2012 Team Vignettes

Introduction (John Langford)

A trip to the World Championships is a special experience for anyone interested in Space Modeling. What exactly makes it so special? What follows is a collection of short essays – I call them vignettes – written by various members of the 2012 US Team and expressing in their own words what made it special for them. Enjoy!

S7 Can Be Fun! (Steve Kristal)

For future readers I would like to mention that I had the next to lowest score of any senior entry that managed a qualified flight, but I had more fun than anyone else in S7. I was the only contestant who handed my model (Apollo Pad Abort 1) to bystanders to hold and examine so we could talk about it. I was amazed at the number of people who came up to me to ask questions about my model, even though most of them spoke almost no English. It was fascinating to learn that "paper" and "fiberglass" are almost universally understood words. After my flight I spent the next hour posing for photographs with people from all over the world. A number of folks wanted their children photographed with my model which was just very cool. It was huge fun flying a really unusual model for the WSMC crowd.

As I suspected going in, you don't have to beat Lievykh's Soyuz to come away a winner in S7. I know a number of great scale modelers who won't try out for the team because they figure there's little chance of winning a medal. But if you've built something cool, there is huge satisfaction flying it for such an appreciative audience.

Our juniors proved the same thing, that you don't have to come home with a medal to have won in S7 at the WSMC. In Serbia we had no junior scale model entries. This time around, the evening of the flyoffs, the 3 Junior Dads met and set a goal of 3 cool models actually built by the kids, and 3 qualified flights. We worked together throughout the year to make it happen. The three qualified flights in Slovakia weren't easy to get, the kids had to really work as a team to make it happen. But I think all three came home with something way more important than medals, real pride in what THEY actually did individually and as a team.

WSMC 2012 from a team supporter's viewpoint (Betzi Kelton)

Nerve wracking tension, disappointment, joy, relief and camaraderie - my week serving as a team supporter for the 2012 USA team had never a dull moment. There may have been a few lost hours sitting in a potato field, hoping for the slim chance that a rocket would land there and I would have the excitement of sprinting over to where it had fallen, retrieving it carefully and handing it back to its grateful owner. Other than the dashed hopes of not getting to do that, this supporter had a wonderful time.

My son, Daniel Kelton, was a member of this year's junior team. He flew event S8, which is scale altitude. His team placed fourth overall, a mere fraction of a percentage below winning the bronze medal. He and his two teammates, Rachel and Cassidy, did an award winning job of working together for the good of the team and making a split second decision that allowed all of them to get launches in before the end of the round. Daniel had disqualifications on his first two launches and a misfire on his third. He got off his last launch with less than 5 seconds left on the clock. Everyone was overjoyed and relieved that the days' launches ended in success.

Camraderie? How about a whole group of folks searching that potato field all afternoon trying to find a lost rocket for the senior S5 team. Finding it and turning it in for an altimeter reading would have catapulted James Duffy, Matt Steele and Jim Evans into contention for a gold or silver medal. But it was not to be. Finding the rocket may have eluded us, but pulling together as a team still made us come out on top.

The next WSMC will be 2 years from now in Bulgaria. Daniel and some part or all of his family hope to be there, cheering the whole team on!

Mission Accomplished (Rachel Clark)

As a first time Junior member on the team, I was a little nervous. I didn’t know whether or not I would have any friends for the next 10 days while we were in Slovakia. I wasn’t sure anyone would like me. But in only a day, most of us were already best friends. And not long after that, it was almost as if our USA rocketry team was a second family. We had our jokes and fun times but my teammates and I also worked together, encouraged one another, and helped each other when it was time to fly.

In my Event, S5 Scale Altitude, it was critical that Cassidy Steele, Daniel Kelton, and I worked together. On launch day, it was a beautiful morning with almost no clouds and not much wind, and we were all excited about the day ahead. It took me the whole first round to prep my rocket, but Cassidy had an amazing flight that set the tone for the whole team. In the second round, I was ready for my first flight, and the team worked together to help me get everything connected on the tower. In the few moments before the count down, so many thoughts ran through my head. Would it deploy? Had I left out any steps in the detailed preparation? Was the rocket in the correct position on the tower? But after liftoff, I saw the second stage deploy, and a huge smile spread across my face. Hearing the words of congratulations and seeing the happy faces of my Dad and teammates, and hearing the RSO say "OK" from the loudspeaker, I knew it had qualified. Then, once recovered, I was relieved that the altimeter had captured a reading.

But the work was not finished: With 30 seconds left in the third round, we all raced to help Daniel get his rocket into the air. In the final seconds he got continuity, and we all cheered for his successful flight. Altogether, out team finished fourth place in the world championships—something that could not have happened apart from teamwork.

In the end, I had nothing to be nervous about. My teammates were awesome, and we enjoyed and supported each other throughout the entire contest. With their help, I had a successful trip, and I think I contributed to theirs as well.

Mission Accomplished!

"Thingfinder" (Annaka Moses)

My family started calling me "Thingfinder" after we read "Pippi Longstocking" because Pippi teaches her neighbor Annika how to find things other people do not see. It is true; I can find things no one else can find. My dad said I would do really well on the recovery crew. In Slovakia I found a part from a tractor, I found a squashed mouse, I found some live mice, I found some cotton in tin-foil and I found lots of rocket parts. I

tried to help the Polish team find their altimeter, but couldn't. I did find one whole rocket – Rachel's. Maybe no one else will call me Thingfinder, but I had a lot of fun.

"That'll buff out" (John Moses)

The day for our boost gliders had terrible weather with cold and wind and rain. We got our models trimmed nicely the day before when the weather was great and they soared for miles (literally). During competition, we could not get a single glider to glide. We eventually realized the bare balsa tail surfaces had warped in the moisture, but there was too much wind to re-trim the models with test glides. Everyone was getting really tense when one of my models came back with the nose crushed in from another case of; "This flight is not qualified". My comment was; "No problem, that'll buff out". Everyone cracked up at this and we got through the rest of the event.

Friendship (Magda Moses)

I think that the Holiday village, where the WSMC teams stayed, may have actually encouraged people to meet each other. Although afternoons and evenings before the division I was in, I spent a lot of time in the room preparing for the next day. Family is important to Slovakians, therefore I believe that the holiday village was designed for that purpose. There were two types of quarters, bungalows and suites ("town house" style cottages), which my family stayed in. It was more open than a hotel normally is. In addition I think that it helped the "family" of the US team interact more than they may have been able to in a typical hotel. We also got to interact with the other teams. There were lots of things in Slovakia that were remnants of the Communist Era and some things which were new. We could get ice cream that was the only ice cream sold in the Soviet Union at the store in the Holiday village. This ice cream tasted sort of like a coconut and was an ice cream sandwich with wafers holing the ice cream. It melted fast. I had heard about the fact that in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, Coke was popular while Pepsi, the only western soda allowed by the state, was shunned. I never anticipated that this was occurring to the extent that it is. Most of the drinks in the store, even the fruit juices called Cappy, were products of the Coca-Cola Company. Pepsi wasn't even sold in the Holiday Village store. The only products from

Pepsi that I remember were Pepsi Colas in some gas station. In addition many of the contest officials and fellow teams were nice and open. There were two Slovakians who were doing the junior check-ins, a man and woman (neither spoke English). The Slovakian man who was doing check-in was nice. He would always smile and say my name when I came by to check in a model or pick up the flight card and he saw my name on the card. The Chinese, as always, came with a mission; however, I felt that they interacted more with the other teams than they had in previous years.

