

How the NAR Works

by Trip Barber, NAR 4322
NAR President

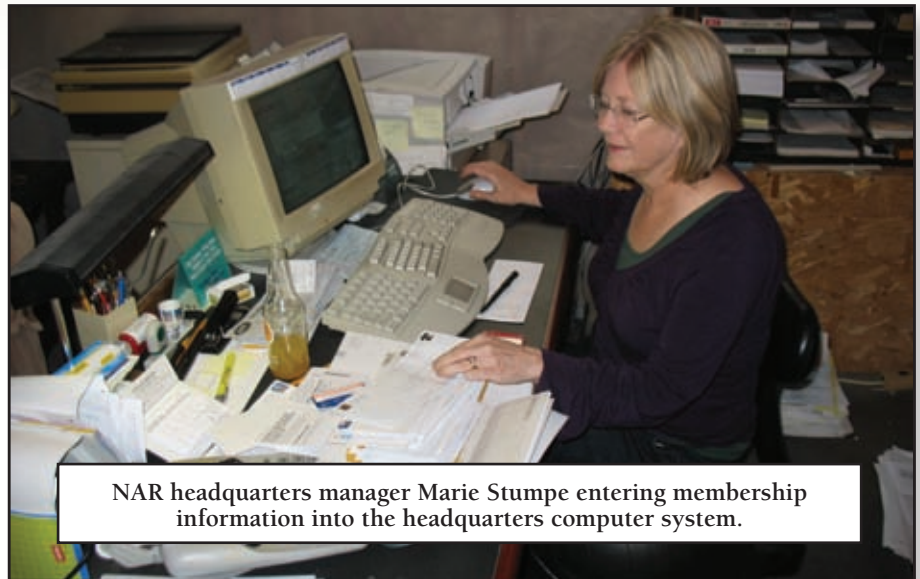
The Association

Your National Association of Rocketry is not a large, impersonal, well-oiled machine; it is a small association of hobbyists that relies on its members rather than on large financial resources for its success. The purpose of this article is to explain how this association of yours delivers its services. Like many small non-profit associations we pay no compensation to our officers, have limited financial resources, and contract out our headquarters management service to a private individual who does this part-time. Other than this headquarters management, insurance, and the printing and mailing of our magazine, all of our national services are delivered by dedicated volunteer NAR members in the spare time that their job and family commitments permit. Our biggest resource as an organization is our members and their commitment to our purpose and to the service of their fellow rocketeers.

Management

The NAR was incorporated as a non-profit association in the state of Colorado on November 5, 1957, "to aid and encourage by all suitable means all people interested in model rocketry and its related sciences." It was recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt "educational and charitable" organization (employee ID number 13-6165575) on August 8, 1963.

The By-Laws of the NAR prescribe the governance of the association; these by-laws are posted on our website. They state that the governing body shall be a Board of Trustees consisting of nine members, elected by vote of the Leader and Senior members of the NAR (all those of age 16 and older) from among the Senior (age 21 and older) members of the NAR. The trustees serve for terms of three years, with three of the nine positions coming up for election each year. The officers of the NAR are elected by the Board from within these nine. The President of the NAR serves as the chief operating officer on a day-to-day basis and is authorized to "transact business in the name of the Association as directed by the Board of Trustees and in ac-



NAR headquarters manager Marie Stumpe entering membership information into the headquarters computer system.

cordance with the By-Laws."

The NAR Board meets twice per year, for a long day each just before NARCON in the late winter and NARAM in early August. These meetings provide direction to the President, establish the NAR's policies, and oversee its finances. In between these Board meetings, a Board-approved Executive Committee of three Trustees (including the President and Vice-President) is empowered to act in the stead of the Board, subject to ratification of any actions by the Board at its next meeting. In exceptional cases, the Board may hold special additional meetings by conference call. Trustees must pay all of their own travel and lodging expenses in connection with attending Board meetings.

