

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

February 25 through February 27, 2016

The meeting was called to order before NARCON 2016, Thursday, February 25, at the Holiday Inn in Dayton Ohio, at 8:30 pm. All Trustees were present: Ted Cochran, Ryan Coleman, Ed LaCroix, John Lyngdal, Joyce Guzik, Mark Wise, John Hochheimer, Vince Huegele, and Tom Ha.

The meeting was called into Executive session:

The topics of discussion were related to NAR Headquarters, Standards and Testing, and insurance claims.

The meeting recessed while in Executive Session at 9:39 pm, and was called back to order still in Executive Session at 8:35 am on Friday, February 26.

The topic of discussion was awards to be given by the NAR.

The Executive Session ended at 9:08 am, and the regular meeting continued.

John H. moved to approve minutes from July 2015 BOT meeting. Ed LaCroix seconded. Approved unanimously.

Member concerns

The Board reviewed concerns raised by members.

The Board was requested to consider allowing 1-day or short-term NAR memberships so that persons who show up at an NAR launch are covered by the insurance that property owners are requiring. Such a policy would in particular benefit kids who want to try model rocketry but aren't ready to join the NAR. The Board concluded that we would remind the Sections that the club and site insurance covers the landowner. Also that a junior membership is only \$25 and they can join with a smartphone, on the field.

The Board was asked to consider allowing Junior L2 certification. The CPSC restricts the use of high power motors to those age 18 and over, and our current policy adheres to that restriction by having the certifying adult handle the motor. The Board was reluctant to extend the existing program to Level 2, which would require a certifying adult to be responsible for flights of significantly higher total impulse and complexity. There is also the issue of coordination with Tripoli. The Board suggested that Junior Level 1 program participants could build Level 2 rockets but that an adult build motor and fly the rocket. When the student turns 18, he/she could then take the test and use the rocket for L2 certification.

The Board was asked to consider approaches to assist clubs snagging rockets in power lines with the sometimes substantial costs of removing those rockets. The Board was reluctant to do this or to make any change that could in any way be construed as mitigating the need for members to avoid power lines. We noted that it is the club's responsibility to take precautions to avoid the power lines and the club's/flyer's responsibility to settle with the power company. The Board suggests that clubs review their range operation and implement whatever flight rules are necessary to mitigate this risk to an acceptable level.

The Board was asked to consider developing a contest manager app for a smartphone to be used for competitions. The current contest manager is written in JAVA; the suggestion was to open-source the code so that others could add capabilities for an app that could be made available to members. Ed LaCroix offered to talk to Chris Kidwell, the author of the contest manager, about this possibility.

The Board was asked whether the NAR should have a public relations committee. The NAR does have a public affairs committee on the books, but it is not active. Could ask for volunteers in next member survey (3-year cycle) to help with this committee. The NAR will be writing the survey this year and it will go out next year. The last survey was sent out in July 2014. A section survey was sent last year.

Membership

Ted C. noted that the membership is now 6400. There was a discussion of the pros and cons of life memberships. There are a growing number of them, at \$1000 each. These are not necessarily a good financial deal for the NAR, but the life members are also very loyal supporters and volunteers, so perhaps we should encourage life memberships, and consider these persons when seeking volunteer help for the NAR.

National Events

John H. observed that location of the events makes a big difference. For NARCON, the schedule is an experiment this year, with time to go to the Air Force museum built in; as for other events, it is important to try different things to see how they work. If we have NARCON in the D.C. area in 2017, this experiment will help decide if it is a good idea to build time in the schedule to go to the Udvar Hazy museum.

Tom H. mentioned that MARS in Geneseo wants to host NSL at some point in the future and there is also a group in Texas that would like to host NSL.

John H. said that the hotel contract for national events is up for renewal. The contractors wishes that our account was bigger; we could think about adding the TARC event to the hotel arrangement, and John H. will talk with Trip Barber about this possibility.