We meet a man from Croatia, Tomislav Cvitic, at supper the night of the first day after the competition. He was the one-man Croatian team. He did give us some advice. At the first event in that day for juniors, S3 parachute duration, most of our team had trouble lighting the Serbian motors. Tomislav told us that the Serbian motors have clay in the nozzles. He suggested that we scrape it out before putting the igniter into the motor. He also said that there is very poor quality control in the factories that make those motors, and in other countries' factories, such as Poland's. He told us about some of the problems with certain types of European motors. He also talked about the trouble the model rocketry community in Croatia is having. Not many industries give them financial assistance and children coming into the sport often leave when they turn 15. He also knew about what troubles the US was having. He was surprised to learn about President Obama's endorsement of model rocketry. We meet up with Tomislav several more times throughout the competition week.

At the closing ceremony and banquet, I was wondering whether there would be an international team member dance, like the one at the closing ceremony in Serbia in 2010. No one seemed to be doing it. However, one of the Slovakian officials came up to the end of the US table and asked if we wanted to dance. We did dance. Some people joined in. Mr. Alway encouraged some people from neighboring tables to come and dance. Soon a large, international group was dancing. Dancing seemed to take away many of the divisions between different countries. We didn't talk while dancing, instead everyone communicated through dance. We even go a waiter to join for a minute or two. When my family left the arena, the party was still going on.

Expedition to Poland (Magda Moses)

I would like to describe the many wonderful experiences I had throughout the course of this trip, but there isn't enough room to do so in this article. I will instead tell you one of the many deep experiences that I experienced during this trip.

When we decided to drive into Poland on our free day, I knew it would be a great experience for me. I many not have known all of the experiences that I would have and all that I would learn from this trip when I started out. I did not know how great of an experience it would be. This drive showed much of the post-communist nature and realities of Slovakia and Poland. It would also bring my family and I back to the Motherland. My mother's side of the family is polish and we wanted to at least go over the border. My mother had been to Poland during the fall of communism when she was with a dancing group that was touring the country, but my siblings and I, as well as my dad, had never been there. Since Poland was so close to Lipovsky Mikalus, we at least wanted to cross over the border. We were either going to go to Bratislava or Krakow. The journey took us through mountains and beautiful landscapes as well as interesting architecture. We drove into the mountains which had seemed so close to the launch site. I had been in awe just looking at them from the launch site or the Holiday Village, where we were staying, (when the fog wasn't hiding them) and I was in awe driving through and over them. The scenery was magnificent. Although it was cold I opened the window to feel and smell the cold mountain air on my face. I had some time to ponder the deep questions. The villages we drove through were very revealing. We had noticed on our drive from Budapest to Lipovsky Mikalus, that there were stockpiles of wood. Dad, who had stayed at an observatory in Slovakia for his work the week before the competition, said that they used to be provided with natural gas from the Soviet Union and later Russia for cheap, but recently Russia has increased the price for providing them with cheap natural gas. So in order to keep warm they have to burn wood in their fireplaces. When we drove through villages we saw that the Slovakians had painted over buildings from the communist era with bright shades of colors. There were also a lot of geometric designs carved into or painted onto the houses. Most of the land we

drove through was undeveloped. There was a kind of rural feel to Slovakia. There were also many shrines in the villages.

We stopped at a gas station right on the border of Slovakia and Poland, on the Slovakian side. Annaka, my younger sister, got what was the Swiss army knife of pliers because our family had spent so much on gas. The border was open. As we crossed into Poland I was observant and thoughtful about the fact that I had just crossed over into my ancestral home. I was so happy that I was there and I just opened up.

“Pope John Paul II said that consumerism would destroy the soul of Poland”, my mom said later, “It wasn’t until I saw post-communist Poland that I realized what he meant.” I think the soul of Poland persist in some ways however it is very clear that post-communist Poland has been greatly affected by consumerism.

As soon as we crossed into Poland the vast areas of undeveloped land and no large towns almost immediately vanished and were replaced by giant billboard advertisements, new developments, and other. My mom pointed out that most of the buildings in the towns were new. However there were some things similar to Slovakia. There were shrines along the road and in villages. I remember one shrine that had ribbons stretched from the top of the shrine outwards to the bottom. I also remembered a graveyard or cemetery, which was very colorful with flowers placed on almost every grave.

We stopped at a truck stop in Poland to get lunch. My brother and I shared two kinds of perogi (a dumpling stuffed with meat or cheese). I chose this because I had eaten perogi at home but here I would get to eat perogi in Poland. We also learned there that Poland has not transitioned to Euros yet. Our waitress finally gave us an approximated price in Euros to pay, because it was the only currency, other than Hungarian Fourints, that we had. My dad ordered an espresso at the truck stop, it was delectable.

We decided to push on to Krakow. There were beautiful mountains and scenery in Poland. The drive was amazing and peaceful, except when we got in major intersections or into large cities. When we got into Krakow it was harder driving because of all of the intersections. At one point we saw a bus with people standing against the

windows making a long line of black leather jackets. We got to see the Wawel Castle. Krakow was where the Mongols were halted in their campaign into Europe. The Polish and others like to think that they overcame the Mongols; others think that the Mongols were distracted by events taking place in their homeland. In either case the Mongols came to Krakow and failed to take the city. We parked next to the Wawel, at the foot of the hill on which it stands. We didn't have time to go into it but I went out. Ever since I heard we were going into Poland during the trip I had wanted to get some polish dirt/earth. I had a pill case with a tight seal which I took with me. At first I was a little nervous and scraped a tiny pit of dirt into my hand from the ground at the foot of the Wawel. My mom asked if I had got it. I put the tiny amount of dirt into the case along with a leaf I had picked up. My mom said that it was not enough. She took out the leaf and helped me scrape some dirt from the hill on which Wawel Castle lies. When she was done I had a good amount of dirt in my case. When we told my grandmother about it she thought that I had done it because the dirt form the Wawel hill is powerful. I had planned to get just some earth from the Motherland. When I saw the Wawel I decided that I wanted to get some dirt from the hill on which the Wawel castle lies, where Poland was once ruled from. I still have this dirt today.

