

PEAK OF FLIGHT

NEWSLETTER

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PEAK OF FLIGHT

How to Prepare for Your Own Apollo 11 Anniversary Celebration

By David Newill

On a fine Saturday in July, the 20th to be exact, lots of rocketeers and other interested parties like NASA will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11's Eagle landing on the moon (**Figure 1**). The question for you is how will you participate and will you be ready!?



Figure 1: NASA's official logo for the 50th anniversary of the Apollo program.

The NAR has endorsed the idea that as many sections and groupings of members as possible have club launches with activities ranging from a simple "go fly a rocket day" to more organized events including "Lunar Spot Landing" contests, picnics, and celebratory launches of scale Saturn/Apollo rockets. Also, note the TARC 2018-19 rules are set up to recognize the Apollo flights!

While July of 2019 seems like a long time away, for most clubs that is only some 9 or 10 meetings or launches from now. Given that most Sections are loosely organized, doing some planning now makes sense!

This is a chance to shine! Not to mention a chance to help new rocketeers get into our Aerospace Sports Hobby – from the first time "A" engine launches to Born-Again-Rocketeers (BAR's) who have never seen engines larger than a black powder "D". It is also a chance to get your group a little bit of positive media attention and build some positive points with your local community, especially if that community owns your club launch area!

So where to start? Just like NASA: work your way back from a super Saturday event and discuss what your team can do. Think about what you want to get out of this once in a "blue moon" opportunity.

A great club launch, done well, is far better than an extravaganza poorly executed. Despite all the "Why don't we do this or that or wouldn't it be cool if..." excitement, remember you are an all-volunteer organization and in fact, about ½ the team will do 100% of the work. Start simple, then if that seems practical, work your way up to a more interesting event. Some thought starters in order of complexity follow:

Club Launch

You can have a club launch with a picnic. In April or May of 2019, do a bit of publicity in the rocketry community through local hobby shops or regional newspapers. Make it a pitch-in, "Bring your rockets and favorite party food!" and have someone make or buy a Moon landing cake. Try to get some feel for the size of the crowd so you have enough.

Invite the Past

It might take a bit of digging, but for many clubs, we are near a company that built parts of the Saturn/Apollo, and those fine ladies and gentlemen are still around. Make sure they get invited to participate! Celebrate their accomplishments with slide-rules and 8-bit computers!

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Invite the Future

Make sure 4-H Aerospace, Scouts, Boys & Girls clubs, CAP, Jr ROTC, TARC teams and other groups get an invitation. Have a make-launch-keep set-up with super simple "A" engine basic rockets. If they involve an engine mount or gluing of fins you might want to set up an assembly line at the April or May club meeting/launch to put those time-consuming items together in advance. See if your favorite supplier can get you a discount on a couple of bulk pack kits "First 30 attendees get a free rocket and two engines to help celebrate the Apollo / Eagle has landed day! – No age limits!" Of course, have a safe club launch set-up and follow the Safety Codes, keeping it simple! Have some extra hot-dogs and buns in a cooler in case the crowd gets hungry (**Figure 2**). Make sure you have club takeaways: a brochure on the club, model rocketry, your next meeting or launch, NAR membership, etc. Now, this level of event needs someone to take on: getting kits, contacting youth groups, planning the pre-build, writing and printing hand-outs, range, and crowd safety plan, so plan for April or May to start getting busy!



Figure 2: Organize a bbq and have people bring their own food for grilling.

Make it a Contest

For just the club or all invitees, have a Lunar Spot Landing contest (**Figure 3**). There is an example set of rules about to be posted on the NAR website, but make it simple and fun! You could have a large 25' -50' circle target outlined with white flour and even mark some Apollo landing sites. Put a prize on each landing site! Closest to a site gets the prize. A simple way of setting this up is to do a pre-target launch of an "A" rocket with small chute or streamer and use its landing spot as the center of the target zone. Of course, recognize multiple times anyone who donated prizes (hobby shops, suppliers etc.) You might want to have a dry-run in June 2019 to get the contest issues understood – and look professional July 20th.



Figure 3: Create a circle target with flour for a Lunar Spot Landing contest.