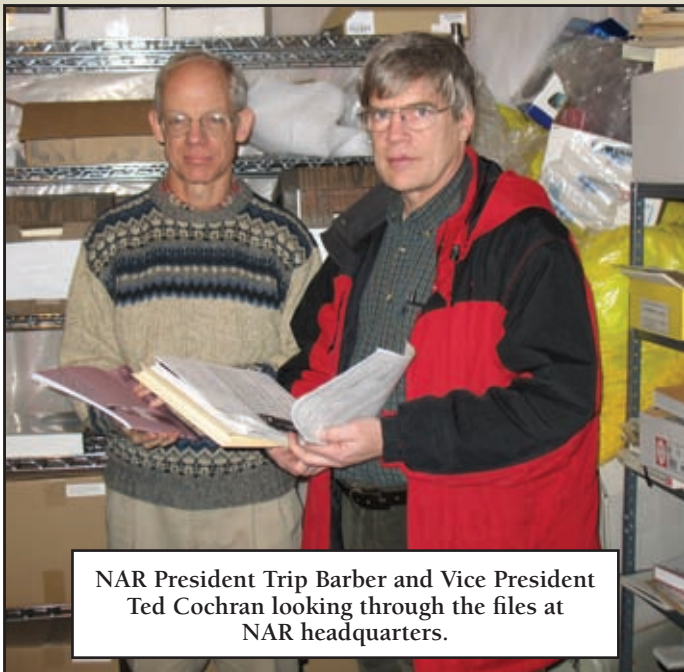
The NAR's operating model is based on delegating responsibility for delivering most of its services other than membership processing, magazine printing, and insurance to one of the twelve active standing committees. These committees report to the Board via an assigned Trustee liaison or are headed by a Trustee directly. Each of the committees has a volunteer chairman and each is charged with meeting specific service standards that are posted on the NAR website in the "Useful Documents" section. Some of these committees have several volunteers and a chairman with both time and energy to devote to the NAR; these are the ones that regularly meet all service expectations. Other committees are as small as one person (the chairman) who may at times be dealing with unexpected events in life or employment. Some committees

may have no one at all who has stepped forward to contribute his or her time to the NAR as chairman. In these cases the NAR's service delivery falls short. The NAR runs only as well and as fast as the number and spare time of its volunteers permit, and we always need more volunteers, both to run our national programs and locally to run sections. A list of the current opportunities for volunteering to be part of one of the national committees is posted on the NAR website.

Headquarters

NAR "headquarters" has moved around over the years, but it has never been an office space that we have owned or leased. There is no flagpole out front flying the NAR flag, no sign over the door, and we don't give guided tours! Our central administrative operation has always been in a space that we were given by some generous larger organization (in the early days) or more recently in someone's private residence. For the last twenty years our headquarters service contract has been with Mrs. Marie Stumpe, and she and her husband Kevin (a former NAR competition flier) host NAR headquarters in their house. Today they live in Marion, Iowa, and so that is where the NAR's operations live as well, occupying many square feet of shelves, filing cabinets, and desk space in their basement.

Marie and NAR Headquarters are connected to you and to the world through



NAR President Trip Barber and Vice President Ted Cochran looking through the files at NAR headquarters.

our post office box; through our www.nar.org website, e-mail, and credit card processing service provided by Greg Deputy and his Blastzone company; and through our toll-free number and its attached answering machine. We pay Marie for levels of service that equate to support of about 20 hours per week for 50 weeks per year and she does more than this, but she does not answer our phone line 8 hours per day. However, her service goal is to return voice mail messages within one business day and e-mails within two.

Whether you apply or renew online or by mail, Marie has to manually enter all of your information into our headquarters computer system. This system has great custom software developed just for the NAR's operations by George Gassaway, but it only runs on an old and outdated computer that cannot interface with the Blastzone system that accepts your application and credit card online, or with our website. We're working on identifying and transitioning to a more modern headquarters system, but it will be a while. The headquarters system has digital archives that go back to 1988, so we can help people who are re-joining find and re-use their old membership number back that far. Prior to that, the NAR individual membership records are cabinets full of little paper cards that go back another ten years but are very laborious to search, so please don't ask.