Ed LaCroix noted that he has the bulk of NAR's NARAM equipment right now stored from last year's NARAM. He may throw away unusable items, as it is expensive to ship. John Lyngdal mentioned also that he has launch pads from SLI that he hauls for high-power launches. Vince H. also has some high-power pads that won't be needed for NSL. For NSL, John H. mentioned that the low power pad availability was the bottleneck, and we need to have a lot more low-power pads available. We also need throughput for launching the low power rockets, e.g. with shorter less detailed announcements. We want a separate low and high-power system so that there is not accidental crossover. The system at the moment is limited by channel control.

John L. brought up NARAM-60, and the Board discussed some options for that event.

Technology Committee

Ryan C. presented this committee's report. Overall, the web site is healthy and usage is not declining. The bounce rate is low (60%). We still get a lot of hits from a link from an article in Men's Health magazine on the "Manliest Hobby." Maybe we should try to get an article written for a popular women's magazine? Ryan would like to see info on next launches for clubs visited by non-members. John H. asked if metadata keyword additions for searches (e.g., if one searched on rocketry conference or workshop, they would still get NARCON convention as a hit), could be added to assist search engines.

John L. asked to have lists of new sections in the E-rocketeer.

We also discussed the QR codes at the display at the Museum of Flight. We noted that these are rarely scanned. We should ask the MoF whether the NAR QR codes are an anomaly. The nar.org/MoF page is not drawing much interest, but it is an excellent landing page that could be replicated for other users (e.g., /Estes, /Apogee, /AeroTech) and used in conjunction with whatever advertising/coupons/targeted messages those organizations might wish to offer.

The NAR member-only pages are improving, with more technical content being added, such as a technical bibliography and R&D archive. There was a huge spike in use of this page in October for an unknown reason. The on-line RCP system is in its 2nd year. The on-line voting system has doubled the number of RCP votes. About 10% of NAR members have logged in to this site.

Cannon, EAG, and Scholarship grants can be applied for now using a web interface. Cannon and EAG need a new E-mail address and form update. Ryan C. will work with Joyce G. to update.

Ryan said that he plans to move the NAR website to a dedicated server, which would allow for better performance predictability and better site management, including backup.

This year the NAR Board of Trustee voting will include an option to vote on-line. This year paper ballots will still be sent out, to every member in the Model Rocketeer as always, but in the long term the plan will be for the Model Rocketeer and balloting to be online, and members would receive a ballot by mail as a membership renewal option. John. L. asked about whether we need a by-laws change to implement on-line voting, and this point will be researched.

Joyce G. (NAR secretary) will not be attending NARAM to organize the election, but will count the paper ballots received by mail and compare with the on-line voting logs to be sure that members haven't voted twice. She will have at least two other NAR members or volunteers without any conflict of interest double-count the paper ballots and she will send the final counts to NARAM.

We also discussed the plan for this year's on-line section renewals, which will be hosted on our website instead of NEON. At most there would be 170 section renewals. For insurance, Bob Blomster will be able to download a list of sections and sites. This will require Sections to enter their information on-line; all of the follow-up actions (Charters, etc.) will be based on this process. This year, Randy Boadway will be sending NAR RSO vests to active sections. One issue was noted that E-mails from WordPress will not go through and will be flagged as spam if over 10 E-mails at once are sent. We could consider tying section mailings to Constant Contact instead (used to send out the E-Rocketeer), as these won't get marked as spam.

Ryan is also working on removing pdf documents from the web and transferring the data to an html page where it can be viewed on the screen and updated. We would like the NAR member guidebook in particular to be available on-line to members. We still could have an option to create a pdf to print. If the information is something that should be printed, e.g., a brochure, then we could keep it as a pdf. The committees will make the decisions on pdfs.

We now have a national event web site, and an archive of these web sites. The NSL web site is populated, while the NARAM website is still sparse. We still need to determine how to encourage event directors to do registration via the website. Ryan is taking this discussion off-line.