Look Professional

If your club has a tee-shirt, make sure everyone has one. In fact, this might be the time to upgrade or refresh your collection. Local suppliers can do these at a reasonable price. You might make a

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one-time dues collection just for the shirts so everyone gets a current version. Hats are another thought. There will be a lot of Apollo and Apollo 11 shirts online. Just do not wait until June to order! Again, a bit of long-range planning helps here. A professional look includes a professional launch set-up. If you are wanting to attract members and have a great running launch, look at your launch controller and range set-up (**Figure 4**). June is not the time to start designing a new range controller. In fact,



Figure 4: Make sure to have a solid launch range setup for your event.

this is a great project for the winter. Usually, for clubs, this requires some funding and design thoughts, but there are a lot of solutions out on the web. The Lunar Landing Day 50th is a once in a club's lifetime to upgrade with a reason. Do a solid job of planning and then execution. And test, test, test before July 20th.

Safety and First Launch Excitement

The celebration of the Lunar Landing Day will undoubtedly inspire your section or friends to do something bigger and better than they may have in the past. If you are having a "Members Only" event, have fun! Of course, have good range safety processes in place. But, if you are inviting the public to watch and fly with you, do apply some reasonable restraints. This is not the time for wild-and-crazy contraptions. These are perhaps fine for a non-media, non-public, pre-July practice launch. This even applies to scale Saturn/Apollo flights that are modifications from the manufacturer's instructions or unique scratch builds. Some launch sites can accommodate remote and under High Power rockets with ease, but public park flyers need to have a bit of constraint.

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Scale Saturn/Apollo Launches

First, you need scale rockets (<https://www.apogeerockets.com/Rocket-Kits/Skill-Level-5-Model-Rocket-Kits/Saturn-V-1-70th-Scale> **Figure 5**) and these builds are not something to start the week before the launch date! Most builders will tell you that a good-looking scale S-1B or S-V Apollo is one of the most complex builds you can attempt and these can take MONTHS to do properly. Adding strength or additional parts to a kit because you think it makes it more robust changes center of gravity and mass quickly. These kits are tested before release, so following the instructions is paramount if you will launch for the first time in July. There are reasons to make specific modifications, such as carrying cameras, cloth parachutes, oversized fins and even cluster engines, but just like NASA flight testing is required before demonstrating these in public. Especially if the media is present!

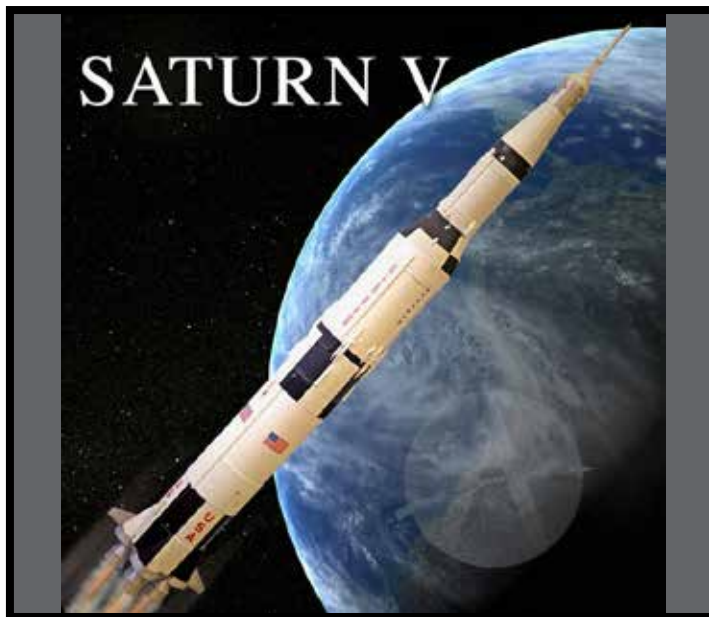


Figure 5: You can buy and build a Saturn V or Saturn 1B from Apogee Components to celebrate the anniversary with.

Invite the Media

We probably all love to be on the local news but, unless you are willing to devote a couple of handlers to media babysitting and control, is it worth the trouble? There are pluses and minuses here. Remember, the principal thing the television news person is interested in is his/her face holding the microphone in front of your scale rocket just before it launches. Their cameraman wants to put his lens as close to the engines as possible. Neither understand our hobby to the slightest degree. You will likely hear this statement: "Okay, they are about to launch now. Let's hope it doesn't blow up!" They also want to do this on their schedule ("Can you please hold your launch until 12:30 when we can get there?") and they want it to happen right then when they show up and will want to do some "local kid" interviews about being an astronaut before they rush off. The cameraman may also expect a second and third launch just to get his or her perfect shot inside of the launch zone area. Newspaper reporters are a little more flexible but they have deadlines and personal schedules as well.

This is a historic moment, so participate by planning the best rocketry event you can!



Figure 6: There are pluses and minuses to inviting a news crew to record your launches.

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