Regardless of how you send it, Marie gets your membership information into the headquarters system within a week then prints a new or updated membership card and sends it out by first-class mail. Your *NAR Member Guidebook* goes out four

to eight weeks later; she has to accumulate at least 200 in order to send them by economical bulk mail. Once every two months, about three weeks prior to the cover date of the next issue of our *Sport Rocketry* magazine, she downloads a mailing address file from the headquarters system and e-mails this to our professional magazine publisher, NAR member Todd Schweim and his graphics company TD Type and Design, to use for mailing out *Sport*

Rocketry. So if you apply to the NAR between early October and early December (for example) you should expect to receive the January/February issue of *Sport Rocketry* in mid January as your first issue.

Membership

About 90,000 people have joined the NAR since its founding in 1957. Unfortunately, they haven't all stayed members, or we really would have our own headquarters building! For the last four years our membership has held steady at around 4500, which is 700 below the peak size we reached back in the late 1990s. Other aero hobby organizations also reached their largest-ever membership levels at about this same time and have actually declined more as a percentage than we have since then. Within our overall numbers are three important trends: a steady decline in Junior members due to the loss of the old Estes kit-stuffer program when they shifted kit making to China some years ago; a 50 percent increase in Leader members (which is a small number) since 2002 due to TARC; and an increase in the fraction of our Senior members that are high-power certified from 30 percent up to 60 percent. Seniors are now 80 percent of our total membership and their average age is about 50.

We get 1200 new members each year (900 of them Seniors) from member out-

2

GREAT NATIONAL ROCKET LAUNCHES EVERY YEAR!



NARAM 2009 – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ROCKETRY ANNUAL MEET

- Competition/Sport Flying All Week.
- Mind-Blowing Models and Flights.

NSL 2009 – NATIONAL SPORT LAUNCH

- Rockets, Rockets, Rockets - From A to M Powered!
- 100's of Flights Every Day With Fliers From Around the Country.



VISIT WWW.NAR.ORG TO BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

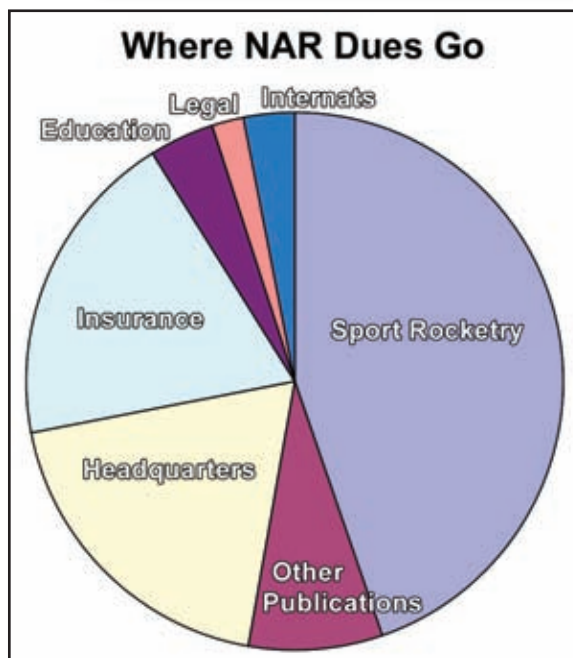
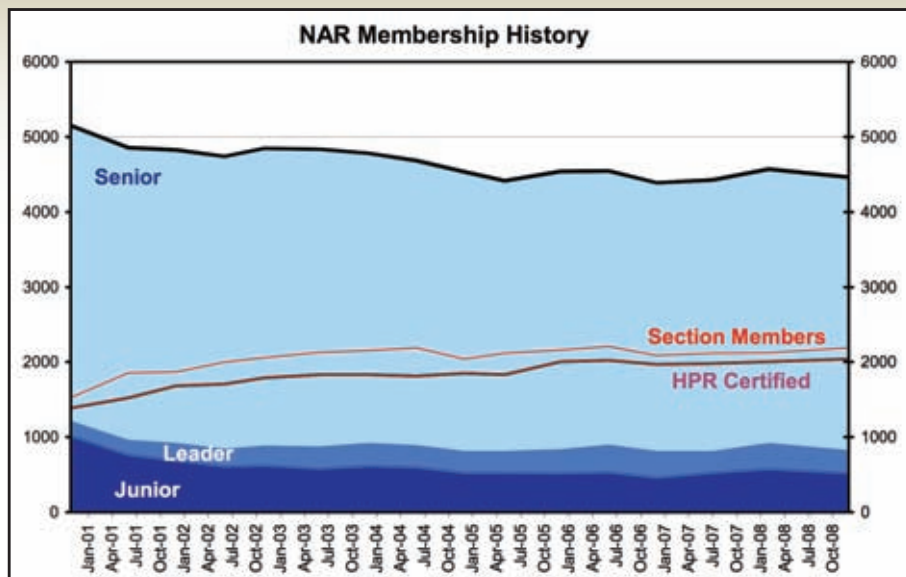
reach and online recruitment; the average Senior member stays five years and the average Junior stays for just two. If each stayed just one year longer, our membership would grow to 5,000 in five years and we could offer far more services to everyone. We are trying hard, within the limits of our volunteer capacity, to improve the outreach that we do to attract more rocketeers to join, and to improve the services that we offer to persuade more members to stay. Recruiting and retention of other members is an important contribution to our future that we ask every NAR member to make.

