

NAR Board of Trustees conference call, September 1, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 PM Eastern Time.

Present: John Hochheimer, President; Carol Marple, Vice President; Mark Wise, Secretary; Becky Green; Steve Kristal; Steve Lubliner; Lynn Thomas; Jim Wilkerson.

Absent: Kevin Johnson, Treasurer.

Todd Schweim managed the technical aspects of the Zoom meeting and provided his input as appropriate.

President's Report

John said, "It's been busy on lots of fronts." John will be heading west to see John Lyngdal (S&T committee co-chair and Student Launch Program manager), to visit Marie at NAR HQ, and close the remaining Collins Credit Union accounts and explore opening a line of credit with USBank. (NAR does not need a line of credit at this time but as John said, "The time you need it is not the time to apply for it.")

The NAR had 8138 members at the end of August. Membership has increased across all age groups, not just the youth. September and October are usually the busiest months for membership, so John is hoping for a big uptick in memberships. It does not look as though the dues increase has led to a decline in membership.

We are slowly but surely getting our business registrations fixed and secured. Our registration with Colorado, where NAR is chartered, lapsed in mid-2020. This had a ripple effect in Iowa, where we currently do business. The situation has been remedied, and we are now retroactively in both states' good graces. Steve Lubliner asked if we have to pay taxes in each state. John said we file in both states, and we reference the IRS Form 990 in both cases. We need resident agents in each state, who must be residents of the respective states. HQ Manager Marie Stumpe is our agent in Iowa, and Matt Abbey is our agent in Colorado, replacing Warren Layfield who served in that role for many years.

The Student Launch Program (SLP) has kicked off for the year. John Lyngdal has things under control, and John Hochheimer will work with him on the bid for the next contract. NASA has asked John Hochheimer to serve as a judge on one of the panels. (John Lyngdal is already a judge.)

TARC registration opened today.

The discussion turned to NAR awards. A High-Power Rocketry Achievement Award has been given out a couple of times in the past, and John has received requests to expand the program and make it about more than HPR. Jim recommended retaining the award for HPR only, since other NAR award programs emphasize competition and do not really address HPR. Steve Lubliner mentioned that he had previously suggested a "Carlisle Award" to recognize technical achievement. Jim suggested that it might be time to find a volunteer to develop a coordinated master plan for awards, since there's no unified award program and it's all rather scattershot. He recommended finding an awards coordinator to come up with guidance before adding another award. Jim will take this on since he is already working with Jonathan Rains on the NARAM awards. He will also talk to Contest Board chair Dan Wolf. To sum up, Jim's task is to create a management structure for NAR's awards.

HPR Certification Management

John expressed his concern that as the total membership and number of HPR certifications continues to grow, Marie will reach a saturation point. He said that we need to find a new way to manage HPR certifications and recordkeeping in order to keep Marie's workload manageable. This is an extremely important task, requiring a strong ("Chuck Neff-level") volunteer. Steve Lubliner asked if it would be possible to find someone to vet the paperwork to make sure it's correct (at least 25% of all certification packages require corrections), then forward the documentation to Marie. John replied that the data entry isn't a huge lift for Marie; rather, it's the back-and-forth with the applicant as he/she corrects the certification package. Steve Kristal asked whether the paperwork could be handled in the same way that record attempt submissions are handled. Todd said that would be easy to do from the standpoint of website development, but that verification would be a challenge. Jim pointed out that verification has legal implications, so the certification team needs to verify the documentation before it's sent to HQ. Steve Lubliner concurred with Jim and asked whether John Thompson (High Power Rocketry Services chair) might have the available bandwidth to take this on. Jim said that John might be able to do so, or he might know someone who could help. Jim also suggested a how-to template for the website to show how certification paperwork should be completed, in order to reduce errors. John said that a hybrid approach building on Steve Kristal's concept might be feasible. If technology could make the process easier, perhaps we could implement a portal for submitting paperwork (rather than relying on e-mail). Jim agreed; his concern was to make sure that the flyer didn't validate his/her own data. Todd said that we could make this process into something like a DocuSign form and set it up so that it couldn't be printed until all of the necessary blocks are filled out. That would validate the document before it went out for signatures. John asked Jim to discuss this idea with the high-power group. The issue won't be solved right away, but we need to move forward. In the meantime, it would be good to find some sort of short-term mechanism to take some of the pressure off Marie. Todd said he could work with Jim on the forms.

Treasurer's Report

We are doing well with respect to cash flow, and Anne is continuing to tweak some of our processes. Her goal – and ours – is to be well-positioned for an audit.

Safety

Earlier this summer, a member made two high-power flights that violated the applicable safety codes, then posted video of the flights to social media. John appointed Trip Barber, Mark Bundick, and Ted Cochran to investigate the event pursuant to Section 11 of the NAR Bylaws. They suggested that NAR turn the issue into a teachable moment, citing commensurate compliance with the safety codes. Ted is writing an article for the commensurate compliance process for the next issue of the *E-Rocketeer*. Steve Lubliner and Jim expressed reservations about commensurate compliance in this case, since the member did not follow the prescribed process before making the flights. John will talk to the member. If the member shows some contrition, the tribunal's action will be more instructive and less punitive.

Social Media

Jim asked why an announcement was posted to Facebook, announcing the retirement of the Best Midwest Qualified Flight award at NARAM. He wondered whether it needed to be publicly announced at all, and questioned why the decision was made without consulting the Board.

After extensive discussion, the Board agreed on the following:

- Facebook and other social media are not channels for official NAR communication. Use social media to refer people to the NAR website.
- Conversations about official announcements are permissible if they remain civil and within the bounds of the NAR's Facebook policy. As appropriate, remind posters (not all of whom are NAR members) of the appropriate people to contact with policy questions, and provide them with contact information as appropriate.

Education

John had a good discussion with Dr. Eric Pyle, president of the National Science Teachers Association (and a NAR member). They talked about eliciting feedback on what kinds of materials would be useful to educators with regard to rocketry. John believes that our materials and method of presentation are dated, and that updates would improve the impact. The NSTA sent Becky an e-mail with ideas, which she'll pass along to Lynn. Carol will add Lynn as an admin to the NAR Education FB page.

Scholarship checks were mailed out last week. Cannon and Extracurricular Activity Grants still need to go out.

Miscellaneous

Steve Kristal asked the Board to think about how we can improve youth outreach.

John welcomed Steve to the Board.

Steve Lubliner said that the Experimental Sounding Rocket Association (ESRA) will sponsor the 2022 Spaceport America Cup next June. He expects them to contact us to see how NAR can support the flights that involve the use of commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) technology (i.e., no experimental motors).

The next scheduled conference call will be on October 6, 2021, at 8:00 PM Eastern Time.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 PM.