



At Ft. Sill, Okla., Capt. R. J. Ellison watches Lee and Charles Becker of San Antonio, Texas, remove excess fuel from "Iwapa R2," two-stage rocket set for firing.

question. Among them, however, is a rising tide of enthusiasm for practical rocketry as a powerful motivating factor and teaching tool in basic science.

Nobody can say exactly how many practicing societies of amateur rocketeers exist today, but they are plentiful. They range all the way from Lilliputian groups of two or three 13-year-olds to societies of more than 100 teen-agers and adults which have been operating for as long as 15 years.

The Richland, Wash., Rocket Society, for example, has more than 125 nighttime launchings to its credit, and maintains complete photographic and statistical records. All its members have decided on scientific careers.

In Brooklyn, N.Y., 10 young men who have been launching rockets since 1953 now take college classes at night so they can devote most of the day to running a business which grew out of their fascination with rocketry. Last year, this business sold \$10,000 worth of models of rockets, satellites, and spaceships.

In San Antonio, Texas, high-school and Trinity University students have been making rockets for the past two years under the tutelage of a refugee Hungarian professor of physics. In more than 450 launchings, they have suffered only one failure, and some of their missiles have gone as high as 15,000 feet.

This group has developed a virtually foolproof propellant and a type of rocket nozzle that can be refired half-a-dozen times. The knowledge they have acquired is truly considerable.

True, inquisitive young rocketeers sometimes suffer disappointment—even injury. But because of such accidents, as unfortunate as they are, should all rocketeers be curbed?

WHY, for example, should we penalize the 15-year-old boy in Jackson Heights, N.Y., who has built in his home a 12½-foot rocket capable of reaching an altitude of 20 miles? It contains two pressurized compartments for live hamster passengers, radio equipment, an accelerometer, an altimeter, two cameras, and gauges for measuring temperature, humidity, and pressure within the compartments—all housed in a package which can be ejected by radio signal and parachuted to earth.

Its designer and builder, now a pre-medical student, has been waiting for more than a year for someone to help him find a place to launch his creation. Will the American Rocket Society help him and thousands of other young Americans like him? Will it help develop the talents this nation needs for survival in the space age?

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