Budget and Dues

The NAR's annual net income is about \$285,000 with the vast majority of this (\$235,000) coming from member dues. The rest is from *Sport Rocketry* advertisement and newsstand sales, member donations and the NARAM benefit auction, and small net profits from various committee operations such as NARTS and National Events. We last raised dues in 2004 and have no plans to do so again anytime soon, unless something unforeseen happens such as a major cost increase for insurance. So our options for significantly increasing our income are limited to three things: more members, more ads in *Sport Rocketry*, or more donations. We need all of these to happen if we are going to have the funds to increase our levels of service beyond what our volunteers can do today.

Thanks to years of careful financial management by former NAR President Mark Bundick and NAR Treasurer Stew McNabb, our annual expenses are in balance with our income and we have six months of cash reserves. This is exactly where small non-profit associations are supposed to be according to best business practices. We reached this position despite having to spend \$387,000 (offset by \$248,000 in donations) since 1999 as our share in the joint NAR/Tripoli legal and legislative battle against BATFE's unjust regulatory efforts aimed at our hobby.

A frequent question from NAR members is why their dues are what they are, and what they get for these dues. The accompanying pie chart shows where the \$235,000 that we collect in member dues each year is actually spent. The net cost (after advertising and newsstand sales revenue) of publishing and distributing six copies per year of our 48-page color *Sport*



Rocketry magazine is by far the largest single expense, at \$105,000. In addition we publish and send to all members a 72-page *NAR Member Guidebook* that is updated and re-sent every 18 months or so, one copy per year of a paper *Model Rocketeer* newsletter (containing Trustee and Pink Book revision ballots), and a monthly Electronic *Rocketeer* newsletter. These cost \$19,000 per year altogether. So our publications for members require \$124,000 per year of our dues, or 53 percent.

After publications, we have two large fixed expenses that are about \$45,000 (19 percent of dues) each: our excellent and flexible all-member/all-section/all-site insurance policy from Bob Blomster and J.A. Price Agency; and the overall cost of operating headquarters (postage, supplies,

printing, credit card and bank fees, phone and website service, and Marie's contract). Our remaining normal annual expenses, totaling the final 9 percent of dues income, are: whatever legal fees that donations have not covered (this varies a great deal depending on what is going on in our court case, but has averaged \$4,000 per year recently); multiple NAR student member college scholarships of \$500 per year each; and \$7,000 per year support for the international competition program including the Junior members' biennial World Championships entry fees.

All of our major expenses are relatively fixed; their costs do not change much if our membership goes up or down by ten percent or less. So if we grow by 500 members we will have the funds to initiate new programs and/or expand *Sport Rocketry*. And if we shrink by 500 members we will end up scaling back the size or color content of the magazine. Increasing membership would be a lot better, but it takes all of us acting as salesmen for the value of our NAR to do this.