We drove back to Slovakia and stopped again at the gas station in Slovakia. My mom got us some rose hip water. I was worried that it would be like the "flavored" waters in the US. It was not. It was more like a syrup or extract of rose hip mixed with water. We all found it very tasty. A few days later, when we stopped at a gas station on the way to Budapest in Slovakia, I found a large bottle of rose hip water and got it. We didn't drink it that day. That night I was determined to pack it. My dad was unsure if it would make the bags too heavy. It didn't and we successfully brought it home.

My dad told us about how Slovakians really valued family. We drove back through the "fearsome Tatras".

"3-2-1-Launch… Not! (Jenna Butler)

I went to Slovakia this year to fly S1 on the US team. I flew on Monday, so I prepped my rockets as much I could on Sunday night, wrapping streamers, putting in

insulation, and clipping up Kevlar so that prepping would go faster the next day. Monday morning, I packed up all of my launch equipment, grabbed the box with all of my rockets in it, and went out to the field.

As soon as the round started, Cassidy, Emma (my two teammates) and I started prepping our rockets. In the first round, we got all of our rockets up, although my flight was disqualified due to not staging, Emma's altimeter didn't read, and Cassidy's model was lost. When the second round started, we got our rockets prepped and ready to launch, but we were having problems with the motors not igniting. It was really frustrating (like, REALLY, REALLY frustrating). Emma was the only one who was able to get a rocket off in that round, and, again, the altimeter didn't read. In the third round, both Cassidy's and my rockets were disqualified because of problems with staging. Emma had a really good flight, but her altimeter read a low altitude, one obviously lower than she had gotten.

We ended up in 11th (last) place for the team medal, and I tied for 32nd individual.

I was disappointed that we weren't able to win a medal, but I still had a great time. I got to visit the Schönbrunn Palace, get emotional about a sloth at the oldest zoo in the world (yeah, I'm talkin' about you Emma), take a tour of a cave, and ride ski lifts to the top of a mountain. I also got to see some friends that I hadn't seen in a while, and even make some new ones. It was a lot of fun ;) "

2012 WSMC Sidebar (Matt Steele)

The Steeles found out the value of leaving for Europe early. After delay in taking off, our plane was diverted from somewhere over Canada to Atlanta because of fuel measurement problems. When we finally arrived in Vienna 10 hours late, our bags did not. And, no bags showed up the next day. This was not a problem for the girls, as they brought a change of clothes in their carry-on bag. I carried the Bumper Wacs in my suitcase, so I had no clothes. A trip to the gift store got me a 78 euro polo shirt to wear. Three bags showed up on day 3 – they had been sent to Bolgna, Italy by mistake (Robyn said if her bags went to Italy, she wanted to go, too!). Two more bags showed

up the next day – only my tower and Robyn's suitcase were still MIA. My tower showed up the night before we were scheduled to leave for Bratislava, and Robyn's showed up (broken beyond repair) the next morning, an hour before we left. Robyn is convinced that the only reason the suitcase showed up was because she went out and bought some replacement clothes the day before.

At least we were not as unfortunate as the Berks, as Matt saw his model box still sitting on the runway – not loaded on the plane, as they pulled away from the gate. Only a heroic effort by Matt's mom Trish found the model box in a corner of a huge warehouse of lost baggage in Vienna.

Even with all the baggage issues, we had a great time in Vienna. We met up with Dr. Steve Kristal and his daughter Emma (Detroit, MI) and went to a wonderful dinner, followed by a fantastic concert featuring the music and dance of Vienna – mostly Mozart and Strauss. We also walked to the city center, where we saw the Lipizzaner stallions practice and the majestic St. Stephen's Cathedral. St. Stephen's Cathedral is the mother church of the Archdiocese of Vienna and the seat of the Archbishop of Vienna. We also had a wonderful dinner at a local gasthouse, complete with exceptional schnitzel, beer, and dessert.

On the way to Liptovsky Mikulas, we passed the field that the 1974 World Championships were held on. We also took the same road on the way to Poland in 1983 – at that time, it was just a two lane road with no rest stops. It was nice to see the progress in the past 29 years – there was clearly a much higher standard of living than there had been on my previous trip through the area.

The Tatralandia Holiday Village we stayed at for the meet was nice. It appears that the area started out as a hot springs resort, and over time, migrated into a full-fledged water park and tourist destination over time (think of a poor man's Wet 'n Wild). I am sure it is the nicest place many of the Eastern European competitors have ever stayed for a World Championships.

We got a four-person "villa" which had two floors, four beds, a bathroom and a small kitchen table & sink. No microwave, but it did have a refrigerator to cool Robyn's

“Coke Light” (the European equivalent of Diet Coke). The beds had virtually no padding, just a wood base covered by a thick blanket.

One of the “lessons learned” from the last world championships was the fact it was hard to pick out other US team members at a distance when were on recovery teams. I suggested to John Hochheimer that we get some bright shirts that would make it easy to see us on recovery. John got us these great bright green shirts that made us “outstanding in our field”. I thought folks might not like them, but they were clearly a popular choice with the Junior team. The concept worked well – when Daniel Kelton and I were well over a mile away from the launch site, the spotters at the pad could pick us out with ease.

All in all the food was pretty good, although you could tell how spoiled Americans have become – we missed our fresh vegetables. We could see them growing in many of the gardens in the area, but most of the meals consisted of meat and potatoes. We did spring for a taxi ride into town to visit the local McDonalds and to do some shopping. I got to enjoy “McShrimp” and they had a “McCountry” sandwich, which was pretty much a Big Mac with sausage patties instead of the hamburger patties. Our favorites were the Magnum chocolate McFlurries, though.

Scale day was a lot of fun. The Junior team had Little Joe I models to fly – very nice. There were some problems flying them on the first flight, so Emma Kristal and Rachel Nowak had to fly again. Rachel got a great flight. Emma’s worked well, but did burn off one of the extra chutes and landed softly. As it was floating down, the RSO said (as she usually did before disqualifying a flight) “I’m sorry, that flight is……..OK.” She played it perfect – what a great sense of humor and a great job she did all week.

The banquet was a lot of fun, with an open bar and lots of food. There was dancing afterwards – even Bob Always got into it. The Chinese team eagerly traded for US teddy bears (made in China!) and Matt traded a Bumper WAC t-shirt to the Pole who won the bronze medal in the scale altitude event.

We had a great time! Slovakia and Austria were beautiful and we had a great time with old friends, and made a n

Daniel Kelton

I would say that my most memorable part of the WSMC was how our junior S5 team really pulled together at the end of the 3rd round. We were low on time, I didn't yet have a qualified flight, and we were under a lot of pressure. The adults wanted me to go first to make sure I had time to get a flight off, but because we would have to switch the piston system for my rocket, either Cassidy or Rachel probably would not have time to fly. The three of us thought that if we launched them first, we would have time to fly everyone. So we launched their rockets, getting the next rocket on the pad even before the smoke cleared from the previous launch. When it was time for my flight, we ran into a problem- my clip whip was old and was starting to fail. When we hooked up my Bumper-WAC, we at first couldn't get any continuity, and with some work managed to get really spotty continuity. Because it uses 2 igniters, continuity issues presented a high chance of a DQ. However, we had 1 minute left, and all we could do was pray and hope for the best. We checked continuity again, called the RSO, and started the countdown.

