

Introduction

by Steve Decker

What is an NAR Section and why form one?

Almost all of us have started out in the hobby of model rocketry by purchasing a kit, building it, and flying it. Fun at first, but it gets old after a while. You need a buddy, or several friends, to fly with. You build models, compare their looks and performance, talk rockets - in short, you have more fun when it's a group activity. Being part of an NAR section gives you a sense of camaraderie, and gives you access to the ideas and enthusiasm of others. This makes everything you do with rockets more fun - every launch, meeting, or get-together.

Also, clubs can often obtain special discounts and publications from manufacturers and dealers. Clubs also have greater financial resources than individuals, and are able to obtain expensive or specialized equipment that individuals could not.

Being part of a recognized NAR section also gives you the ability to hold your own sanctioned model rocket competitions in accordance with the "Pink Book", the U.S. Model Rocket Sporting Code. I have been a member of NAR sections on and off for over 20 years, and I consider the people I fly with some of my best friends. Although some members don't compete, there are still plenty of activities to keep everyone interested. Forming a section is the best way to find and get together with like-minded people. Isn't that what life is all about?

By reading this document, you will gain the knowledge of people who have gone before. People who have formed successful, long-lived sections. People who have fought to have restrictive legislation changed. People who have run successful sanctioned meets for years. Throughout the manual, you'll notice actual quotes from people all across the nation expounding on "What Works." Draw on their experience, and add your own ideas and creativity.

*“. . . The key to keeping the interest is variety. You can move from one interest to another or do them all at once. The key is to provide more than just whoosh . . . pop!
..”*

Fast Facts - What it Takes

First off, what are the requirements that need to be met in order to form a section?

You will need:

- Five NAR members. One of these must be a senior member.
- Fill out a section charter application. These are available from the Section Activities Committee, NAR Headquarters, online in the Forms Filing Cabinet and in the Forms Section of this manual.
- Send the completed application to NAR Headquarters, along with the chartering fee. The charter fee is \$40. This fee includes \$1,000,000 of liability insurance coverage while engaged in rocketry activities. Site Owner insurance is available for an additional \$15 per site, to provide \$1,000,000 of liability insurance coverage for the owners of your flying site.
- A place to fly! School fields are often used by NAR sections, and most school boards will want your club to be insured before they will give you permission to use their fields.

You, *may not* need:

- A Senior Advisor. The Senior Advisor concept was instituted back in the 60's, in order to have a responsible person at the helm. During this era, most sections were comprised of minors. The situation seems to have reversed during the 90's, with most sections being comprised of adults. However, if your section's officers are minors, you will need to find an adult to serve as your Advisor.
- Site Owner Insurance. Some clubs are lucky enough to be able to launch from family-owned properties, and therefore don't need the site-owner insurance.

Organization

One very important ingredient of your new section will be MEMBERS ! A one-person club isn't going to go very far. But how and where do you find members? There are several ways to recruit potential members, some more successful than others. Most clubs try a combination of several techniques. Here are some you can try:

- **Contact NAR Headquarters**

NAR Headquarters can supply you with a list of NAR members in your local area. A direct mailing to these members could well generate all the members you'll need to form a section. A simple letter to the prospective members is your best bet, telling them who you are, what you want to do, and why. Invite them to an organizational meeting at your house, or any convenient meeting place.

- **Hobby Shops**

Most hobby storeowners will be valuable sources of information. They often have customers ask if there is a rocket club nearby. Most hobby storeowners will let you put up posters or distribute flyers in their shops. It's good business for the owners. They know that the members of a local rocket club are ready-made customers. Some hobby shop owners will even give club members a discount, and special-order merchandise for rocketeers. It pays to maintain a good relationship with hobby storeowners. It's great to know when the new merchandise is coming in, and be able to pick up parts or motors on a moment's notice.

