

Minutes of National Association of Rocketry Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, July 23, 2015
Hilton Hotel, Reid Park, Tucson, AZ

Present: Ted Cochran, Vince Hugel, Tom Ha, Joyce Guzik, Randy Gilbert, Ryan Coleman, John Hochheimer, Mark Wise, and John Lyngdal (all elected Trustees were present at this meeting).

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by Ted Cochran.

Vince H. moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting without reading aloud. Randy G. seconded. Passed unanimously.

Executive Session

The Board met in Executive Session until 8:19 pm. Topics discussed were section grants, headquarters and bonus for Marie Stumpe, advertisements of contest meets in Town Hall and E-Rocketeer at least 21 days in advance, and awarding a Galloway Award to Fred Shecter for spearheading efforts to change California laws affecting rocketry.

Tom H. moved to pay Marie (NAR Headquarters) a bonus as budgeted. Mark W. seconded. Passed unanimously.

NAR Logo Policy

At the request of Randy G., the Board discussed the use of the NAR logo, and whether we need to have a written statement or policy on use of the logo. The NAR logo is not being shown as a registered trademark (but not all logos have the registered trademark; e.g., it is absent on the Boy Scouts of America logo). The NAR logo should be used for NARTS and National Events, and the Board has said that local NAR sections could use the logo. The discussion was tabled to be taken up again in a strategic planning session at a future Board meeting

Membership

Ted reviewed the membership and state of the NAR. The NAR currently has 6077 members. The NAR has spent down its funds as was the goal, and has plenty of funds to deliver a year of Sport Rocketry and other commitments to members if for some reason the NAR had to cease existence. Funds were spent on the Museum of Flight displays, new section grants, and more scholarships. 1/3 of new NAR members come by referral and the NAR sends \$5 to the person listed on the

membership who made the referral. There has been good growth of new members via yellow cards in Estes kits.

John H. suggested that we do a 3-year average of membership statistics, and asked the question of whether we are retaining more members, or just churning through new members who join for 1 or 2 years and then drop out. The younger members now use social media such as Reddit, and Facebook to a lesser extent than previously. The NAR Facebook account has 3600 members, and is moderated by Ryan and Ted. Only an estimated third to half of the Facebook page members are NAR members.

Ted noted that we still need a chair for membership committee, and raised the question of whether we should focus on increasing membership, or on providing more/better services to current members to improve retention.

National Events

John Hochheimer presented a report on the National Events. John noted that NARCON in Seattle probably lost about \$1500 to \$2000. A box of receipts from this event was lost by the postal service. John said that this venue is difficult and expensive to work with, due to costs to use facilities at Museum of Flight, paying admission per person to enter, and needing to use their food vendor/caterer.

John predicted that NARAM 57 would be a success, and said that the hotel arrangement was working well.

John noted that NSL in Orangeburg was very well attended, and all of the costs will be covered. The hosting section has since lost its field, and is working to get a better field, and is trying to schedule a launch in September.

NARCON is planned for Dayton, Ohio, February 26-28, 2016.

NSL 2016 will be sponsored by HARA (Huntsville) and take place at a field in Tennessee. LDRS 2016 will be held at Lucerne. There are currently no bids and no expressions of interest for NARAM 58. John wanted to have a discussion about NARAM 58 and contest rocketry, and present new ideas to revitalize NARAM. John said that Chan Stevens had inquired about hosting NARAM 59.

Contest and Records

Ryan C. presented this report prepared by Steve Humphrey. There were fewer meets in Pacific and Southwest compared to last year, and one more in Northeast. The number of young competitors is about the same, but there is a decrease in older competitors. Overall, the number of competitors is only 87% of last year. There are only 24 teams, as the number of teams has decreased too.

The website and Rule Change Process voting process worked well, and there were 50% more voters this year as in the last two years.

For the first time, a meet was held in Alaska!

As far as events, classic model and precision payload were upgraded to regular event status. A new provisional event was held, ping-pong ball duration, but the timers could not see the balls! It was easiest to time the balls by listening for them to bounce on concrete pavement!

