

Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the National Association of Rocketry

July 29, 2019

The meeting was called to order Monday, July 29, 2019 at the Courtyard by Marriott, Muncie, Indiana at 8:05 AM. Trustees present: John Hochheimer, President; Carol Marple, Vice President; Mark Wise, Secretary; Tom Ha, Treasurer; Randy Boadway; Vince Huegele, Kevin Johnson, Ed LaCroix. Trustees absent: Jim Wilkerson. Others present at various times during the day: Todd Schweim (NAR web designer and publisher of *Sport Rocketry*), Mark Bundick (Publications Committee chair), Jane Eisele (National Accounts Manager, Experient, Inc.) Carl Curling, Matt Johnson, Lynn Thomas.

The board immediately went into executive session. Topics discussed included compensation for Marie Stumpe (NAR Headquarters manager), Todd Schweim (website and National Events support), Jon Bolden (website support), and Anne Heacock (accounting). Marie is the only salaried employee of the NAR; the others are retained on a contract basis.

The board came out of executive session at 8:30.

Carol moved to approve the minutes from the July 10 conference call. Tom seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Voting Eligibility

The NAR Bylaws are somewhat vague as to who is eligible to vote in the annual Board of Trustees election. Members who return after letting their membership lapse for a period, members who move from Junior to Leader status during the year, and people whose memberships expire during the voting period are not specifically discussed in Article III, Section 10 of the Bylaws. Mark has requested clarification so that a consistent standard can be applied to determine voter eligibility.

John suggested using a member's birthdate as of the Town Hall meeting at NARAM (i.e. the final opportunity to cast a ballot) as the standard for determining whether a member was a Junior (ineligible to vote) or Leader (eligible to vote).

Ed moved that all voting (online and mail-in ballots, with no voting at the Town Hall) be concluded by midnight on July 15 of the voting cycle in effect. Tom seconded.

Lynn Thomas asked for clarification of the deadline. Ed suggested that online ballots be submitted by midnight Pacific Time on July 15, and mail-in ballots be postmarked no later than July 15.

John said that members were likely to object strongly to such a plan, and that administering the voting at the Town Hall was not particularly burdensome. He added that we would only be creating a problem that we did not need to create.

Motion failed 1-6, with Ed voting in favor. Ed and Tom both clarified that they submitted the motion to get the matter on the record.

Moving on to the subject of members who have returned to NAR after an absence but have not been a member for one continuous year as of the date of the election, the sense of the Board was to allow them to vote.

With regard to the question of a voter whose membership expires without being renewed during the voting cycle, John suggested that if membership was current as of the last day of the month preceding the election, the vote would be valid. For example, if a voter's membership expires on June 30, his/her vote would be valid in any election dated July 31 or earlier. That way, a brief delay between a member renewing and the appropriate entry in the NAR database would not cause the member's vote to be invalidated.

Kevin moved that it shall be the policy of the NAR that for voting purposes, the minimum age for a Leader member shall be based on the age as of the established date of the election, that the requirement for one year of NAR membership for voting eligibility shall include all past membership terms, and that a member is eligible to vote if he/she is a current member on the last day of the month prior to the election. Ed seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mark will update the policy list accordingly.

NARTREK

George Scheil, the NARTREK Committee chair, has reminded Mark (the trustee liaison to NARTREK) that the Competition advanced level is aligned with the old "Pink Book" events rather than the current National Rocketry Competition (NRC) events. Randy said that Dave Combs is willing to help George with rewriting the requirements, and Ed has spoken with George Scheil about the topic. All the trustees present agreed that NARTREK currently needs updating. John suggested connecting Dave with George. Randy will talk to Dave.

Education

The July 16 mass launch (5000 rockets) at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center (Huntsville, Alabama) attracted media attention, and it went off safely. Vince says that it is very difficult to make contact with the management of the Space and Rocket Center. Vince isn't encouraged about connecting with them unless they have expressed interest in putting on a particular event. The mass launch took place because USSRC wanted it to happen, but Vince is not hopeful about putting on other events unless NASA decides to do them.