- **Posters and Flyers**

As mentioned above, posters and flyers can be a cheap and effective means to advertise your club. Remember the "Three C's" when creating posters - Colorful, Clear, and Critical. Colorful means just what it says. Steer clear of plain old white poster board with black lettering. Opt instead for colored poster board and/or colored text. Graphics help to draw the eyes of your intended audience. Try including some photos of launches, meetings, or construction sessions. Go easy on the "crash & bum" shots, and try to show people smiling. Family shots can be quite effective, too. Clear means to keep your poster uncluttered. A few graphics or photos are great, but too many can detract from your message. If you are forming a new section, the posters should include information about your organizational meeting. This is where you'll actually form the club, and it's important to make the first meeting a good one. An obvious point, but often overlooked, is to put your name and phone number on the poster or flyer! You *do* need to know how many people to expect. Critical, of course, refers to critical information. As mentioned above, make certain that you include all of the information needed by your prospective members - Where is the meeting? Who should attend? What's it all about? When is the meeting (date/time)?

“. . . The most obvious and stable recruiting technique has been to put posters and flyers in as many hobby shops as possible. . . ”

NAR Sections - Who, What, How, Why

by Ed Muccio

What are Chartered NAR Sections and Why Do They Exist?

Sections are made up of five or more NAR members (one must be a Senior member) who have applied for and received an NAR Section Charter.

The NAR Section serves several purposes:

1. Provide a structured organization on a local level for modelers to use as a common ground for holding launches, workshops, demonstrations, and sanctioned competitions.
2. To be able to receive hobby liability insurance coverage for bodily injury and/or property damage. Coverage applies to the Section as a group (the collective group of current NAR members in good standing). Also, the Section can purchase this coverage for the owner of its flying site. Only chartered NAR Sections can purchase flying site owner coverage.
3. To host NAR sanctioned competitions such as Section, Local, Open, and Regional meets and possibly NARAM, the National Contest.
4. To be part of a national network. The NAR Section Activities Committee provides support to Sections by making readily available all news and information that affects Sections. Contact is made directly, electronically, or through Sport Rocketry magazine.

Who can start a Section?

It is not necessary to have a Senior Advisor if your section's President is over the age of 18. In such a case, the President may serve as the Senior Advisor. The Section Information Packet, which is obtained free from NAR headquarters, provides all the required details to charter an NAR Section. The free packet includes a Section Charter Application.

Families, schools, civic groups (churches, scouts, Civil Air Patrol, YMCA, etc.) can help nurture enough NAR members to form a Section.

While forming and chartering an NAR section is designed to be easy, the real work comes in keeping a Section active. This means consistently conducting a number of group activities:

1. Holding regular meetings that are well organized and meaningful.
2. Planning launches, months or a year in advance and sticking to the schedule.

3. Holding demonstration launches to cultivate new Section members as well as interest in the model rocket hobby.
4. Holding sanctioned competitions and organized fun-flies and inviting other NAR Sections to participate. . . competition and organized flying bring a real purpose to model rocketry for many flyers who have an otherwise short-lived interest.
5. Sharing your Section's interests with each other and with the community by writing newsletters, supporting science fairs, and holding model rocketry workshops.

The idea of binding common interests and sharing common goals is the basic philosophy of the chartered NAR Section. The Section, in turn, is the binding force of the NAR membership. Section members remain active in the hobby the longest and have the potential to enjoy the most in their hobby.

If you are interested in forming an NAR Section, call or write to NAR Headquarters and ask for a free Section Information Packet:

NAR Headquarters
P.O. Box 407
Marion, IA 52302

Phone toll free: 1-800-262-4872

Internet: <http://www.nar.org>

“ . . . Starting a section requires a lot work from a small number of committed individuals. It is worth the effort.”

“This hobby is much more fun when it is shared with others. Regular meetings, sport launches, and a ‘let’s have fun’ attitude all contributed to the early success of the section. . . .”

First Meeting and Bylaws

Now that the organizational meeting is set, you should have a number of people coming. The question that is probably foremost in your mind at this point is what to do at the first meeting.

First of all, if most of your prospective members are minors, make sure you have an adult present. An adult supervisor helps to keep the meeting from getting out of hand. A parent, teacher, or local hobby shop owner can often be “drafted” as the adult advisor. If the majority of the people present are not familiar with the hobby, give a brief explanation of what it’s all about. A number of props can be useful here: slides, videos, actual rockets, catalogs, copies of Sport Rocketry magazine, NAR literature, etc.

