



Marching Through Oneshot



A St. Patrick's Day Oneshot for SFPA

by Steve & Suzanne Hughes (mine hosts), the incomparable T.K.F.
Weisskopf & her consort, Hank the Lowly, I mean Lovely.





Toni here, as a cry for “wadding” rolls over the hills of North Georgia. (We need wadding to keep the rocket engine from blowing up, as if you didn’t know.) It turns out that you can get rockets at WalMart—all anyone really needs is at WalMart. You have to believe that if you live up here—and I do mean UP here. Steve and Suzanne have a house on the peak of Rock Candy Mountain, where rockets grow on trees, the soda fountains out of the fridge, fanzines emerge fully formed from the printer, and calories just don’t count. (Hank and I just saw *O Brother Where*

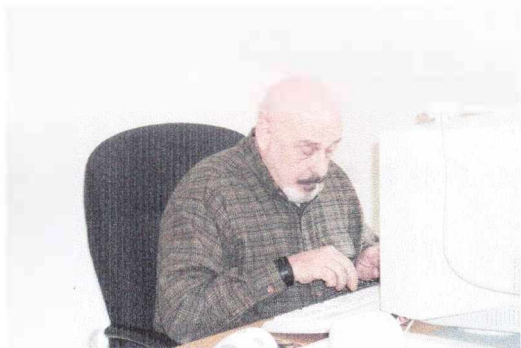
Art Thou?, so you’ll have to forgive the references. We also just saw a ballet of Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*—and listened to a recording of it on the way up: the perfect soundtrack to a Springtime drive in the country.) Back to the oneshot—shut up and type, Weisskopf! It’s hard to type as I’m fighting vertigo looking out the picture window down the 90 degree slope, past the chair lift, down to the bucolic green fields dotted with cows, and yet conveniently above the smell of the methane-polluting beasties. That’s one thing I miss in Athens—big sky. And out here they’ve got some Big Damn Sky.... You wouldn’t think that I have anything nice to say about Huntsville, since I was so very happy to be out of there when I graduated high school, but to give the place its due, it had some nice views. Many of which I saw when I was skipping high school.... This view actually reminds me of New York, and the last time I had serious vertigo, which was at Carnegie Hall, and we had very nice seats, but very *high* seats for an all-Beethoven program. I settled down and opened my eyes after the first program. I’ll open my eyes after I finish this oneshot....

Suzanne here – well, okay, we are at the top of the hill but I’m not sure we have the skyscrapers that would make it be New York. I’m a city girl who went and married a damn southerner who has succeeded in getting me to buy a pickup truck, get a gun permit, shoot arrows and now I’m planning to move to the mountains where a Friday night out is dinner at Burger King followed by hanging out at Walmart. Of course, I just heard reference to making a model of my head, and I don’t think I want to know why. It’s probably to go into the rocket that we’ll be shooting shortly. That is what’s nice about up here, we go to the front yard and shoot arrows, we go for a short ride and have a mountain trail to hike, or you just lie out on the hammock and listen to the wind in the trees. We just got through putting a fence up along the road and seeding about half an acre along it for grass. That means I’ll be cutting grass this summer if any of



it grows.

Just found out that Drake is going to be at Liberty Con in May in Chattanooga, so I think we'll be trying to make it. That makes DSC the first weekend in May in Birmingham and Chattanooga the end of May with Lookout Mountain every week that the weather is nice for hang gliding. It's a good thing we're not going to be traveling much this year.



Hank here. I am forced to lower myself to actually indulge in a one shot. My sensibilities are outraged, that a man of my erudition and sophistication should be forced into such a demeaning activity.

But this place is beautiful, the view is incredible, and there are very few people around. This is something that I like. I've been around too damn many people, so like Steve, I enjoy living away from the hoi poloi. Anyway. When I lived close to people the cops were always coming by from the reports of screams, and

it was difficult to hide all of the bodies.

Shortly we are going outside and shoot some model rockets. Steve gave me one for my birthday, but I haven't shot it yet, as there are too many trees around my house. But I have hopes to go over to Museum Replicas and do it there. Also have plans on doing some horseback riding soon. But for really great news, have been lucky enough to see some really delightful movies, The Replacements, Oh Brother, Where Art Thou, Hannibal, and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. Hannibal is quite different from the book. Except for his peculiar dietary habits I find a lot in common with him. He just doesn't tolerate rude and obnoxious people. Sigh. I would like to not have to do that myself.

Steve Humm.. I keep forgetting to warn people about the road up the mountain to our house. It tends to give people with a fear of heights a bit of a bad time. I will have to admit it bothered me the first few times we drove up but after a few months I stopped even noticing it. Living on the top of even a small mountain, it's only 600 feet high, does introduce you to the concept of *wind gradient*. This is the principle that wind velocity drops as you approach the ground. The wind may be blowing 20 miles an hour 100 feet up but only 5 miles an hour at ground level. What this means for us on our mountain is that when the valley



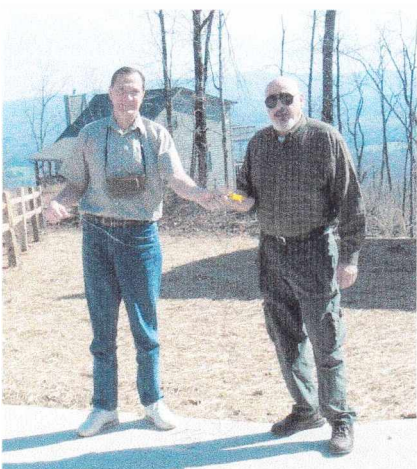
gets breezes, we get wind; when the valley gets wind, I start worrying about the house blowing away. A worry, which explains the storm room, with 8 inch steel reinforced concrete walls, we built into the basement of the garage. Too paranoid? Nahh...it's not possible to be too paranoid!

When we finish this oneshot, we're going to go out and shoot a rocket. It's a lot of fun shooting these things especially since the chance of recovering one is very close to zero. If it goes just a little bit too far in any direction from the vertical, it's going to land somewhere in the woods and there's no chance of finding it there. That assumes the wind doesn't grab the rocket and carry it to parts unknown.

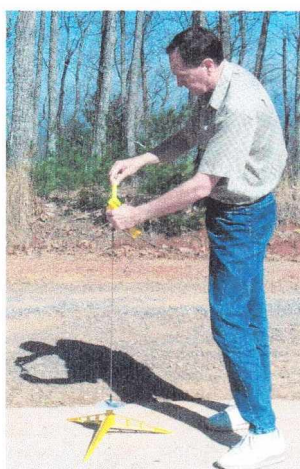
Enough of this writing stuff, lets go see if the Junior Rocket Men can launch one of these WalMart specials.



Launching the Rocket



The Junior Rocket Men



Loading the rocket on the launch rod.



Ready to launch.



The rocket attains an altitude of exactly zero feet. Oops!

Yes, the first launch was a dud. The rocket engine burnt out on the launch pad without raising the rocket an inch, unless you count blowing the nose off. We all accused Hank, he pushed the button on the firing controller, of screwing up the launch. Hey, pushing buttons is not all that easy. The second try, with a new engine, he got it right and the rocket reached an altitude of several hundred feet in a few seconds. Then it fell to earth 'we know not where' but it was fun watching it go up!