The Firefly altimeter manufactured by Perfect Flight was approved. Steve Humphries bought 20 of these altimeters for use at NARAM. Their cost is \$30-\$35 each. It might be possible to rent them out to fliers. This is the 2nd NARAM that is trying altimeters. For G altimeter events, not a lot of altimeters survive the event.

Ryan said that he would like to see records promoted more.

Standards and Testing

The Board noted that we need a backup site for testing in case the MIT site becomes unavailable. We wondered whether the NAR could just not test motors? Does S&T do a better job than Estes at testing motors?

Museum of Flight Report

Ted noted that there was a spectacular article in Sport Rocketry about the Museum of Flight.

Pat Fitzpatrick requested that the MoF receive official recognition as The National Collection of Model and Sport Rocketry. If we approach a particular artifacts donor, we could use this designation to highlight this endorsement by the NAR.

Ted will follow up with Marie about whether the Museum of Flight received the information requested on obtaining Sport Rocketry subscription at a discount for school libraries.

John H. moved that we declare the Museum of Flight collection as “The National Collection of Model and Sport Rocketry” John L. seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Board meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm to reconvene the next morning.

The meeting was called to order Friday, July 24, 8:20 am. In addition to the board members present on Friday, Randy Boadway also attended the meeting

Ryan C. gave the Technology Committee report, discussing the new NAR web site.

He discussed reasons for fluctuating number of hits on web site. There seems to be less traffic from Apogee than before. The traffic from the MoF may not have been as high because their internet went down near our display because a car hit the pole outside of the museum.

Ryan discussed content and bloggers. We have a few bloggers now that are approved by the NAR board. We also don't want to have content on blogs that could be saved for Sport Rocketry. We need to channel people to the blog section. We don't publicize a blog until it is worthwhile. We have Educator Newsletters available online. We could use the intro to the newsletter in an education blog every month. We need links to find this content. We could allow people to subscribe by E-mail to receive a message when there is new blog content. Ryan is moderating the blogs. We want to keep political posts off of NAR forums.

Ryan also led the contest and records discussion. Ryan noted that if you have a Neon login, you can vote on RCPs, comment on RCPs, and can access R&D competition content. Scholarship and teacher grant submissions are non on-line. Greg Deputy is working on SSL upgrades for secure transactions. Ryan also discussed priorities for additions to the web site, including making NSL, NARCON, and NARAM pages all part of the NAR.org page. The NARTS store web page has been redone so that the NARTS chair can change it to look the way he would like. The NAR is selling tickets and T-shirts for NARAM and NARCON on this site. The Teacher Certification and Level-2 tests could be put on-line. These require a different plug-in from RCPs. Sport Rocketry back issues could be on-line. The NAR could do Board of Trustee voting on-line. We could phase this in with memberships, and allow people to opt in or out of the paper Model Rocketeer that is now sent out 1x year including the BoT ballot.

Ryan noted that the member-only site log-in API (plug-in) is currently broken, and only 300 people who logged in earlier who have voted on RCP or looked at R&D reports can log on at the moment. We have to get NEON to fix the plug-in, or upgrade to new API at our expense. We are paying very little for NEON, so this is part of our expenses. We also retrofitted our old site into NEON in a hurry, and should consider reworking it to optimize for NEON to work with our content to keep it compatible with the future.

Ryan noted that the Section insurance section is used only to generate insurance certificates, and we are not using all of the functionality, i.e. to help members find a section near them. At the moment we have to look up zip codes, or send the member all of the sections within a state after some manual intervention. We could spend more for further NEON development.

The Board discussed how quickly, and how much content from Sport Rocketry should be made available to members in electronic form. Tripoli publishes all back issues. There is a risk that someone could steal content and offer it separately. It

would take more work to make the content indexed, and searchable. At the moment there is one large pdf file for all of the issues in a single year. Some indexes were created in the past, e.g. by Lila Schmaker and Trip Barber, and Mark Bundick wants to make an index. The release of back-issues could be staged, with the oldest ones first. NARTS could also sell 'best of Sport Rocketry' CDs. About 60% of NARTS sales are to non-NAR members. Randy G. would like to have magazines available immediately for members. Randy Boadway suggested that members might want to opt for an on-line only magazine. Making the magazine available immediately on-line could be considered a topic for future consideration.