Since you are reading the Section Manual, we’ll assume that you have already decided that your club will be an NAR Section. You need to make sure that you have at least five current NAR members. One of your NAR members must be a Senior member.

Next, decide on your membership. Will it be limited to your school, your town, your county, etc. Most clubs don’t worry about setting a limit on the number of members, and are happy to get as many as possible. What are the club’s purposes? Will you charge dues? Who will do the newsletter? What equipment will the club own, and who will take care of it? Where will you launch? Where and when will your meetings be? You needn’t answer all these questions at the first meeting and you shouldn’t even try. The first meeting is a time to explain to everyone what you want to do, and get them enthused about the idea. Wait until the second meeting before tackling these jobs. You need to build a solid base first. Top off the first meeting with snacks and an informal discussion session. Have everyone introduce themselves, and tell the group a bit about their rocketry experiences, what they expect from the club, etc.

The second meeting should be held about two weeks later. Don’t let too much time elapse, or some people will lose interest. Remind everyone by phone, e-mail, or post card a few days before the meeting. By now, most of the “merely curious” will have lost interest and the group that attends the second meeting will be ready to start seriously writing by-laws (rules that govern the organization and operation of the club) and will have had a chance to think about the problems facing the club discussed at the first meeting. You should have a secretary writing down the discussions and resolutions of this meeting. Following are the major divisions of the by-laws of most rocket clubs. Some people may think that by-laws aren’t needed, but they can save a lot of arguments and hurt feelings later on. After you’ve formulated the by-laws, have everyone vote on them before formal adoption. See the following pages for a set of sample bylaws for your use. These are meant to serve as examples only, and should not be followed verbatim. Your bylaws should apply to your situation. After you have your bylaws written up and voted on by your membership, remember to send one copy to NAR Headquarters for acceptance.

- I. **Name.** You probably have already chosen a name, which reflects the nature and location of the club. (e.g. Southern Pennsylvania Area Association of Rocketry, San Gabriel High School Section, etc.) Some clubs choose names to fit a desirable acronym. MARS is a popular choice, but try not to duplicate existing names or acronyms.
- II. **Purpose.** You'll probably want to keep the purpose as general as possible in keeping with the aims of your club. Don't make your purpose so specific that it's impossible to live up to it.
- III. **Membership.** Here's where you'll detail any restrictions on membership: "Students of San Gabriel High School", "Residents of Southern Pennsylvania and Northern Maryland", etc. Again, don't be too restrictive ("Rocketeers on Main Street between 13 and 15 years old"), or not restrictive enough ("all rocketeers in the galaxy"). That kid on Alpha Centauri may have trouble getting to the meetings. It helps if the territory you cover is small enough so everyone can get to the meetings. This size is highly dependent on your membership, and the transportation available.
- IV. **Dues.** Many clubs decide on what dues will be charged depending on the club's needs, such as equipment to be purchased, newsletter costs, postage, NAR charter fees, etc. If your dues are high, try to spread the cost over a period of time, to lessen the burden on each member. For example, you could charge \$1.00 per month instead of \$12.00 on the 1st of January.
- V. **Meetings.** Set a regular interval for meetings, such as monthly, or bi-weekly. A minimum time should be set for the calling of special meetings, such as "five days notice must be given to members when a meeting is to be held". Meetings can, of course, be held more frequently than the bylaws call for, but should not be held less frequently.
- VI. **Officers.** Every club needs a President, whether you call him President, CEO, or Grand Poobah. The president acts as a binding force for the entire club, and runs the meetings and other activities. The Vice-President takes care of the President's duties when the President is inactive or unavailable. The Secretary keeps a record (the minutes) of meeting activities and is usually responsible for keeping the club roster and notifying everyone of meetings. The Treasurer, of course, handles the club's money. Some clubs even elect their Newsletter Editor, in order to give everyone a fair chance at trying out the job. In a small club, some of these jobs can be combined. Your bylaws should create four distinct jobs and allow them to be combined if needed.
- VII. **Elections.** In this section, a time and procedure is set for the election of officers. If you are a school club, follow the normal time and procedure for elections of your school's club's officers. Otherwise, the elections can be held anytime. Some clubs elect officers in January, some hold elections to coincide with the NAR contest year. What's most important is to spell out your procedure in your bylaws.

