



APOGEE

PEAK OF FLIGHT

NEWSLETTER

Who are the Rocketry Heros?

By Tim Van Milligan

For me, the answer to the question "who are the heroes in rocketry?" is a simple one. The heroes are the ones that teach and inspire others about rocketry.

If you were going to write down a list of your own personal heroes, the first name you'd probably come up with is the person that got you hooked on rocketry. For me, it was a guy named Patrick McCarthy. While Pat didn't first introduce me to rocketry (I can't recall the name of the guy that lead the boy's group were I built my first rocket), but it was Pat that showed me all the neat things that could be done with rocketry. Until I hooked up with him, I didn't know about things like: helicopter and glider recovery, clubs, competitions, national events like NARAM, technical information, magazines, or bigger rocket motors.

The point of all this is that there are lots of people out there that fly rockets, but yet haven't been exposed to the really neat stuff about rocketry. It was by pure chance that I met my rocketry mentor. And until others meet their's, they will be caught in an endless cycle of RTF models. Where there is nothing wrong with RTF models, they'll get more pleasure and satisfaction out of rocketry when they step up to the next stage.

The benefit to all us other rocketeers is great too. When a modeler gets more consumed by rocketry, he gets more involved in the group and the organized aspects of the hobby. He may run for a local club officer position. But more importantly, he becomes an ambassador for the hobby. He will tell others, and maybe even help lobby the government for reduced regulations.

Even though there can be only one person that inspires us personally that very first time, I have other heroes too. I think of the guy in our local club that shows up every month with the launch equipment. He also takes it out to schools that want to do rocketry demonstrations.

This is one of the most important jobs in the club, and I'm glad that he does it. I guess that most anyone that drags themselves down to a local school (on their own time -- taking time off from work) is also a hero of mine.

The same goes for the guys in the clubs that produce the newsletter. It is a tough job (I speak from experience). This guy has to come up with content for every issue. He usually ends up writing most of the issue himself. It is a thankless job. But if he doesn't do it, the other members of the club let him know his failings.

I've been fortunate in that I've had plenty of opportunities to see rocketry heroes in action. I haven't had a chance to thank them personally, but I hope that they know their efforts haven't gone unnoticed. Also, their efforts have had a positive effect on the hobby. They shouldn't get discouraged because they don't get the recognition that they deserve. More people are enjoying rocketry because of their passion for the hobby, and their willingness to share it with others.

In conclusion, I hope that more people become rocketry heroes. It has made this hobby more fun for me, as well as for others. The only criteria is a willingness to become more involved on a one-to-one level.

I salute all the rocketry heroes.

About the Author:

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