Vince estimates that about a half-dozen narTcert enrollees per month discover NAR through online searches. More educators come from the informal teaching environment rather than the K-12 classroom (e.g. Civil Air Patrol, 4-H, Junior ROTC).

Vince will continue as Education Committee chair despite stepping down from the Board. He will also entertain candidates for a co-chair or successor.

Launch Site Options App

John Hochheimer talked to John Langford (NAR International Programs Liaison and co-owner of Estes Industries) about several topics yesterday. NAR and Estes both get many requests along the lines of, "I just bought this rocket. Where can I launch it?" Estes refers them to NAR. John Langford would support

the development of an app that would tell users where they could launch in their local area. The app would also include points of contact for local policies and permissions.

Tom foresaw potential liability issues. Matt Johnson (visitor) asked if John Langford had asked John Hochheimer whether the app's emphasis would be "Where can I fly?" or "Where can I find a local club?" John said that Dr. Langford is enough of a visionary that he is probably looking for both, but that he's also a realist and that with hundreds of thousands of starter sets being sold annually, they are not all being flown at local club launches. John said that his intent in bringing this up for discussion was to get the sense of the Board as to whether this is a good idea and if so, to identify a champion on the board. Vince asked whether the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) has anything similar, or if local AMA clubs would be willing to share their fields? Kevin said that Horizon Hobbies, to name an example, has a "Where can I fly?" link that directs them to the AMA field locator. Carol pointed out that most rocketry vendors already have links to NAR on their websites. FAA has a "Before You Fly" app that mostly deals with radio-controlled airplanes and drones, but would also be applicable to model rocketry.

Carol asked if John Langford's initial "ask" is simply whether NAR be interested. John Hochheimer said that was the case.

The sense of the Board is that this is an idea worth pursuing. John will look for a volunteer to champion the initiative.

Introduction

In his capacity as National Events chair, Ed introduced the board to Ms. Jane Eisele. She is the National Accounts Manager for Experient, which handles the hotel contracts for NAR national events. They departed for the range at 10:10 AM, so that Ed could introduce her to hobby rocketry and NAR activities.

Historian

Kevin reported on behalf of NAR Historian Jennifer Ash:

- Jennifer has received two boxes from Chris "CD" Tavares (NAR #9772), former NAR magazine editor and an early NAR webmaster. He has been reimbursed for shipping. She has not inspected the boxes yet.
- Art Nestor is sending her the last box from the Jay Apt collection.
- She is currently processing the Len Fehskens and Richard Sipes collections. All duplicate magazines have been sent to Todd Schweim for scanning and posting to the NAR website.
- Jennifer is grateful for the funds that have been budgeted for her work, and is slowly spending the allocation.
- After September, she will work to create finding aids for the collections that she has processed.

Todd created a Historical Donation page on the website last year, which is linked from the home page. Jennifer needs to post a PDF of items she already has on hand.

John asked Todd whether he has established an *In Memoriam* page on the website, as the Board discussed in a recent conference call. Todd said that he is working on it.

Treasurer's Report

Tom reported the following:

- Financial Institution Accounts
 - We are waiting on reimbursements for the NASA Student Launch (\$68,401) and TARC (\$12,000).
 - He needs to have Collins FCU close the one remaining checking account.
 - The debit cards for John and Marie through US Bank seem to be working well.
- National Events
 - NARCON
 - Tom is working with Pat McCarthy to determine final numbers. He expects NAR to take a \$3400 loss on NARCON.
 - SLP
 - Tom would like more visibility into the expenses to facilitate proper recordkeeping.
- General Topics
 - Section Grants
 - Tom noticed duplicate Section Grants to four Sections dating back to the beginning of 2019. Tom asks that Section numbers be included in the Memo line for each grant check so that he can track them more easily.
 - More Sections are taking advantage of the grant program this year than in previous years.
- Debit cards
 - Debit card holders must provide transaction information to Tom so that he can track expenses appropriately.
- Action Items
 - We must have better documentation around Student Launch Program expenditures. Tom sees checks being processed without receipts or detailed descriptions of the expenses.
 - Question: Would it be better for NAR and host Sections to have separate checking accounts/debit cards for each national event, or to handle expenses in a more centralized manner?