John H. moved that we put back-issues of our historic periodicals that are over two years old on the web site available to members only. John L. seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Board discussed priorities for the web site: Fixing log-in for new members #0; NARAM, NARCON, NSL #1; Members-only log-in page fixed to look nice #2; Section renewals #3; NARTS store + NSL, NARCON, NARAM sales through NARTS (we need to decide who will get the proceeds from the NSL, NARCON, NARAM sales), Section Sites #5; Teacher Certification Tests #6; NAR trustee voting as an option #7. Next year will be able to vote on-line.

We need to update awards list and send winners to Jennifer Ash-Poole for posting. We also need to stop using pdfs and move to html content as much as possible, and need to clean up the pdfs that are duplicates. O. Lee James also wants to put all historical info on contest records on the NAR web site and has all info back to 1999!

Education Committee

Vince Huegele presented the report. 17 people registered for teacher certification. There have been nice articles about teacher certification in Sport Rocketry and in Educator Newsletter. We have a lot of volunteer mentors for the teachers. One teacher has actually made their certification flight so far. We don't have a NAR database to do teacher certification yet; Jonathan Rains said would create it when there was a need for it. The hard part is to print the membership cards with "TCert" on it. It was suggested that we could convert or repurpose a disused database slot designated for "Trained Safety Officer" for the Teacher Certification annotation.

The Board then discussed the Cannon and Extracurricular Activity teacher grants, and Scholarship grants. Joyce Guzik chaired these committees. The amount of the scholarships was increased to \$2K, and there were many more applicants this year of high quality. Joyce requested that extra funds be allocated to give out 10 \$2K scholarships and six additional \$1K scholarships. Joyce noted that there were difficulties comparing applications of those applying for scholarship a second time with new applicants, and that new applicants generally fared better because renewals weren't required to turn in new letters of recommendation, their college GPA was not as good, they weren't as involved in rocketry activities. Joyce asked for

the board's advice on setting aside some funds for renewals and some for new applicants to be judged in separate categories.

John H. said that he was comfortable with Education committee splitting the allocated amount. Vince H. noted that for this year, if the NAR funds were tight, we wouldn't be asking for \$6K more, but we have had a lot of growth in membership and applicants this year. The situation is dynamic right now. The board thought that if we have two divisions, we should spell this out up-front.

Randy G. noted that one consideration is whether we are emphasizing breadth or depth in investment—funding new applicants goes for breadth and funding renewals develops depth. John L. noted that now it is more difficult to get the \$2K as there are more applicants. We could also consider adding a \$4K award for the highest-ranked applicant. Ted C. noted that the Committee has work to do for next year to clarify how the funds will be allocated. He suggested setting aside \$5K for new awards, \$5K for renewals, and \$10 K discretionary. Ted noted that the NAR is spending 5% of member dues on scholarships and grants.

Vince H. then discussed the remainder of the education committee report. Education curricula for teachers are being developed based on TARC. Vince hopes to see for next TARC season a physics classroom curriculum that we could offer. Tom Ha noted that the Association of Physics Teachers is a sponsor of TARC, but we are not sure what specifically they are doing. Vince had nothing new to report on partnerships with 4H or Civil Air Patrol.

John L. reported on SLI and S4, commenting that running these events “was a vacation compared to the prior year.” John didn't need to build a lot of launch pads or other equipment unlike last year. Last year was first year that the Mars ascent vehicle was flown. TARC teams for 2014-2015 will be encouraged to participate in SLI. The remaining budget reserve was \$10K, and part of these funds will be used to cover S4 costs at Black Rock in June. The event will be run by ARLISS. John H. noted that it would be appropriate to use net proceeds to reduce risk for the future. Tom H. said that we wanted a proper accounting to the NAR Board of how funds are spent. John H. noted that we need to be clear that the NAR is not making a profit. We are breaking even, and also incurring significant risk.

Ted noted that Roy Houchin has been doing a great job of putting out the educator newsletter. He asked if it was read, and commented that there was about a 20% open rate on web site, which is good for organizations like ours. The Electronic Rocketeer gets opened 40-50% of the time.

