



Kervin Martin, 4-H leader, and Daryl Brown rocket by remote control. Countdown is a work at attaching the cord which will ignite the simple "Push the botton."



Martin helps as his 4-H'ers work industriously to get their rockets ready for the big moment. They are putting in the wadding and adding parachutes or streamers to make sure they return safely to earth.

## Rocketry launches a new project in the 4-H world

BY SALLY BAIR  
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The launch pad is not exactly Cape Kennedy, and the countdown is little more than "Push the button!" but the excitement of the launch is thrilling to the members of the 4-H rocketry project.

The rocketry project is just one of over a hundred projects offered in Lancaster County's 4-H program, but it is a good example of the fact that "4-H ain't just cows and cooking anymore."

Rockets will be launched as one of the demonstrations which will be a part of the 4-H Fair to be held August 19 at the Farm and Home Center as the final activity and recognition of the summer's project work.

Kervin Martin, Penryn, is the leader of the rocketry project for the Elm-Penryn Community 4-H Club, and has been teaching youngsters to make their own rockets for the last five years. He is never in need of members - they

come forward eagerly to be a part of his project.

This year his club has ten members with most being first year 4-H'ers. However, Kervin's two sons, Curtis, 16, and Shawn, 13, have been in the project for several years.

In the first year, members learn to build their own rockets and are required to launch them at least twice. There is often more opportunity to launch them, and the members seem eager for every chance.

According to Martin, the project affords the youngsters the opportunity to learn many things, but he lists "patience" first when he talks about them. He added, "They also learn simple math skills and some physics. When they see it in action they understand it."

The small rockets are made from balsa wood and cardboard

tubing, and can be designed to the wishes of the individual. Martin says he purchases the parts to save the children money, and they design their own. He estimates that a rocket may cost between \$3.00 and \$8.00 to complete.

Just as the government space program sometimes hits a few

snags, so it is with the 4-H rocket project. There is the constant threat of losing a rocket.

After observing a launch it seems impossible that a rocket could disappear from sight, but Martin says it happens. He adds, "It is a disappointment when it happens to an eight-year-old who has worked really hard. It is really a heartbreaker."

It happened this year to nine-year-old Bill Shenk who said, "It just disappeared. It never landed. I worked pretty hard on it. Now I'm making my second one."

The rockets are launched either in Martin's backyard, in a nearby elementary school playground or a high school. The igniter is attached to a car battery but can be launched by a six volt lantern battery. Martin says he carries two of everything when traveling to a launch.

When asked about the danger, Martin replies, "It isn't as dangerous as it looks. Everything works electrically. They are launched by remote control."

When the rocket falls there is also little danger of being hit by one. "There's nothing to it - it might scare somebody."

Launching the rockets is not just exciting, it is also a learning experience. At each launch, a tracker, usually son Curt, uses a protractor to help figure the distance and feet per second that the rocket travels. As soon as the rocket is recovered everyone gathers round to hear that information as Martin figures it with his trusty calculator.

The figures are entered into the project book as a final record of "how it works at launch."

Mike Martin, 10, readily admits what the others probably feel. "Book work is boring. Well, it is not really boring, but not as much fun as the launching."

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J.J. Bradley gets ready to launch his six foot rocket which other 4-H members refer to fondly as "the spear."



There it goes! All heads a look skyward as another model rocket is launched in the backyard of 4-H leader Kervin Martin. Each try is a new experience and offers new excitement, although the procedure for each launch is the same.