Randy observed that we seem to have a problem with the budgeting process for national events, to include SLP and TARC. We used to require a budget and spreadsheets before the events, but that requirement is no longer being enforced. Todd suggested a base fee structure for the guidance of event directors. Randy suggested an appointee under the Treasurer to guide event directors through the financials. John said that he and Ed have talked about how to make events more efficient, and build tools to make planning and accountability easier. John said that Ed supports the idea (Ed was still at the range during this discussion).

Matt Johnson complained that the National Event Handbook has been ignored. John objected that it is outdated – major parts of it no longer apply, such as the hotel section. In response to Matt's objection to the use of a hotel contractor ("Paying a company in New York to make three phone calls"), John said that NAR does not pay the company. John agreed that we need to improve communications and update the National Events Manual.

Carl Curling (visitor) pointed out that any national event will require backup hotels.

John agreed with Matt that a secondary hotel is becoming necessary with each national event, but that hotel space is limited across weekends in high-demand towns. The requirement for meeting space and banquet facilities narrows the available choices, too. He added that including a secondary hotel involves a balancing act, because a secondary hotel that is significantly less expensive than the primary hotel undercuts the primary hotel, with whom NAR has contracted.

John agreed with Matt that planning would be much easier if we had an accurate attendance count six months in advance of an event, but the sense of the Board was that it was probably not realistic to expect that.

John mentioned that the attraction to encourage people to attend national events continues to be a challenge. John asked Matt what the host Sections did to attract people to the last Muskegon NARAM. Matt said that the environment there for national events was ingrained after two NARAMS (54 and 59) and an NSL (2014). Muskegon is an attractive location for NARAM and NSL due to their large flying field. Randy said that NSL 2014 was not well attended because it took place at the same time as NYPOWER 18 in Geneseo. Randy opined that the NSL registration fee was too high for the event's actual expenses, and that a budget would have helped. A consistent budgeting process would enforce accountability and make things easier for the NAR Treasurer.

The Board discussed running more advertising in advance of national events, with more details in the ads. Randy suggested beginning the ad campaign in *Sport Rocketry* eight or nine months in advance of the event. Todd said that a full-page ad runs in every issue, but stays relatively static. Todd said that he can update the ad with each issue, but someone else needs to provide the content. With his other responsibilities, he does not have the time to create extensive ads from the ground up.

Lynn Thomas (visitor) suggested reaching out to casual rocketeers, Scout groups, local media outlets, teachers, and school districts. Hosting an Educator's Workshop, as was done at NARCON 2008, can also attract additional participants.

John asked Board members to consider how price-sensitive we really think people are. Are we pricing people out of events? Randy asked whether making NSL and NARCON registration free to participants under age 18 might improve attendance. John summed by saying, "In looking at our National events longer term, we need to think about where our inflection points are in regard to costing."

Publications

John asked whether we want to maintain the status quo with respect to delivering *Sport Rocketry*, or should we explore other options? If we create new options, will that change the price structure? If so, how?

Todd has looked at seven different membership organizations to see what they are doing. He found that several don't have a digital magazine at all. In no case did an organization offer a discount for a digital-only option.

Todd said that considering the size of NAR, our current online option (each new issue is posted in flip-book format for two years, then as a PDF) is good. He does not recommend discounts for online-only. Carol pointed out that as print runs go down, the price per copy goes up due to fixed costs. (Mark Bundick, Publications Committee chair, corroborated Carol's statement). Lynn pointed out that a print magazine is a much better recruiting tool than a PDF.

Mark Bundick. is meeting with the AMA later today to discuss publication distribution.

Mark Wise pointed out that NAR does not have to be the early adopter of an online-only option. We can observe what other publications are doing with electronic distribution, then copy their best practices.

John said that we will continue to offer both print and online versions of *Sport Rocketry*. If someone wants an electronic version only, we will work out a way to turn off the print version without a discount to the member.

Todd said that he would investigate possible ways to offer *Sport Rocketry* in a digital-only format to members who want it. It will require changes to NAR processes. He will discuss any conclusions with the Board before taking action.

Ed returned to the meeting at 1:23 PM.