The new NAR Member Guidebook is almost ready. [Note: This was mailed in April].

We also can host section web sites at the NAR web site. Perhaps we can email sections that currently do not have web sites, and offer to help create one for them.

The results of past NARAMs are now on-line, but not all data is available for NARAMS held greater than 20 years ago.

We discussed having NAR tests on-line. We do have practice tests, but we would like to find a way to have the teacher certification test and the L2 test on-line. We would

like to find a way for Marie to not have to mail out the tests. We also need to prevent a person from taking it for 30 days if they fail it the first time.

Tom Ha, Mark Bundick, and Jennifer Ash are working on magazine archives. They are starting with 2-year chunks. They have lots of contributors, but do not have all of the back-issues. There is inconsistency in scanning, and some pages need to be rescanned.

Ryan would like to see NARTS transitioned to the NAR web site. The site narts.nar.org exists, but it is not live. Brad Cline needs some time and training to learn to use this new site.

Ted C. thanked Ryan C. for his work, and asked him to continue to set priorities for new capabilities to add to the web site.

Section Activities

Ted talked about adding items to subsidize that will be available to sections on the NARTS page when it becomes active to request. These items could for example include signage, PA Systems, or weather stations. Vests have already been ordered and two will be mailed to each section. NARTS can get some things at reduced rate. NAR could have contracts with Kinkos or some other company to print banners, signs, etc.

As of Feb. 10, the NAR has 171 sections. A minimum of two members is required to start a section. Some sections are TARC teams or SLI teams. We also have some teachers and university professors starting sections. We will send E-mail to all section contacts via Constant Contact to ask them to renew their section. We have only 16 section banners left. Do we want to have an inventory or buy/make these one at a time? Would it be cheaper to get at, e.g., Kinko's or Staples? Tom Ha said that looked into this possibility when he was running NARTS, and decided that it wasn't feasible. Ted will ask for a volunteer to research this. Some things that need attention are shipping and handling, whether the sign needs to have an arrow and direction. Last year there were 28 section grants awarded. The Board concluded that the Program is worth continuing.

Randy Boadway said he wants to have the Section Excellence award ready for NARAM 2016, and to name a Section of the Year.

The Board acknowledged Chuck Neff and Randy Gilbert for their significant efforts to strengthen Section Activities and support the web-based registration system.

Safety

Motion: Tom Ha moved to approve an application for commensurate compliance with the NAR MRSC to use tiny competition motors for the CAN-AM cup. John H. seconded. Passed unanimously.

Education

Education Committee chair Vince H. discussed teacher certification. One problem with the program is that some teachers are not near an NAR section, and Vince needs to find a NAR member to observe and validate a certified flight. Six teachers have completed and are certified. Vince will get names to Jonathan Rains to provide them with NAR cards with NAR TCert on them. Other teachers are nearing completion of the program. Vince noted that experienced teachers and Cannon winners want to be granted certification without completing the program. Vince solicited ideas for dealing with this issue. Would a resume be enough? Teachers are interested in this process as a continuing education requirement fulfillment. Vince wants the NAR program to have credibility to be recognized by school systems. Accepting an essay or resume instead would build up numbers, but not fulfill the purpose. Ed L. asked about whether the program is limited to individuals who are NAR members (the answer is yes). Being an NAR member gives them access to resources and insurance. Ed wondered whether teachers can afford the NAR membership. We noted that the Cannon (and EAG) grants are not restricted to NAR members.

We discussed NAR participation in the NSTA (National Science Teachers Association) national conference. Aerospace Industries Association is not going, so if the NAR wants to participate, we will need to pay the fee for the exhibit. Our benefits are that we get a list of E-mails of people who visited the booth. Most visitors are regional. We would also need to find volunteers to staff the exhibit. We could try to tie the exhibit to the Teacher Certification initiatives. This year there is an advantage that the NSTA is in Tennessee, and NSL and SLI are in the same region this year. The discussion was tabled, pending searching for volunteers.