This time, (almost) everything worked flawlessly, and I finally had a qualified flight! I said almost, however, because my flight did not go nearly as high as I predicted, and I puzzled over this for 3 days before finally discovering the reason. My piston jammed, and the lower stage essentially just flew out of a tower with no piston. If not for this, there is a good chance that we would have taken team bronze.

This was a really fun experience, and I will definitely be there in two years!

Experiencing World Rocket Championship 2012 (Nicholas Nowak)

When I first got into the US team, I felt proud to have made it. Just thinking of going to Slovakia was such a good feeling. But in a year's time, I would be there alongside my sister who also made the team. What would feel like ages till it came turned into days as soon as the next year came. I wasn't worried about it until it came around. When it did, I was either excited or just nervous. I didn't know what to expect. A team expecting the best from everyone, or a team looking to see everyone try their best.

Hard challenges from other countries, which I knew would most likely happen. All I mostly knew was that this was going to be the longest week for me and everyone else.

At the beginning of the week, on a rainy Sunday morning, I met the US Junior team. I didn't know what to expect, but when I met them, t was the best thing that happened on the trip. Just playing cards with them at first was fun and just starting to get to know them was even better. Before I knew it, I was playing cards with them whenever I could. Later in the week, both my sister and I got along with everyone on the team and we were looking forward for anything that would happen this week.

There were many events that happened that I could never forget going on that trip. Going to the water park that was at our hotel with friends was a great time. Playing a Russian card game with Russians. Playing Billiards with Bulgarians. Seeing our success of our rocket models even though we didn't win anything. That was what I like mostly about this trip. Just interacting with the other countries was what made the trip for me and seeing our success of our models. This may be a cliché, but even though I didn't win a medal, I did have the most amount of fun possible. That's definitely a win for me.

My WSMC Experience (Michael Nowak)

This was my first experience at a WSMC. My son Nick and daughter Rachel made the team and my wife and I came along as supporters. The entire experience was very memorable. None of us had ever been to Europe, and just the travel experience would be memorable, but there was much more than that. After my children made the team, and attended the Capitol Cup, I began to notice the bonding that developed among the Junior team members. This continued through the Great Lakes Cup. At meetings and social events, there was always the "Junior table". This bonding would become very important during the week of the WSMC. Being half way around the world in a foreign country in a competitive event could be very intimidating. Without being coached, the Junior team found a way to bond, support each other through some difficult times and have fun in the process. Although they did not come home with many medals, it was not for lack of effort.

I remember being on the field during the practice day, and having two Juniors from another country ask questions about our Junior team. "Is this the first time they are all flying together?" "Are they all from the same city?" "Are they all from the same state?" I explained that they are from multiple cities and states from all over the United States and that for many of them it was the first time they were flying together. It was apparent that this was different from most of the countries, whose teams practiced together extensively before the meet. In spite of these differences, it was very apparent throughout the week that they acted like a team. They represented the USA in a very favorable manner to all of those present.

My FAI Experience (Rachel Nowak)

My week at WSMC was certainly an unforgettable one. It all really started for me the day we got on the bus to get to Tatralandia, our hotel, which was more like a little town. But even before the bus ride, all of us juniors were in the restaurant of the hotel we stayed in over night in Bratislava. We just got to actually talk to each other and play some card games and just hang out. Knowing some of these people a little better made the bus ride so much more fun. I could already tell I had a great week ahead of me.

The day the actual competition started, I was on recovery with my friends and we had a blast, but at the same time still worked and did what we were supposed to do. That lasted the whole week until Saturday when it was the day of my event, S7, or Scale. My teammates and I were so excited and nervous to fly our Little Joes. We were told that everyone was going to be watching us, and they were. Emma went first and we were all cheering her on. Her flight was great, until her parachutes shredded and she got disqualified. But, that was okay, because we still had the second round later in the day. Next, it was my turn. I was extremely nervous now. They called off my number and started the countdown. My rocket went up, but curved and landed head first in the ground right next to me. It didn't deploy or anything and the tower broke into pieces. I was lucky that people from a bunch of other countries helped and picked up all the pieces. It was devastating to see my rocket that I had worked so hard on fall to pieces, but I couldn't keep thinking about it. I went back to the tent and repaired my model. Sure, my rocket didn't look perfect or pretty or anything like that, but at this point

it was just a matter of getting my engines to ignite. Only one ignited on the previous flight, and we couldn't figure out why that happened. Campbell's flight went great and she was done for the day.

Later in the day, Round 2 was starting and Emma and I were the first two to fly. I went first and the fight went perfectly. Emma was next, and her flight went perfectly too, despite the RSO joking around with us and telling us, "Sorry, but this flight is . . .okay." We were all filled with joy that we all got qualified flights. We ended up in fifth place. But that didn't even matter to me. The best part, to me, was how close we had all come by the end of the week. Though none of us wanted to leave the field, the hotel, or even the waterpark, it was time to go. But not before the banquet. We got to talk to all of our friends from other countries. However, soon enough, it was time to go back to the hotel and get on our bus that left at 1:00 A.M. Luckily, I can still keep in touch with all my friends from the U.S. team, and other teams, through social networking. Overall, I think I can safely say that my week at WSMC was one of the best of my life so far.

2012 WSMC Report (Jim Filler)

I have flown model rockets for over 40 years now and even though I have participated and overseen numerous events and activities, going to the World Space Modeling Championships with the US Team in Slovakia was amazing. I flew for the S5C team which translates to Scale Altitude with up to "C" class motors. The event is two parts the first being static score for craftsmanship, and the second part being for altitude using a very small altimeter.

We arrived in Slovakia on Saturday morning and got a look at the area. The contest range sat on a very large open clover field centered in a valley that looked like something out of a storybook. The valley was surrounded by very picturesque mountains everywhere you looked. We stayed at a resort with a water park that looked to be a ski resort in the winter months. The small villas located behind the main building gave a "feel' of being in an Olympic Village. The trip included our lodging and three meals a day served in the main building and lunch served at the field.

Sunday we got to go to the field to allow flyers to practice flying at the field and for the US team a chance to fly the 10mm European motors. The organizers of the event did a very nice job of having tents erected for each team based on the number of members. The US team had 55 people in attendance including flyers, supporter's coaches and even an official timer for the contest. Our tent was huge and did a nice job of keeping the elements off of us. That evening after dinner we went to the auditorium for the opening ceremonies.