Mark Bundick asked for time at the Town Hall to do some recruiting. We need to update the Member Guidebook, with some content pitched to more-experienced rocketeers.

He would also like to understand how our Constant Contact account works. Could NAR extend content via Constant Contact? Would an opt-in contest newsletter distributed via Constant Contact be a viable experiment in the current digital environment? John said that Trip Barber and the Education Committee use Constant Contact to deliver content to TARC mentors and educators, respectively. Other ideas for Constant Contact newsletters might include TARC contestants and Level 3 Coordinating Committee (L3CC) members. We could create an opt-in feature on the membership registration form.

The goal is to have a new Member Guidebook ready for printing within 90 days. Todd is looking for at least 30% new content. He will work with Mario Perdue, who was a driving force behind previous editions.

NAR Membership Cards

We are working with Jonathan Rains to identify a new source of membership cards. The vendor we are currently using started out great but has since gone downhill. Jonathan is working on a request for proposals.

The Board is looking at the possibility of a provision in the Members-Only section of the website for members to print membership cards. That way, a member could print a card immediately while the plastic card works its way through the process. Carl pointed out that there would still be a lag for a new member, particularly if a new member joins by mail. John's vision is that when a member goes to his/her member data page, a PDF of a membership card would be generated automatically.

We will check with Jon Bolden to see if this is feasible.

Internet Domains

Frank Uroda, the owner of PML, is selling the domains highpowerrocketry.org, highpowerrocketry.com, and highpowerrocketry.net. We have spoken with Tripoli's leadership, and we all agree that it is in both organizations' best interests to control those domains, in part to keep them out of the wrong hands. The domains in question are currently redirected to PML's website. Frank is asking \$2000, and some market research by Carol indicates that they are worth close to \$2300. We could buy the domains and load them with HPR content. We can do this more quickly than TRA, since we are meeting right now.

Ed moved that NAR spend \$2000 to buy the domains highpowerrocketry.org, highpowerrocketry.com, and highpowerrocketry.net from Frank Uroda. Mark seconded. The motion carried 6-1, with Randy voting against.

Member Survey

John said that we could take advantage of questions that Matt Johnson sent to him in advance.

Tom said that some questions from previous surveys should be included so that we can assess trends. Randy said that we need to look at demographics, as well.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding the questions that should be included on the survey.

The Board recessed until after the election and Town Hall.

The Board reconvened at 9:59 PM. Trustees present: John Hochheimer, president; Carol Marple, vice president; Mark Wise, secretary; Randy Boadway, Becky Green, Kevin Johnson, Ed LaCroix, Lynn Thomas. Members absent: Jim Wilkerson.

Ed nominated the following slate of officers for the next year: John Hochheimer, president; Carol Marple, vice president; Mark Wise, secretary; Kevin Johnson, treasurer. Lynn seconded. The slate passed unanimously.

Mark nominated the following trustees to the Executive Committee: John Hochheimer, Carol Marple, Ed LaCroix. Lynn seconded. The slate passed unanimously.

John said that we will review committee assignments during the next Board conference call, which is scheduled for August 7 at 9:00 PM Eastern Time.

Kevin moved to adjourn. Lynn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Wise, Secretary

NAR Town Hall

The NAR Town Hall began at 7:30 PM on July 29, 2019.

NAR President John Hochheimer called on NAR Secretary Mark Wise to administer in-person balloting for the Board of Trustees. Joyce Guzik, Maria Ha, and Steve Humphrey served as election judges.

Safety: John brought up a topic that is often overlooked: Is the ground support equipment safe and functioning properly? A member narrowly escaped injury at the sport range on Saturday, when he hooked up an igniter to a pad that was “cold” by all indications. John went on to say that fire safety is also critical. If conditions are not right, do not fly, inspect all ground ejections, and *do not fly during burn bans!*

John discussed the NAR insurance policy, calling it “awesome.” Our insurance is capped at \$5 million per incident, with a \$6 million aggregate for a year. This means that two \$5 million claims in one year would leave NAR liable for \$4 million. John suggested that members check with their insurance agents to see whether personal coverage may be desirable. He called on the membership to follow the Safety Code – that is the best way to show that an incident is not entirely our fault, and to document all incidents and keep the information on file. The information may come in handy. We have not had any claims since 2016, so our insurance premium increased minimally and the cost per member actually went down.