Who We Are

The NAR is all of us. Your dues money primarily pays for three things that volunteers cannot do: professional publication of a great magazine and Member Guidebook, essentially seven magazine issues per year; top-quality and flexible insurance; and over a thousand hours a year of excellent headquarters service. In combination and in comparison to other prices on the market this is a great value for what we charge for dues. We are solvent but not rich financially, and our future will be as bright as

our efforts make it. If we recruit or retain more dues-paying members, and if more of our members choose to become volunteers in our programs, we can achieve even greater things in our next fifty years than we did in our first fifty.

If you have any questions or suggestions about how your NAR is being run, or if you want to step forward as one of those much-needed volunteers, please contact me at president@nar.org.

NARTS News

NARTS now has the **sunblock hat** in stock, in limited quantities. This Adams Extreme Outdoor UPF-45 hat with numerous features to make it the best available on the market, can now be yours with the NAR logo on front, from NARTS! Check it out in the NARTS online store at <https://blastzone.com/nar/narts>

Wondering about all that great information that was presented in the **NARAM 50 R&D** contest? NARTS has a CD of every report in PDF format ready to ship! We also now have the R&D reports from **NARAM 41** in PDF on a CD!

NARTS is also your best source for **Rockets of the World, Fourth Edition**. This handsome hardback book is the ultimate reference work for rocket data! The NAR has reprinted this masterpiece and NARTS has it in stock and shipping! See our web store for this book and so much more at <https://blastzone.com/nar/narts>

We also have in stock the **Old Rocketeers Reunion 2 DVD Video and Photo set**, with all that great historical footage. **NOW reduced in price to \$10!**

Our NAR logo **light blue golf shirts** are ready to ship, and we also have **long-sleeve denim shirts** ready to order on our web site.

Look for our **special NARCON-only** offer when you attend the National Conference. NARTS will be offering a coupon for attendees and a special on-site-only deal never before seen from NARTS!

Thaw out with NARTS this Spring! At <https://blastzone.com/nar/narts/>

NAR Member Services

Access to NAR programs and materials is as close as your computer! Any time you need information on launches, clubs, certification, or any other NAR member program, simply visit the NAR website at <http://www.nar.org>. And we've included a brief list of the most popular NAR service programs for you here!

Need to find your next NAR sponsored sport or contest launch? Visit "Launch Windows" at:
<http://www.nar.org/NARcalend.shtml>

Want to get connected to a local NAR club? Use our "Club Locator" by selecting your state at:
<http://www.nar.org/NARseclist.php>

Need to find the procedures and forms for NAR High Power Certification? Visit:
<http://www.nar.org/hpcert/index.html>

Looking for the official NAR Contest Rule Book? Try:
<http://www.nar.org/pinkbook/>

Did you experience an Engine Malfunction? Help us catalog and prevent those by going to:
<http://www.nar.org/NARmessform.html>

Need to get some "Education Resources" for your school or youth group? There's a library of those at:
<http://www.nar.org/teacher.html>

Need an NAR Form or Informational Resource? They're in our Filing Cabinet at:
<http://www.nar.org/cabinet/index.shtml>

Do you want to contact an NAR Committee or volunteer? Try the Contacts Directory:
<http://www.nar.org/NARadmin.html>

Still Stumped? Contact NAR HQ!
by phone: 800-262-4872
email: hq@nar.org

I JOIN THE LARGEST MODEL ROCKETRY ORGANIZATION IN AMERICA TODAY!

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ROCKETRY



- 1,000's of rocketry enthusiasts across the country that will help YOU become a better flier.
- **Electrifying Clubs**—rocketry taught as a educational, safe, hobby.
- Every member receives the **NAR Member Guidebook**—a great way to get started in rocketry.
- Save hundreds of dollars by using the **Vendor Coupons** each NAR member receives.

VISIT WWW.NAR.ORG TO BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!