Financial Report

Nar Treasurer Tom Ha gave the report on NAR finances. He is working on invoices with US Bank and a getting access to online viewing of account. Todd Schweim is doing his own billing instead of using the quick-books account, and Tom would like

to make it easier to keep track of these transactions. Tom would like to see the check writing process be consistent for all check writers. For example, on the subject line, to clearly write NAR Checkbook: (fill in subject). Currently, Tom has to search his E-mail to match up the accounts with amounts. Ted suggested to put accounting sheet on-line that could be accessed by the six NAR check writers: Trip, John, Ted, Randy, Tom, and Marie, for example, on a Google docs standard spreadsheet that Ryan could set up. There are problems working with US Bank because there is not a US Bank branch where Tom H. lives, and so he can't go there in person. The Board discussed opening an account at the Credit Union in Marion IA that Marie could visit in person, and also in Tom's city so that transactions could be made.

Tom noted that the 1st-time B division travel grant account is now negative. The original seed money was provided by Robert Alway. The board needs to decide if we want to continue this program in the future. (At NARAM-57 in Tucson there were 4 travel grant recipients who actively participated.)

Tom gave full backup of the treasury information to Ted Cochran on a thumb drive. Tom has another backup at home (his son Chris knows where it is).

Tom noted that the Cannon fund has \$27,000 (this fund is replenished by proceeds from the annual auction at NARAM). The R&D prize fund has a little over \$10K remaining

We are on track to spending down about \$30 K in the budget instead of the \$63 K that we had originally budgeted for. We did not spend all of the funds that we had allocated last spring.

Tom paid \$988.50 to Padden Guerini for helping the NAR with auditing and filing 990 form for non-profit status.

The Board discussed whether to buy vests, signs, etc. and send to all NAR sections. It would be cheaper if we bought them in quantity, but do not want to waste them. It is also necessary to check with NARTS about whether they want to do the work to send them, and not overload them with work. An initial order of 100 vests, with flags and banners may be ordered next. We could survey sections to find out what items they would be interested in. Sections would be able to buy them at significant discounts. Perhaps sections could apply for a section grant to buy these items. There is a limit of \$250 per section per year for section grants. The safety grants are still going strong. 19 safety grants were awarded year to date, with average value of \$238 each. About \$4500 total was spent, with \$10 K budgeted.

Ryan C. on behalf of the Board thanked Tom Ha for his work as NAR Treasurer. Tom said that his son Chris has also been helpful to him supporting his work on the books.

NARAM and Contest Discussion

John H. led a discussion on NARAM and contest events. "NARAM is broken. We have no bids. We have to get out of our existing mold, and the only way is to cut it off at the knees and get a CD or other group to do it another way. Ryan and Ed have tried new things. We have no one to run NARAM for next year. Chan Stevens might be interested for NARAM 59, but John and his team agree that field is not appropriate for NARAM (too small for high-power). To further compound the problems, contests themselves are broken. The number of contestants is declining. NARAM may be too long. It was a destination 20 years ago and had a big group of people to make it a destination, but these days over a week is a lot of time for people to take off. Holding on to this tradition is forcing us to maintain five days of competition plus the weekend. This schedule is hard for the organizers. NSL or NARCON are easier events to run. We don't have a lot of people interested in holding NARAM. Contests need to be revived if they are the goal of NARAM.

There are a lot of options to consider. NARAM could be a 3-4 day event, with all competition and nothing else. We could have a Western and Eastern Nationals, with competition as a side event. We could have more interesting contests, with a lower barrier to entry. Ted C. suggested a 'mentoring' event. We as a board need to wholesale reinvent competition. The Board should establish a three to five person committee to gather input. We could consider a fun competition, or more of a rocketry festival national event, or more of an engineering challenge like TARC. We could have several CDs for different aspects of the event, e.g, Competition, High Power, TARC or SLI demos. Vince H. noted that at conventions such as comic-con are designed indulging everyone's passions. These conventions have merchandise, vendors that are only available at that venue, breaking news, and special guests.