John personally thanked the officers and trustees, as well as Marie Stumpe (NAR Headquarters manager) and Todd Schweim (*Sport Rocketry* publisher and NAR webmaster).

NAR currently has 195 chartered Sections. John thanked Chuck Neff for his outstanding work as the Section Activities Chair. The Section Grant program is stronger than ever.

NAR’s goal is to raise \$25,000 for the next phase of processing the collection at the Museum of Flight. Members may donate to the fund at <https://www.nar.org/donate/>

John listed the Board’s current priorities. One continuing priority is to increase our membership, and that we would like to reach 7500 members by the end of the year. NAR will also continue to help Sections via the Section Grant program, and continue to improve transparency in Board decisions. Of course, a major priority is to fly rockets and have fun.

NAR continues to award scholarships and grants, including the NAR Scholarship, the Gleda M. Estes Scholarship for the Advancement of Young Women in STEM, the Len Fehskens Memorial Scholarship, the Robert Cannon Educational Grants, and the Extracurricular Activity Grants. The Publications Committee continues to pay for some articles in *Sport Rocketry*.

Other continuing programs include expired motor testing, the Malfunctioning Engine Statistical Survey (MESS), motorcato.org, and the NAR Facebook page, which now includes over 7400 members. John thanked the Facebook page admins for their work.

At John’s invitation, Mark Bundick spoke about the NAR Member Guidebook, following up on a discussion during the board meeting. Mark asked for volunteers to write about more advanced topics.

John thanked Trip Barber for his continuing work on the E-Rocketeer.

John recognized several members and groups for their accomplishments:

- Mark Johnson, NAR #14025, received a 50-year membership pin.

- The Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) was recognized for their hospitality and willingness to allow NAR to fly NARAM from its field.
- Jay Marsh (NAR #9825), an AMA board member and 50-year NAR member, was recognized for his work in fostering the AMA/NAR connection.
- The Howard Galloway Spacemodeling Award was presented to the Enhancing Competition Subcommittee:
 - Scott Alexander
 - Glenn Feveryear
 - Jim Filler
 - Ed LaCroix
 - Chad Ring
 - Chris Kidwell
- The NAR President’s Award was presented to Vince Huegele for his service as a trustee from 2007 to 2019, and for his continuing service as Education Committee chair.

John also thanked the sponsors and the attendees, and extended special thanks to the organizers who put this event together.

Mark tabulated the results of mail-in, online, and Town Hall election ballots and passed the results to John. John thanked all seven candidates, and mentioned that just under 260 members voted in the election, the highest total in several years.

John announced the following vote totals:

- Carl Curling 73
- Becky Green 147
- Tom Ha 124
- Matt Johnson 37
- Steve Lubliner 133
- Carol Marple 227
- Lynn Thomas 142

Carol, Becky, and Lynn were declared elected.

John opened the floor to member concerns at 8:36.

A member asked if the unofficial, but traditional, NARAM events would continue. He mentioned the night flight, the Imagination Celebration, the Best Midwest Qualified Flight award, and high power events during the week. John said that a lot of these events are up to the local organizers, but NAR will be supportive.

A member expressed his concern about the types of awards (the “Hardware”) awarded at NARAM. Could we mandate trophies rather than medals or certificates? John said that we encourage sponsoring Sections to put together the awards they want, and thanked the member for his input.

As a body, the members discussed the issue of youth participation. One member asked about B division travel grants and cash awards for R&D at NARAM. John said that the grants had not been successful in attracting people to NARAM, so the Board decided to discontinue them after the original grants, which had been privately funded by Bob Alway, ran out. Matt Johnson made several suggestions and declared

that a top-down approach, spearheaded by the NAR Board, was necessary. James Duffy countered that organizations like ours operate best from the bottom, adding, “Expecting magical solutions to come down from the board isn’t going to work.”