Vince H. polled some CAP and 4-H teams to learn about their flying sites. CAP had air fields, and 4-H had farm fields of family member friends. Vince noted that it would be difficult to bring NAR members into these flying sites without going through local CAP and 4-H groups. The lack of a strong national structure for these organizations weakens coordination and obtaining information. We could suggest that NAR sections and TARC teams contact these groups at a local level to help find launch sites.

Vince H. commented that he had lots of success with registering TARC teams at U. of Northern Alabama. UNA has registered 15 new teams and contributed to the record number of 37 teams this year in Alabama.

There was some discussion of ARLISS/S4—this is a way for the top TARC teams to enter SLI. John L. said that the NAR has received a contract with SLI for \$57 K. This is a weeklong commitment, and the contract covers travel expenses for NAR volunteers and incremental insurance costs. The incremental costs are estimated at \$7K for liability insurance increase for the SLI field.

Ted C. said that TARC is going well, and that it and SLI have been big wins for the NAR and for education.

Financial report

NAR treasurer Tom Ha will change NAR account in Marion, Iowa to Collins Community Credit Union that is part of the Shared Branching Network, and will close US bank accounts. This is so that Tom H. and Marie and HQ, living in different parts of the country, can make transactions in person at institutions that share records. There was no US Bank branch where Tom H. and many other members with responsibility for funds reside, but the credit union network is nationwide.

Tom wants to discuss with TD Type (who do layout, printing, and arranging mailing of the Sport Rocketry Magazine) having TD Type doing billing to advertisers directly instead of through the NAR. Tom said he would get quicker turnaround with reporting this way.

Tom reminded the Board and committee members who make deposits that he needs notes written on deposit slips (not on checks, as he gets images of deposit slips only). Sometimes Tom has seen deposits come in, but he doesn't know without research who made them or what they were for.

Tom H. discussed making a spreadsheet editing link in google docs for check writers so that they can enter check information that can be shared with him.

Tom H. gave a new thumb drive (Drive B) Ted C. with the records for banking, QuickBooks online, vendors, etc., as he does at least once per year. Tom also makes backups to an external hard drive not connected to his PC; it is disconnected so that it doesn't get corrupted.

Tom H. discussed moving the NAR B-division travel grant line item from temporarily restricted funds to the general fund, as there are no longer any remaining funds from restricted donations, and the NAR needs to decide whether to continue this program from the general fund.

Tom H. noted that the treasury balance is down \$26,811 from 2015; however, the NAR had a goal to spend down \$63,367 this year. The NAR balance has been increasing in large part because of the increase in membership. The Board will work harder to convert this added income to member services.

Tom noted that the NAR is not asking as aggressively as before for vendors to donate for NARAM awards.

Tom noted costs in printing for the magazine, copying done for paperwork for Marie at Lyn Mar printing in Marion Iowa, and for the paper Model Rocketeer newsletter.

Tom H. noted that NAR funds that he has started investing in 1-year CDs with AmeriChoice and US Bank with staggered maturity dates are giving 0.1862% interest rates—while this percentage is small, it amounts to \$336.22 in interest for the year of funding for the NAR would not have otherwise.

Tom H. went over some items that weren't included in his proposed budget to be passed for 2016 that need to be considered, in addition to some assumptions that were included:

- Dedicated web server for NAR web site
- Travel to NSTA for volunteer and exhibit expenses
- Travel for Tom Ha to Marion, Iowa
- Travel for Jennifer Ash to Marion Iowa (archiving)

NASA SLI Contract income of \$56, 570. Some of this (est. \$7K) goes to supplement insurance line for SLI launch.

We had a discussion of the insurance costs—NASA drove us to seek \$5 million insurance coverage, and we are charging NASA for the insurance increase, and matching the premium payment to extend that coverage to our entire organization.