VIII. **Committees.** Committees are groups of people within the Section who are responsible for certain tasks or activities. For example, the Range Operations Committee builds and maintains club equipment and operates the range. The Contest Committee runs the club contests. The Publicity Committee handles publicity . . . you get the idea. The President usually appoints the committee chairman and the Chairman then chooses the committee members.

IX. **Amendments.** Conditions change, and so must bylaws. To prevent hasty or foolish changes the amendment procedure should be fairly difficult. For example, “the amendment must be approved by 3/4 of the members present at each of two meetings held at least five days apart with written notice to be given to all members of the meetings and the amendment.”

Sample Bylaws for an NAR section

(Note: These are only samples. Individual Sections may wish to alter them or add to them due to local circumstances. The purpose of these sample bylaws is to provide a guide for each group in drawing up their own bylaws.)

Article 1: Name

The name of this organization shall be the _____ Section of the National Association of Rocketry.

Article 2: Purpose

It shall be the purpose of this Section to (a) aid and abet the aims and purposes of the NAR in (Locale), (b) to operate and maintain a model rocket range in accordance with NAR standards, applicable regulations, and the NAR Safety Code(s), © to hold meetings for the purpose of aiding and encouraging all those interested in rocketry, and (d) to engage in other scientific, educational, or related activities as the NAR, the Section, or the Section Board of Directors may from time to time deem necessary or desirable in connection with the foregoing.

Article 3: Membership

All members of this Section shall be NAR members in good standing who reside in (Locale).

Article 4: Dues

Dues shall be \$____ per year, payable in advance. These Section dues are separate and distinct from national dues paid to the NAR. All dues monies shall be kept in a General Fund by the Secretary-Treasurer and shall be paid out by him only on order of the Section Board of Directors. Special assessments may be levied by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any meeting of the Section

provided notice of such intent is given in writing to each member at least five days preceding such a meeting.

Article 5: Meetings

Meetings of the Section shall be held at least _____ times per year at times and places designated by the Section Board of Directors. Operation of the rocket range shall not be considered a meeting. A quorum shall consist of 50% of the membership of the Section. Meetings shall be conducted and governed by "Robert's Rules of Order, Revised."

Article 6: Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of this Section shall include the four officers, one member-at-large, and the Senior Advisor, if applicable.

Article 7: Officers

The officers of this Section shall consist of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, all of whom shall be members of the Section and of the NAR.

Article 8: Elections

Elections of officers and members of the Board of Directors shall take place at the first meeting of the calendar year. All officers and members of the Board shall serve a term of one year. Vacancies in office and on the Board shall be filled by nomination and election of a Section member to fill the unexpired term of office and shall take place at the Section meeting at which the vacancy is announced. Nominations for all elections shall be made from the floor, and the candidate having the largest number of votes shall be elected.

Article 9: Committees

There shall be three Standing Committees of the Section, plus such additional committees as the Board of Directors may from time to time deem necessary or desirable. The Standing Committees are as follows:

(a) **Operations Committee** shall be in charge of the Section's model rocket range, shall monitor the experimental technical activities of the Section members, and shall act as Safety Inspectors. The Chairman of the Committee shall be a Senior member of the NAR in good standing, and shall act as Range Safety Officer under the NAR standards, regulations, and Safety Code(s).

(b) **Contest and Records Committee** shall be in charge of all arrangements for contests, and shall monitor all national record attempts by Section members.

(c) **Activities Committee** shall be in charge of making all arrangement for Section meetings, for conducting membership campaigns, and for carrying on

public relations.

(d) The Section President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Article 10: _ Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those Section members present and voting at any meeting of the Section, providing written notice of the pending amendment has been sent to the membership of the Section at least five days in advance of such meeting. No amendment of these bylaws shall be in force until and unless approved by NAR Headquarters.

Adopted: (Date)

Signed: _____