Randy Boadway talked about WSR’s efforts to motivate youth. They make sure that every young rocketeer who comes to the field gets a lot of attention, and they make an effort to get the kids involved. Outreach is critical – go out and build rockets with kids. “Do whatever you can,” as Randy said.

John asked members to bring their good ideas to the attention of the NAR Board. The Board is eager to support youth initiatives, but please bring them tangible ideas.

James Younger asked if Sections use a common standard for counting young flyers and first-time flyers. John said that we don’t have a standard, and we don’t even require such a count.

Steve Lubliner said that selling rocketry to the kids is easy, but the challenge is “selling” it to the parents so that they’ll drive the kids to launches. He advised against pushing NAR membership, saying that will come in due time if the kids continue to be interested. Steve closed by saying, “I’m not looking to grow the organization today; I’m looking to grow it in the next five years.”

Jack Hagerty responded to James Younger’s question. His section, LUNAR, has a check box on their flight card to record first-ever flights. Mary Beth Clune said her section provides free kits, free motors, word finds/crossword puzzles to interest children who may not want to fly rockets. Steve Lubliner said that SARA has club “Rent-a-Rocs” that people can prep and fly for \$2.00 to spark their interest.

Several people expressed concern about the cost of attending national events. John agreed that it could be a lot of money, and that we may have to find a different way of doing banquets and different kinds of activities. He pointed out that NAR is at the mercy of the hotel industry, and that we can’t dictate the outcome of those costs. Gary Miller suggested that we ask the people who don’t come to national events why they don’t do so. Steve Lubliner pointed out that we have no control over costs such as lost income due to taking time off to attend events. Lynn Thomas said that we could run events more cheaply, but at what point is the loss of quality unsatisfactory? Mary Beth Clune summed it up: “You can’t please everybody.” To Gary’s point, Kevin Johnson said that the Board is currently drafting questions for a member survey. Kevin asked attendees to go back to their sections when the survey comes out and encourage their members to respond. We need the feedback.

Ed LaCroix, National Events Chair, gave out his e-mail address and promised to answer all e-mails on this topic. He also talked about the requirements for a convention hotel, and why those requirements drive up the cost of an event.

The discussion continued regarding NARAM participation. The Board and NAR are trying as hard as they can to increase the number of participants. The Board would be glad to hear any ideas from members. John Hochheimer has been thinking about this issue for the past 8-10 years, but he does not see any easy solutions.

Steve Lubliner pointed out that NARAM is only one of three national events.

Bob Kaplow said that only 3-5% of NAR members participate in competition and opined that NAR devotes too many resources on NARAM, while 50% of our members fly HPR with comparatively few resources devoted to them. Is it time to rebalance the allocation of resources?

Dan Wolf stated that his mission as Contest Board chair is to increase participation. He pointed out that 850 teams registered for TARC in 2018, and 101 made it to the finals. What happens to the other 700+

teams? Dan invited every TARC team in Wisconsin to participate in a TARC-like event. Four teams showed up for the launch, then they transitioned to an NRC launch in the afternoon. Five students flew, and two of them finished the day on top of the scoreboard in A division. Dan made an impassioned plea for Sections to get involved in outreach. Build, launch, support TARC teams. Do more at the local level.

Pam Gilmore asked about the cost to the Section of hosting a national event. It's difficult to budget, and in her case the financial give-and-take between NAR and the host Section took a year to resolve. She would like to see the process streamlined. John Hochheimer does not totally disagree and said improvements continue to need to be made, but he also said that we have spent a lot of time over the past year to fix some of these systems. It's not perfect yet, but we're working as hard as we can to improve things. Pam offered to help.

Trip Barber said that TARC is our biggest outreach activity, and he thanked the TARC mentors present for their work at the local level in outreach.

Bob Kaplow said that NAR has provided a launch system for NARAM since 1980, and that NAR needs to provide a system for NSL and the NARAM sport range. John said that he had asked the National Events chair to do precisely that during today's Board meeting.

Bob Kaplow added that he would like to see the "Needs Fixing" report return, and that the expired motor testing process needs to be streamlined. John said that the Board would take that under advisement.

The Town Hall adjourned at 9:20 PM.