We also noted that the supply of Rockets of the World is dwindling. A new edition is in the works and will require a significant up-front investment for printing. Nevertheless, the arrangement is mutually beneficial; Rockets of the World has generated considerable net income for both the NAR and its author.

The Board convened an Executive session at 3 pm.

Topic of discussion was Headquarters operations.

The Board ended executive session at 3:24 pm.

The Board continued discussion of budget items and assumptions. Board members noted that the majority of sections asked for infrastructure upgrades, and not for safety upgrades. If section activities had a larger budget, could they do some combination of section grants and offering discounted equipment? The Board decided to increase the budget for section grants from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Joyce G. questioned whether grant amount could be increased above \$250 example, to buy a PA system. Randy Gilbert said that these cost about \$400 minimum. John H.

said that his group has a great PA system, but it cost \$4000. PA system are not a one-size fits all. John H. said that we need a new NAR PA system that would cost about \$5500.00. This amount was added to the proposed budget.

John L. asked about giving equipment to sections that host NARAM. Perhaps giving a PA system to a local club, or road improvements to their launch site, for example, would be a good incentive.

The Board also set the amount for combined Cannon, Scholarship, EAG grants for 2016 to \$35,000.

Mark Wise moved to approve the budget. Ed LaCroix seconded motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board then discussed the work of the Special Committee on Expanding NAR competition, chaired by Ed LaCroix and including Glenn Feveryear, Jim Filler, and Scott Alexander (all of whom were in attendance). The committee fielded questions on their proposed NAR Spacemodeling Qualifier Series (SQS) draft document that they had sent to Board members earlier in the week for consideration. This is a draft proposal that will be revised and finalized over the next few months and reviewed for possible adoption at NARAM. There were questions about topics such as event specialists, preserving incentive to hold R&D at NARAM or moving R&D to NARCON, the process for becoming a national champion, advantages of small vs. large fields, eliminating the return rule for duration models, and having more altitude events added to the SQS.

If the return rule is eliminated, the Board brought up the concern of flying non-biodegradable rockets without the intent to return. Glenn Feveryear noted that rockets are by definition meant to be reusable, so it may not be wise to not plan to recover them. Board members liked the ideas of an event specialist and a web-based 'leader board' for a pre-NARAM qualifying and ranking system as well as for record-setting flights.

There were questions about the sanctioning of meets, and making it a non-burdensome process. There should be an on-line application one month ahead of time. SQS can be part of any section launch. The section launch shouldn't be disrupted, but we want to find a way to get some contest flying possibilities incorporated into a section launch. The on-line [postal] competition set up by Chris Flanigan had a lot of participation, without having a sanctioned or hosted meet—one just had to fly the rocket at a launch. We have to have to trust fliers to be honest in reporting their results.

The Board discussed issues of how to organize craftsmanship and R&D events; having a performance-based threshold for qualifying; how to determine section championships; and the idea of 1 point per event, with no weighting factor.

Ryan C. will work on having a venue for discussion of the Expanding Competition Committee's proposals on the NAR web site after NARAM-58.

Joyce G. thought that R&D should stay at NARAM, as well as being tried (as was discussed) at NARCON. Joyce G. thought that taking away weighting factors on R&D does enough to level the playing field without dis-incentivizing R&D competition at NARAM.

John H. praised the committee's work. He would like to see an implementation plan at the next Board meeting in July 2016, and to implement the plan immediately—one year earlier than proposed.

Ed LaCroix said that we should have a new Pink Book out for members to study.

Vince H. said that the proposal mostly addressed getting more adults to participate in competition, but didn't specifically address how to get more A and B division involvement. In the implementation, we need to think about how we get kids to interest other kids, and get sections to interest kids? We should think about B and C Egg-loft duration as events, as a pre-TARC activity. Competition is happening among B Divisioners, but it is happening in TARC and not in the NAR. The NAR events could be used to build up TARC.