Monday started off with a fast pace with lots and lots of contest flights taking to the air in that first round of the day. I spent my time the first two days in the senior flight lane with the motor box key. The tested motors are kept in a locked box and a coach or designee keeps the key to get team members motors at the beginning of each round. The motors are taken out of the box and given to the timers to verify and initial. Each flight lane has designated timers that are assigned to your lane. What struck me as awesome about this entire team event is how each member shows up each day even when they are not flying an event to help and support the flyers in the event being flown. Based on the event, we had several people watching Kestrel meters which monitor wind and temp changes that assist in picking good air to fly into for duration events. We would have a dozen or more people down range at different points and distances to recover these high performance models. Teamwork is an understatement! Wow! This team worked like a well oiled machine. This made me very proud to be a part of Team USA!

The first three days of the contest the weather was pretty steady with moderate temps and mild thermal activity. Wednesday night a storm rolled through and Thursday started out cool cloudy and breezy with the wind blowing 15+ to the southeast. Did I mention there was a lake beyond the potato field to the south west? Thursday morning was Gyrocopter for the seniors and many of them headed for and landed in the lake! The Chinese team rented a boat and proceeded to start recovering any and all models they could pluck from the lake. (I saw pictures).

Congratulations go out to Zachary Stenberg for his bronze medal in S8D (D Radio controlled rocket glider) and to the Senior S8EP team for a bronze team medal.

Before I knew it the event was coming to an end and the closing ceremonies were held at the arena Saturday night. Overall it was one heck of a trip that I will never forget. To be a part of the US Space Modeling Team and flying in the “Olympics of Model Rocketry” made me very proud and a memory that I will always look back on with very fond memories.

Learning how to fly S8D in two weeks…(Brendan O’Bryan)

Before I practiced on an S8D model I practiced on a flight simulator (Realflight6) and a small RC plane (Parkzone Ember2). I flew those for two months, even taking the flight simulator on vacations.

When I got home I got to do my first S8 boosts. That was two weeks before we left for Slovakia. The boosts were kind of easy if the model was trimmed. But if the model was not trimmed the boosts were harder to control. Before we left for Slovakia I had about 30 boosts, only 6 or 8 on a full D engine.

In Slovakia I practiced with my new models and they were pretty good. During the S8D contest I felt nervous because of the high winds. My boosts were difficult but I kept control somewhat. I did get three qualified flights.

When it was done I said ‘Boo-yah!’.

A Fascinating Journey to 2012 WSMC S7 (by Chris Flanigan)

“Life is a journey, not a destination.”
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

The flight of my 1:48 Saturn IB at the WSMC started nicely but, unfortunately, did not end well. At ignition, one of the eight motors in the first stage did not ignite. With only seven motors powering a large/heavy scale model, the acceleration was insufficient to trigger the electronic timers in stages 2 and 3. Stage 1 operated and recovered normally, but the unpowered upper assembly arced over and impacted. After the flight, some teammates came by to offer condolences. I very much appreciated the thought, but I wasn’t really that sad or upset. I looked at the flight as another learning point along the wonderful journey of trying to build and fly a good scale model.

The path leading up to S7 at the 2012 WSMC was an interesting experience. At the 2010 WSMC, I flew a large model of the Russian N-1 launch vehicle (the Russian equivalent of the Saturn V). The N-1 got a lot of attention since that prototype had not been previously flown at a WSMC. However, the N-1 is not a competitive entry for a WSMC since, due to Cold War secrecy, the vehicle has no significant external lettering, flags, or other markings.

For 2012, I decided to enter a Saturn IB. I started with the Apogee kit (which is an excellent kit – highly recommended!). The first build was customized to include a four-motor cluster in the first stage and electronics in the upper assembly. A second build was started and would have been a two stage configuration. However, I decided to transition from the 1:70 Apogee model to a larger 1:48 model in order to fly a model with eight motors in Stage 1, complete with nozzles in the correct locations and orientations.

The journey since then has been fascinating. I met David Weeks, the incredible scale modeler and historian who did the remarkable drawings of the Saturn IB and other launch vehicles. His information, plus seeing his award-winning 1:48 plastic model of the Saturn IB, gave direction on how to proceed. I also received help and suggestions from many other scale modelers and teammates including Josh Tschirhart, Marc McReynolds, John Pursley, Jay Marsh, Dave Fitch, James Duffy, Matt Steele, Steve Kristal, Jim Filler, and more. Many thanks to all for their kind assistance and encouragement.

The Saturn IB is an amazing launch vehicle, and learning about it was a great part of the journey. The more you investigate each component, the more you find out how intricate the vehicle was. For example, the launch escape motor was not a single "crayon" but was three separate motors, each with a specific function. The classic black-and-white fuel and LOX tanks were not simple cylinders but had electronics tunnels, fill/drain valves, umbilical panels, flight termination charges, and access doors. Most of the interstage and tank adapters were skin/stringer construction, not corrugation as implied by typical vacuum-formed wraps. The Service Module was extremely complex due to the segmented structural design and the placement of the white thermal

radiators. Learning of these and other detailed features gives you much better appreciation of how much work went into the design and engineering of these original spaceships.

Building a flying a 1:48 scale model of the Saturn IB was also a great learning process. I started with a two stage boilerplate model. Some initial flights had “whoop-de-do” staging incidents, leading to detailed flight photo interpretation to understand and resolve the issues. The boilerplate model was rebuilt into a three stage configuration, with some associated learning pains. To get additional score, the liftoff event was augmented with a scale model of the LC-34 launch pad, a pre-launch motor to simulate ignition prior to liftoff, and the original NASA audio of the Apollo 7 launch. Hearing the original NASA countdown brings back great memories of the Apollo days!

The lessons learned were applied to the 2012 WSMC model. There were some unexpected late “crisis” learning experiences, such as finding out that the 1:48 decals for the large “UNITED STATES” lettering on the black fuel tanks did NOT come with a white backing like the Apogee decals do. White trim Monokote to the rescue! Another unexpected challenge was that the 2012 WSMC organizers announced on Friday that model turn-in had been moved to Saturday night instead of Sunday night. One less day for last minute details! This resulted in some interesting working arrangements in hotel lobbies and foosball tables. Thanks to Trip Barber and Chris Kidwell for helping to get the model submitted to the scale judging room with five minutes to spare.

S7 flight day was a great team experience. Steve Humphries had a tent stake that was a perfect fit to secure the launch pad. Terrill Willard handled the NASA countdown audio. Trip Barber helped with the prelaunch checklist and handled the pre-ignition motor. Petra (our liaison/interpreter) helped coordinate the NASA countdown with the RSO, who quickly understood the concept and rushed to place his microphone so that the audience could hear. George Gassaway took some nice photos of pre-launch and initial ascent of the model.

In summary, the journey to 2012 WSMC was a great experience. I hope to continue the journey to the WSMC in 2014.

“It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.”
— Ursula K. LeGuin

Trip Barber and Chris Flanigan prepare the 1:48 Saturn IB for flight.


