly on his hay farm ever since the club got going almost 20 years ago.

But for various reasons it would be good to have an additional field. We can get as many fields covered on our NAR insurance as we want. Having another field would give us options if for whatever reason Mr. Weigand's farm isn't available. It would allow us to sometimes have two launches in a month without imposing ourselves too often on a single landowner. If it were somewhere different in the Syracuse area — off to the west and south, let's say — it might let us draw people from that side of the region who'd be less likely to drive to Van Buren to check us out. (Though, really, we're extra fortunate in that our launch site is so easily and quickly accessible from anywhere near Syracuse.)

It wouldn't necessarily have to be the size of Weigand's Field. Same size would be nice, and bigger would be even nicer, but a smaller field would be fine for low and medium power rockets.

So we'd like to look for something. Finding a launch site isn't generally an easy thing; often it involves asking total strangers "Can we launch rockets on your land?" That worked with Mr. Weigand, though, so it's worth trying again.

Can you help?

Do you know anyone with a good size piece of open land? Any connections with groups that might know someone? Are you willing to scan Google Earth for possibilities? Knock on some doors or make some calls? If so, please get in touch with the club officers! We may still be praising your name 20 years from now.

## On the Bench

*Mark Riffle writes:* I know someone that received the Polecat Aerospace Wocket for Christmas. Looks like there may be a couple of long-burn sparky J-motors lighting up our field this year!

### About the Syracuse Rocket Club

The Syracuse Rocket Club (SRC), serving hobby rocketry in central New York, is section 566 of the National Association of Rocketry (NAR) and was founded in 1997.

SRC holds a monthly sport launch in Van Buren once a month, May through October, typically on the third Saturday (weather permitting); see our calendar elsewhere in this newsletter for specifics. Launches are open to the public, with a \$5 launch fee for non SRC members who wish to fly rockets.

SRC welcomes all prospective new members to our monthly meetings. They are held on the first Monday of the month (second Monday if the first is a holiday) from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at Walt's Hobby Town on Dwight Park Drive, near the State Fair Boulevard exit of I-690.

For more information see our website:  
<http://syracuserocketclub.org>

SRC officers are:

President:	Mark Riffle
Vice President:	Scott Sellers
Secretary/Treasurer:	James Shattell
Editor:	Rich Holmes
Web Master:	Scott Sellers

### About *What's Up*

Volume 10 Number 1

January 2015

*What's Up* is the official newsletter of SRC, the Syracuse Rocket Club, National Association of Rocketry Section 566.

*What's Up* is published quarterly and is distributed electronically on the SRC website; latest and back issues may be downloaded at <http://syracuserocketclub.org/newsletters.html>. Except where otherwise indicated, material in *What's Up* is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial license. You are free to share and adapt material from *What's Up* providing you give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

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## Club Stats for 2013

Total motors 686  
Total launches 603  
Total impulse 39543.75 N-s

Flight King Tim Catterson (91)  
Motor Master Dennis Friend (114)  
Thrust Master Mark Riffle (3859.95 N-s)  
Club King Scott Sellers (48 points)

## Club Stats for 2014

Total motors 406  
Total launches 365  
Total impulse 25802.5 N-s

Flight King Dennis Friend (51)  
Motor Master Dennis Friend (69)  
Thrust Master Mark Riffle (3934.5 N-s)  
Club King Scott Sellers (26 points)



Above: Scott Sellers and Mark Riffle work on the club rocket project. Below: MOST Team Rocket Challenge.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday Jan. 17th 10:00 am – Club rocket project build session (Walt's HobbyTown)  
 Monday Feb. 2nd 7:00 pm – Club meeting (Walt's HobbyTown)  
 Presentation: High power certification  
 Discussion topic: Upscale Saber project

## SRC 2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Location	Event
January	Mon. 5th	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sat. 17th	Walt's HobbyTown Club Rocket Project Session
February	Mon. 2nd	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
March	Mon. 2nd	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sun. 15th	OCC Ying Science Fair
April	Mon. 6th	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
May	Mon. 4th	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sat. 16th	Weigand's Field SRC Sport Launch and Test Launch for MOST Rocket Team Challenge Teams
	Sat. 23rd – Mon. 25th	Geneseo NYPOWER regional event
June	Mon. 1st	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sat. 6th	Skytop MOST Rocket Team Challenge
	Sat. 20th	Weigand's Field SRC Sport Launch
	Thu. 25th – Mon. 29th	Potter, NY LDRS national event
July	Mon. 6th	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sat. 18th	Weigand's Field SRC Sport Launch
August	Mon. 3rd	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sat. 22nd	Weigand's Field SRC Sport Launch, Family Picnic and Night Launch
September	Mon. 14th	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sat. 19th	Weigand's Field SRC Sport Launch
October	Mon. 5th	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sat. 17th	Weigand's Field SRC Sport Launch
November	Mon. 2nd	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting
	Sat. 21st	Walt's HobbyTown Walt's Annual Secret Santa Sale
December	Mon. 7th	Walt's HobbyTown Club Meeting

**Please check web site (<http://syracuserocketclub.org>) for changes, cancellations, and last minute events!**  
 Go/no go status of each launch will be posted on the web the evening before.

Directions to Walt's HobbyTown: From I-690, take Exit 5 (State Fair Blvd./Lakeland). Turn right onto Van Vleck Rd. Take the first right onto Dwight Park Dr. Walt's is immediately on your right.

Directions to Weigand's Field: From I-690, take Exit 2 (Jones Rd.). Turn left onto Jones Rd. Take the first right onto Van Buren Rd. After 1.6 miles turn left onto Connors Rd. After 1.0 miles turn left onto Canton Street Rd. Launch site is about 0.4 miles on your left; look for sign. Park in designated area. Please do not drive onto field without launch director's permission.