Tom H. said that he was puzzled at first about how the new competition proposal was going to work, but that his questions have been answered. He had moved on from participating in competition lately, but after hearing the presentation he is very interested in getting back into competition under the proposed framework.

Steve Lubliner asked about status of high-power competition. Do we have a formal rule book for high-power? Could we have a high-power competition event at a NARAM or NSL? This event could be something for high-power flyers to engage in after achieving L1 or L2.

Ed L. moved that the Board approve in principle the SQS (Spacemodeling Qualifying Series) as proposed with further refinements to be reviewed at NARAM in July. John L. seconded. Motion passed unanimously, except for abstention by Ed L.

The Board went into recess, and reconvened at 8:36 am Saturday, February 27.

Contest and Records and FAI

Mark W. moved to replace the first paragraph in Appendix F.11 with language suggested by Contest Board Chairman Steve Humphrey to change a deadline from June 30 to September 1. Unanimous. Ed L. Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Regarding Steve H.'s suggestion to think about ways to reward Contest Directors, Ed L. agreed to look into this and make recommendations. We may want to reward mentoring, or other activities in addition.

The Board reviewed John Langford's report on FAI competition. 32 people are going to Ukraine for the Internationals.

The Board also reviewed the report on HPR. They noted that there were no applications for Rocket Science Achievement Awards. A new record of 118,632 feet may have discouraged interest. (The Board noted that bowling-ball duration was very popular and successful.) Ted C. will publicize the award more to see if interest can be increased.

The Board then reviewed the NARTS report. Ted C. noted that the Board is very grateful to have a dedicated volunteer, Brad Cline, for running NARTS. Ed L. asked if Brad Cline gets requests for products that haven't been added. Tom Ha said NARTS has no constraints, and can sell anything that isn't stepping on toes of other vendors. NARTS also sells things like safety vests that are requested by the Board. Tom H. would like to see the product line change or increase. Ed L. asked if we are sensitive to price for products. For example, Ed wears SPF-50 (sunblock) long-sleeve shirts. Could we get such shirts with such special fabric, even though they might cost \$40 or more? Sunblock hats are another example, but these are a \$25 item, and we don't make a large profit and can't order them in bulk.

Ted C. asked Tom H. to transfer \$5K from section activities to NARTS to pay for the requested safety vests.

The new NARTS web site will make shipping options more flexible. We could use the Magnum Hobbies idea to have on-line drawings to drive traffic to the NARTS site. NARTS could also sell downloadable items on the web site. Ted C. noted that the mission of NARTS is not to make profit, but we should think of ways to enhance its service to the NAR.

There may be interest in making available competition towers if these could be manufactured with a limited run.

Ed L. asked if Sport Rocketry is getting enough articles. Apogee has a newsletter that pays for articles. SR has had to raise its amount available to pay authors to \$350 for each issue.

The Board then discussed the Museum of Flight. The Board decided to give the Museum library a subscription to SR. The exhibit is the best Model Rocket exhibit in the country, but we may not be getting much traffic to our web site from the exhibit. We are going to ask them if they get hits on their own web site for their exhibits. There is a plan to expand the exhibit space to include collections of Vern and Gleda Estes, and Lee Piester.

The Board reviewed a few action items: Ed L. offered to help with a graphic design for the future for a new awarded Spadafora Award for Service. Joyce G. would set the deadline dates for the next NAR 1st-time B division travel grant, and get it advertised on the NAR and NARAM web sites with help from John H. and Ryan C. We also thought it would be good to give the visitors/competitors from India a chance to do a presentation, and we need to find new volunteers to shepherd them. The Board decided to extend the membership of Zack Coffee and Michala Alexander for one year to thank them for their time and written input and advice provided to the Expanding Competition Committee.

Vince H. moved to adjourn. Tom H. seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Board meeting adjourned at 9:32 am. Ted thanked Board for service, noting that "It is a glorious time to be a member of the NAR".

The Board will reconvene at NARAM Thursday night, July 21, 2016.