Initial ascent of the Saturn IB.

Senior S1B Field Report (Bob Kreutz)

It was a day like any other day: ham & cheese sandwiches, scrambled eggs and kielbasa with sliced tomatoes for breakfast; of course, they were out of coffee by the time I got there. Only today, the second day of the WSMC was to be S1B Senior Altitude competition. During the morning events was check in for S1 models. I had 2 types of models to compete with, a classic one piece straight body and a boattailed aeroshell design. Along with fellow teammate Matt Steele, my first attempt to get the models passed failed and we needed to trim our motor tubes projecting from the booster. Due to the 18mm rule, we had questioned whether the boattailed design would be acceptable and I was prepared to fly 2 non-boattailed models. However, other similar models were being presented and passed. It became obvious, after the British team breezed through their inspection, that as long as the sustainer's aft reducer was covered when the stages were joined, it was acceptable. There had been some confusion about this in the rules. So, I needed to take off of my motor tube on one end of the booster and add about ½" of 18mm tube to the front. I didn't have any. Despite

the fact that you fly against them, this is where true team spirit comes to play, when Matt Steele produced exactly the part that I needed! Thanks Matt! With the modifications in place, I returned to check-in and the models both passed – it was time to fly high!

Trip Barber had done this the previous WSMC and was well prepared to be the first one off the pad. The last time I had been in the lane was 2002. Previous efforts were good enough for the Silver in S1, but I had radically changed designs to accommodate using lighter European booster motors. I relied upon Trip's experience with flash-tube staging. I watched Trip's flight, straight and true for 568m, it gave me confidence as we had similar designs. Tweaking my classic model as Trip had shown, I got in the queue. As the RSO approached I suddenly realized I had completely forgotten to give a heads up to US Recovery! A quick shout out to TM John Langford got those not chasing down Trip's model at the ready. I was amazed how quickly it all came together and it was GO time! With a quick prayer ("Lord, don't let me screw up") a quick dedication to Ole Ed Pearson (who was ailing back home) and a quick push of the button, my first flight was up. It squirreled and corkscrewed out of the tower due to light booster body wall deforming. Straightening out as it flew, the model staged vertical and true and I knew I had done the best I could. The RSO lost sight of the sustainer, so did I, and never called the flight qualified. That required a return; it would be up to our recovery team. As luck would have it, the sustainer landed in the highway right next to Chris Kidwell, who did a snatch-n-grab to save it from an on-coming truck. With the flight qualified by the RSO, I headed off with Lucy, my "timer," (who now has my Team t-shirt among a number of other US team memorabilia) to get the altimeter read - "If" it had functioned properly. I pulled out the Adrel at the recording table, three blinks! It had recorded! The bespeckled Leszek Szwed from Adrel connected it to the computer and I watched for a sign it had produced a readable result. I saw his eyebrows lift above the glasses: "A very good altitude" he said in English, "632 meters." "Wow!" I said. Lucy smiled. The real-time results board listed me currently in 3rd! I quickly returned to lane and reported the score to John Langford: "632 – I'm in 3rd." Despite my joy, we looked at each other with signs of apprehension: "It won't hold…" I said, and we both knew it. There would be more work to do this day… Meanwhile, back at the lane… Matt

Steele had attempted his 1st round flight and encountered problems. With a decent boost, the second stage ignited but there was no stage separation!!! The same thing had happened to me practicing at the Capitol Cup! The motor thrusted, burning down through booster destroying the bottom of the model. DQ. Matt was down to one model and it was on to Round 2. We all moved on to our second models. Trip and Matt prepped again and were ready to fly before me. Trip got in the second round air first with a good flight that visible just after ejection. But upon return, there had apparently been a premature trigger of the altimeter and no results so he received a “no close” and would be allowed to re-fly within the round: high pressure and dwindling time. Matt got off a good flight. We watched the sustainer for his tracking powder as it disappeared during the delay ascent. We thought we heard the ‘pop’ of the ejection but then – nothing. No sign of a streamer. No orange tracking powder. It just disappeared! Track Lost. Trip had begun reprepping when I was ready with the second model that Matt helped modify for check-in. I had high expectations for this design, despite its controversial boattail. This time I made sure recovery was ready, some of whom were still off searching for Matt’s sustainer. I switched to second stage motors that had inadvertently been placed in the Junior Team motor box and had to be transferred to our lane though John Langford’s intervention with the judges. My second flight performed similar to the first, corkscrewing out of the tower then straightening out for a clean staging. Presenting the model for altimeter reading, an internal pin on the altimeter bay broke and I couldn’t get it out. There is a 20 minute limit on returns and I could see through the body there were the correct 3 blinks on the unit. I had no choice. I returned to the download table with a surgical scissors and carefully cut the altimeter out of the sustainer, destroying model #2. All for naught, while we did get a reading, it was a disappointing 461 meters. Closing in on the end of the round, Trip was back in the tower for his reflight, but due to the altimeter glitching, he decided to cancel the flight and do a clean re-prep for Round 3. The final round had me returning to my 1st model, Matt using his surviving #2 booster with his #1 sustainer and Trip doing a reprep on his model. Smart that he did, Trip got off another clean flight, bettering his previous result to 581 meters, moving into 12th place. Matt kept having problems with the altimeter. Despite using precautions against wind gusts, it kept tripping and needed

to be returned to the station for a reset – 3 times!!! I know how frustrating this must have been for Matt, not to mention the pressure and stress, which he weathered well. Well enough to get his 3rd flight off in time, but staging problems again resulted in a lost sustainer and another Adrel planted in the potato field. I was on the pad towards the end of the round, feverishly attempting to fix a problem with a tangled recovery system. There are times when you should stop and reprep, competitors know when they reach that point and it's the advice I usually give others. But time ran out in the round before I could and I settled for the 10th place finish. One note of vindication, I finally ended the argument of "who is tallest" with my friend Oleg Voronov from Russia, who bested me in Slovenia for the Gold Medal. He came in a respectable 14th. So, for this year, I have an inch or two on him and I'm: just a little bit taller! I want to thank my teammates: Trip and Matt for their help and no less, US Team Recovery for their diligence and incredible "never quit!" attitude. So, while this isn't a story about bringing home a gold medal, it is one of teamwork and teammates, both in the lane and on recovery. And it worked well to get me into the top 10, but it was all due to the combined "team" effort! Other competitors brought home "heavy metals" to remind them of their personal accomplishments this day, but my reward was being part of the intense and successful group effort, a team mentality, all focused on same goal: a "Band of Brothers" and sisters! We may have come up a little short but, we'll get 'em when we're back in 2014!!!

Junior S5 Rebuild (Bob Kreutz)

Round 2 – Cassie Steele's Bumper WAC failed to stage and pranged just an inch from my outstretched hand. If only I had been a half second quicker… We gathered 'round – Oh, the carnage! I looked at Matt, "Can you rebuild?" And with his approval it was: Lets go! Within a moment we were back at the Team tent with pieces in hand.