John H. proposed two options for next year:

1) NARAM Classic. In this case the Board would address issues such as team size, and 'mentorship' to increase number of competitors, and find site and contest directors. Unless someone bids to host this event, NARAM 57 would be last classic NARAM.

OR

2) Special committee on National Sport Rocketry Festival, that would design the next NARAM. Include competition as part of charter.

The NAR will have a NARAM (rocketry-festival type) with or without a classic NARAM contest

Ted discussed his idea for a mentorship event to be added to the Pink Book, giving a point to the mentor for everyone who signs on. There would be no proxies. The mentor would receive the flight points of mentee. Ted also discussed changing the

rules to limit team sizes to three or less, in order to prevent arbitrarily large teams from becoming a perceived barrier to entry for new teams. The NARAM hosting group would need to have a venue for high-power, for at least level 2 rockets, and waiver to 3000 feet.

Ryan requested that another change be made in the pink book to the rules for R&D to enable judging to be completed and two nights of presentations to be done even in a short event like NARCON or a reduced NARAM. With sufficient lead time, judging could be completed and finalists announced on open day.

Joyce G. commented that competitions give us something to aspire to, to be the best at something. Many of us are goal oriented and need/want something to achieve. We should always be positive about and encourage competition at a high level, in whatever form it takes.

Mark W. moved that the Pink book changes for R&D, mentoring, and team number be adopted. Tom Ha seconded. Passed unanimously.

John H. moved to have the NAR Executive Committee establish a special committee on competition, with specific charter to be recommended by Executive Committee. Ryan seconded. Passed unanimously.

The board continued to discuss other needs. Regarding recruiting volunteers, perhaps the Board could post descriptions of volunteer positions needed on web site, with an E-mail contact. We could have a section for volunteers wanted, and volunteers offering their time and skills to help sections on member-only site.

The Board also discussed having more events and launches for high power flights. Not all NAR members are within a 12 hour drive of national launch event. We could even consider a Labor Day NARAM. Ted noted that the NAR has 3200 high-power flyers that we should provide more services to; many of these members are also great TARC mentors. We could work with Art Upton to develop a plan on how to better publicize the HP award.

The Board also discussed the recurring problem with finding launch fields. Is there a way to engage 4H university extensions, research farms, major companies such as Spaec-Ex? We could start an NAR Blog on landowner relations and finding fields? We could emphasize more benefits for the landowner.

Tom Ha moved to raise per article payment for Sport Rocketry to \$350 per article. John H. seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Board also discussed having some call for volunteer Sport Rocketry assistant editor help for Tom Beach, mostly to train and provide backup for Tom.

John H. moved to give Education committee additional \$4500 beyond budget. Mark W. seconded. Passed unanimously.

Mark W. moved to allocate up to \$1000 each for two trips to NAR HQ between now and NARCON next year. Mark W. Ryan second. Tom Ha abstained.

The Board recessed at 3:30 pm, to convene after the NAR Town Hall meeting and elections.

The Board Reconvened Monday night, July 27 at 9 pm.

The results of the Board of Trustee Elections were:

Art Applewhite 74 votes

Ed Chess 124 votes

Randy Gilbert 153 votes

Ed LaCroix 206 votes

John Lyngdal 212 votes

Mark Wise 271 votes.

Therefore Ed LaCroix was elected to the Board, and John Lyngdal and Mark Wise were re-elected.

Vince H. moved to re-Elect the current Board officers (Ted Cochran as President, John Hochheimer as Vice President, Joyce Guzik as Secretary, and Tom Ha as Treasurer). Ed LaCroix. seconded. Passed unanimously.

Joyce G. moved to re-elect the current Executive Committee (Ted Cochran, John Hochheimer, and John Lyngdal). Mark Wise seconded. Passed unanimously.

Ed LaCroix was appointed as Board liaison to Contest and Records, and Mark Wise appointed as Sections liaison. We hoped that Randy Gilbert would continue to assist Randy Boadway with Section activities, even though Randy G. was not re-elected to the Board.

Mark Wise moved to adjourn the meeting. Vince Huegele seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Board meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.