Cassie eyed the remains of her scale model. "No Dad – Don't do it!" (don't put us through this) and walked to the back of the tent, absolutely devastated. "You tell her," said Matt – "she'll listen to you." From the back of the tent was heard: "Dad, PLEASE!..."

Taking a brief break from the eight hands on the model rebuild, “Cassie,” I said, “I was in the same situation in 2002, same model! The Bumper never staged and augured in, busting into hundreds of pieces. I picked them all up and slowly made my way back to the Team tent resigned that, my World Championship was over. But, Ross Hironaka saw what had happened, walked over, and with a different set of eyes, took one look at the model and said “It can be - rebuilt…!” Whaaa? I was stunned!” “With in seconds, Ross had 5 people all rebuilding some part of the model from all the pieces we salvaged, it wasn’t pretty, compromises were made, but it flew (single stage) before the end of the 3rd round – You know, it was just enough, we got the Team Bronze that year, all because someone had a plan and a little faith. Dad’s got a plan, Whaddaya say?” (NJ accent intentionally included)

Cassie rebuilt the Bumper and was the first one out of the tent. She got that bird prepped and a new altimeter in record time. It was in the air for another flight with less than 5 minutes left in the contest. I think Cassie had the “Right Stuff” to be a World Class Competitor – and on this day, she taught us she did too!

[I was able to tell that story at Ross’s Wedding.]

Junior S5 Decisions (Bob Kreutz)

There is just so much a Team Manager, 8 coaches, assistants, advisors and parents can do at the edge of the lane, to prepare their FAI Junior competitors for the WSMC. So it was with the Junior S5B Scale Altitude Team: Rachel Clark, Daniel Kelton & Cassie Steele. “Tighten the shock cord” – “check your piston fit” – “Safety key in!” – it just reminded me of myself, at my daughter’s last basketball game. It was the last minutes of the third and final round of the event and all 3 flyers still needed to get in the air, they were in contention for a possible Team Medal. Rachel needed a higher altitude, Cassie had rebuilt a crashed model and was going for broke and Daniel had yet to get a qualified result from 2 previous flights. If he could just get a moderate altitude, they had a shot at it. He, we believed, was the priority flight. Cassie and Daniel were finishing prepping when Rachel stepped down the lane. She and Cassie had similar models so she set the group launcher and prepared for a piston launch. 5

Minutes read on the clock, it was notoriously inaccurate. There couldn't be any misfires which had plagued the juniors, this time. Confidently, she launched at the end of the count, staged straight up – qualified! "Get Daniel up" we all cried. Rachel returned to help her teammates, and for a huddle. But it was Cassie who emerged with her re-build to fly. "Get Daniel UP!" But despite our instructions, they were going to do it their way. She quickly and adeptly towered her model and being the only one in the queue, got a quick count from the RSO - she was in the air! Ironically, while it failed to stage in round 2, this launch was only the sustainer. DQ. But she still had her 1st round score! 3 MINUTES to go but was there going to be time for Daniel??? By the time we had lowered our eyes from following Cassie's sustainer, still in the sky, Cassie had removed the piston from the tower and was erecting the one for Daniel – she hadn't even watched the end of her flight – that was the job of the recovery team! Rachel had the clip-whip and had stretched out the controller. Daniel stepped into the lane – the RSO watched closely knowing time was extremely critical. 2 MINUTES!!! OMG - HE was in the tower! 90 SECONDS!!! The piston was not cooperating, but Daniel rearranged the wires and raced to the controller... 60 SECONDS!!!! Safety IN and, and, and – silence – no continuity. Reset. Safety IN – Nothing!!!! Fists clenched on my knees: "Pull IT, Pull the Piston!! Go without it!" I emphatically whispered to Matt, as if Daniel could hear my advice... Daniel stood his ground - 30 SECONDS!!!!!!! And then, as if just slow to respond, a slight tone was heard growing from the controller, almost fighting to get out. Patience on Daniels part proved prudent. The tone became stronger, Daniel raised his hand and called for the launch. 5-4-3 – It was taking too long! Daniel hit the button as the RSO called "Start!" and he was in the air! Before the model could stage, the gun ending the final round echoed across the range and this contest ended: and flight was declared "Qualified!" They did it! As time literally ran out!

We learned later that the Junior team decided the order of flight in that huddle - based on Time. Time, they were keenly aware of. If they had swapped out the piston for Daniel to fly 2nd, it would have taken too long to set it back up for Cassie. Only by working together as a "team" could they beat the clock and get all 3 flyers in the air by the end of the round! The junior S5 Team, showed more poise, more knowledge, more confidence in their abilities, than could ever have been "taught" to them. Maturity is

what comes from that experience of: “being in the arena.” Because, there is just so much a Team Manager, 8 coaches, assistants, advisors and parents can do, at the edge of the lane…

A Report On US Team Support (Bob Kreutz)

I’m not sure there has ever been a report on the US Team Supporters and the valuable contributions they bring to a WSMC. Well, just what is Team Support? A ticket to the dance, or much more? Team Support are the individuals that travel with the team with an interest in FAI Competition, but not as competitors. They may be skilled timers like John Hochheimer (our NAR VP) with a history of national events and competition, or simply a wife, husband, or parent who showed up to help keep order and some semblance of normality during periods of intense strain and tension. But there was one Supporter I’d like to mention that made the trip for the first time: Bob Alway. Now, I got over and back packing my models, launcher and clothing in one suitcase that weighed 50 lbs. Bob, in order to “support” the Team brought 4 bags, one of which contained a week’s supply of Gatorade, 70 lbs worth! GO Bob! In another, Bob had brought a complete range kit stocked with every imaginable epoxy, super glue, sand paper or construction supply and was ready at the waiting if any competitor needed something. GO Bob! I would say Mr. Alway broke down the barriers of communication with his camera. Taking photos much the time during the day, Bob would spend half the night printing them from his photo printer (from bag 3?) for timely hand-outs the next day. And he covered all teams and all events. GO Bob! This guy could pull an award from his pocket at any given time and diffuse the most stressful of situations. One of our Junior members, Emma, was just beside herself after God-knows-how-many attempts to get her S5B Scale Altitude Bumper to ignite, when Bob produced the first ever Field Medal for “Most Igniters Used In A Day.” We ALL celebrated that one with a stress releasing laugh and a cheer for Emma, realizing the true merit of this spontaneous award - that acknowledged Emma’s resilience, fortitude and persistent attitude. GO Bob! Lastly, it should ultimately be noted that Bob Alway is the only person I know that has ever, Ever, gotten George Gassaway to Dance. So, when it comes to the 2014 WSMC and they list Team Supporters: GO Bob!

After Thoughts:“The WSMC: there is no other time or place in the world where 8 guys, from 5 nations, with no ability to communicate in anything other than their own native language, can sit at a table in a small hotel room eating anchovies and ChexMix, drinking peach vodka and beer, making unintelligible gestures, laughing so hard they cry or fall down, and emerge from the room in the wee hours, with a complete and clear understanding of all that was said and done, simply because they all filled in the missing pieces in their heads and were one of the same mind.”

“The fun begins when you send the translator home….”

The Bittersweet 4th (Cassidy Steele)

Tension was riding high Tuesday night. The junior S5 team had picked up their models and were getting ready for the stressful scale altitude competition the following day. We were all a bit disappointed--static points had not been as high as what we had expected them to be. I, personally, was not expecting Wednesday to be any better than our disaster of S1, but I knew I had to do my best, since it was my last event as a junior and the first event for either of my teammates.

We prepped the following day, and my model was the first off--a miraculous flight of over 400 meters. At the end of the first round, I was in third, though I eventually dropped to eighth when the range closed. Daniel had some difficulties the first two rounds, and when we had less than five minutes left, he finally got off a qualified flight. We were ecstatic--there were rumors flying of us taking third, then second. We were thrilled to be in such high standing, so when it turned out we were in fourth, we were still happy. It was a bit bittersweet, though, to have done so well but be just short of a medal was a little hard to deal with.

From Emma

I'm Emma Kristal.

I'm the one in the middle, getting hugged by my teammates.

Can you tell if I'm getting hugged because my rocket flew really well or if I'm getting hugged because my rocket just crashed? Can you tell if my teammates and I just won the Gold medal, or if we just came in last place?

No, you can't tell that from this picture. But what you CAN tell is how my teammates feel about me, and how I feel about them. And of everything anyone can tell you about being on the U.S. Spacemodeling team, THAT's the most important.

I've been in lots of rocket competitions, and lots of other competitions as well. But there is nothing in all of competition that beats being on the U.S. Spacemodeling team. Nothing else even comes close!

My dad always says that "you win by getting on the team, the prize is that you get to go to Europe and fly rockets."

But he's wrong.

The prize is what you see in this picture.

This picture is my gold medal, and I won at least a hundred more of them being on the team this year.

My Experience at the World Championships (Alyssa Stenberg)

I enjoyed going to my second world championships in Slovakia. It was really pretty at the flying field, and we stayed right next to a water park! My brother and I practiced a lot for this year's championship, but I never expected what happened during the competition.

During the week, I enjoyed being with the other U.S team members, and getting to meet people from all over the world, some of whom I've met before in Serbia two years ago. I turned thirteen in Slovakia, and the U.S team threw a surprise birthday party for me! I really enjoyed myself and I was grateful that they did this for me.

My brother Zackary and I flew S8D RC Rocket Glider. I had some problem with the radio in my rocket glider and no control at all in the first round. That was sad, but I then flew my backup model for the second and third rounds and did quite well. At the end of the third round, we found out that Zackary was going to win an individual bronze medal! I was really shocked and happy for him. My dad and I were so proud of him when he was on the podium, receiving his medal and trophy. He is only 8 and looked so small up there compared with those kids that were 10 years older than he was!

We all had fun on our day off. Slovakia is beautiful, especially the countryside. I was quite sad to leave when the competition was over. But still, I loved being there and we are already practicing for the next world championships in 2014!

My trip to the World Championships as a Competitor (Zack Stenberg)

This is my second time going to a World Championship. The first time was to Serbia but I was only 6 years old and just a supporter. This time, I went as a competitor. I flew S6 Streamer Duration and S8D Remote Control Rocket Glider. I had

to practice flying a lot for S8D because I wasn't even supposed to be on the team. I only found out that I was competing in April when they agreed to let me be on the team.

When we got to Slovakia I practiced almost every day. On the day when I flew S8D, I was really, really nervous. The weather was really windy so I was glad I had done all that practice. After I flew the first round was glad that the round was over, it was hard to keep my glider pointed perfectly into the wind to get the longest time possible. I was so sad for my sister when she had a problem with her radio and her first flight crashed. I was not so nervous when I had to fly the second and third rounds. But I was still very happy that the flying was all over and I could relax! I was happy with the way that I flew and my dad said I could be in the top 10!

After all the flying was done, I was hanging around when they started yelling that I was going to win a bronze medal! Wow! When we left the US, I thought I would never win a medal. I think everyone there was shocked because I am only 8 years old! I was so happy, I was crying happy tears. This is the best thing ever!

I like Slovakia. I like the country because it is so beautiful. The water park next door was awesome too. I had the best team mates ever. I was so happy to be on the medal stand and was so proud to see the American flag flying during the ceremony.

Report (Campbell Duffy)

2012 marked my first adventure as a member of the US Spacemodeling team. After qualifying at the team selection in Cincinnati, I competed in the Junior S7 Scale event with my teammates Emma Kristal and Rachel Nowak. We each made models of the Little Joe LJ-1A, each one with unique and different details. Unfortunately, we did not win a medal but we still had an extraordinary experience. I met so many wonderful people from other countries and from my own team.

The base hotel for the Championships was at a water park resort in Liptovsky Mikulas, Slovakia called "Tatralandia." The Juniors and I very much enjoyed going to the water park many times! The resort was beautiful, but it was not like American waterparks at all, as they had a pretty casual approach to safety. There were limited lifeguards and many times we came shooting off of waterslides face first! The Junior

team was full of wonderful people whom I made great friends with, such as Rachel Clark, Jenna Butler, Katherine Humphrey, Daniel Kelton, Emma Kristal, Anna Moses, John Moses, Magda Moses, Nick Nowak, Rachel Nowak, Brendan O'Bryan, Cassidy Steele, Alyssa Stenberg and Zackary Stenberg. Bill Stine was our Junior team manager and Katie Steele was his assistant. All of us grew very close to each other, and it was sad when we had to leave because I felt like I had known them forever. I still email and text many of them daily, and I'm looking forward to seeing them all next year at NARAM for the 2014 Team Selection Event.

I started building my model in October of 2011. My father designed the blueprints and design that Emma, Rachel and I used. My body tube is fiberglass, hand-made out of fabric fiberglass rolled onto a mandrel and coated with epoxy. After the epoxy cured we slid the tube off of the mandrel and trimmed it to the correct size. My body tube is silver black and orange like the rest of the model. The Little Joe fins are made out of balsa covered in plastic sheet and painted silver, black and orange. The painting was the longest step but it looked gorgeous when I was done. My body tube is silver black and orange like the rest of the model. All of the building took about 300 hours over the course of ten months. When I finished I was very proud of my work. If you are working on your model and you hit a hard spot, keep going! It is very rewarding when you're done. Model rocketry is a wonderful hobby, and I can't wait to go to the 2014 World Championships in Bulgaria! ~Campbell Duffy, first year junior scale team competitor