

NAR Town Hall

NAR President John Hochheimer called the meeting to order at 8:03 PM Eastern Time on August 13, 2024.

Thirty-three NAR members were present at the beginning of the meeting.

Safety

John said that the NAR's top safety concerns remain unsafe recovery (due to inappropriate launch rod/rail angles and recovery failures), fires, keeping rockets inside the launch site, and automobiles struck by rockets. Wildfires are a special concern in some areas. John noted that if a car is struck by a rocket, it is the joint responsibility of the owner of the vehicle and the owner of the rocket to coordinate insurance (the car owner's auto insurance and the rocketeer's homeowner's insurance); the situation is not covered by the NAR's insurance. John also noted that if the NAR files an insurance claim, the first \$1000 of the deductible is the responsibility of the rocketeer, not the NAR.

Trustee Mark Wise moved to open the business meeting. Member Arnold Witzke seconded. The motion passed without opposition.

Election Results

John announced the results of the Board of Trustees election:

- Jim Wilkerson 137
- Steve Kristal 135
- Mark Wise 134

Jim, Steve, and Mark were declared elected to the Board.

Business from Members

Member Bob Kaplow expressed a concern about the notification of members. While a meeting notice was published in *The Electronic Rocketeer*, members who are not online did not receive notification of the meeting. Bob asked that the NAR be more careful about notification. John thanked him for his input.

Bob Kaplow brought up the emergency Rules Change Proposal (RCP) regarding shortening the 2024-2025 contest year, a change that became necessary due to NARAM 66 taking place in late June 2025. Bob moved that the Board of Trustees direct the Contest Board to cancel the RCP that changed the events list for the contest year. Bob noted that that an emergency RCP to shorten the contest year to accommodate the early NARAM was necessary but maintained that the follow-on emergency RCP to change the events list was not reflective of a genuine emergency. He added that even members who supported the changed events list should recognize that it did not meet the definition for an emergency change and should have followed the RCP process.

Bob moved the following:

I move that the NAR trustees direct the contest board to roll back the non-emergency change, and go through the standard RCP process giving members the chance to evaluate, comment, and vote on the NRC event list change. This would include reverting the current NRC events back to their originally published list.

O. Lee James seconded the motion.

Lee James opined that it was a Model Rocket Sporting Code issue rather than a bylaws issue.

Jim Filler said he did not believe that the Town Hall was the appropriate place for such a discussion and added that the Contest Board had been polled on the issue. In Jim's opinion, the question was whether the situation was truly an emergency. He said that he was not going to argue the merits, and that any statement should come from Contest Board chair Al De La Iglesia.

John asked Jim Filler about the changes. Jim said that the Contest Board decided that based on the number of people who attended the FAI flyoffs this year, it was evident that Junior FAI was a growing segment of competitive rocketry. (Jim attributes the growth to mentorship.) The Contest Board suggested that two events be changed, and that it was now up to the Board of Trustees to decide whether this action was appropriate.

Member Steve Maire said that the list was supposed to be published by July 1st so that people could prepare for the National Rocketry Competition contest year, and that members in colder climates do not have the advantage of long flying seasons. (Note: Per paragraph 13.1.3 of the Model Rocket Sporting Code, "The following year's NRC events will be announced on NAR.org, no later than 10 days before the start of NARAM by the Contest Board Chairman." July 1st is not specified.)

John said that per Article V of the bylaws, Bob's motion needed to be sent to members 14 days before the meeting. He proposed an amendment to Bob's motion to ask the Board of Trustees to confer with the Contest Board to determine whether it would be appropriate for the Trustees to direct the Contest Board to make the change. Bob pointed out that at least two Sections have NRC launches scheduled for the coming weekend, and a decision was necessary sooner. John said that he was not sure that the Board of Trustees had the authority to do what Bob was asking. John admitted that he did not have an immediate answer.

Vice President Steve Kristal added that we have a segment of competition (FAI) that is growing rapidly (especially at the Junior level), and a segment of competition (NRC) that is not growing at all. He recognized Bob's concern but added that we are trying to grow competition and the way to do that is to foster what is working. Steve said that he would talk to Bob offline.

Trustee Jim Wilkerson moved to table Bob's motion, recognizing the issue. Trustee Jasper Barnett seconded. Trustee Don Carson wondered whether Bob's motion even needed tabling. John ruled the motion out of order and said that the Board of Trustees would review the issue with the Contest Board.

Mark Wise moved to close the business meeting. Jasper Barnett seconded. Motion carried.

John moved on to the "State of the NAR" presentation. (The slides may be found at <https://www.nar.org/state-of-the-nar-presentations/>)

John thanked the NAR's employees and contractors:

- Mayra Marquez, HQ Manager
- Monica Rooker, HPR Certifications and Social Media
- Todd Schweim, Director of Member Communications and Publishing
- Marie Stumpe, HQ Manager Emeritus
- Jon Bolden, Webmaster (contractor)
- Anne Heacock, Accounting (contractor)

John said that NAR Headquarters has moved again, from Middletown to Marshall, both in Virginia. We need to change the post office box, physical address, IRS documentation, and business license. The telephone number and banking information will remain the same.

The NAR had 9186 members as of the time of the Town Hall, including 5888 Seniors, 2493 Young Adults, 669 Juniors, and 136 Life Members, up slightly over this time last year. Membership was down about 200 from January, which is not unusual. Mean and median ages remain 45 and 49, with a bimodal distribution of members by age.

The NAR currently has 246 Sections: 174 public, 68 organizational, and 4 private.

The NAR has awarded 30 Section grants totaling \$7350 this year. John thanked Chuck Neff, the Section Activities Chair, and Ed Chess, who manages the Section Grant program.

John announced the 2023 Section Website Excellence Awards:

- 1st Place – Wisconsin Organization Of Spacemodeling Hobbyists (WOOSH) #558, Paul Kinzer, Webmaster
- 2nd Place – Summit City Aerospace Modelers (SCAM) #282, Dave Porter, Webmaster
- 3rd Place – Music City Missile Club (MC2) #589, James Allen Hall IV, Webmaster
- 4th Place – South Western (Ontario) Association of Rocket Modelers (SWARM) #752, Chris Halinaty, Webmaster

Member Will Marchant asked if there had been any movement on Sections using the NAR's nonprofit status to accept donations. John said that there has been no significant progress, but the NAR is working on it. John added that the NAR can accept donations from organizations on behalf of Sections, then disburse the funds back to the Section.

John discussed NAR's value proposition, pointing out the benefits both for members (insurance, *Sport Rocketry* magazine, the online Member Guidebook, the Members' Forum, the website with member-only content, high power certification, Section participation, competition and other national events) and for the hobby at large (educational programs, grants and scholarships, STEM programs, safety codes, and motor testing).

John provided an update on endowments. The Jay Apt Scholarship Fund has been moved into an investment account with the intent that it be self-funded in perpetuity. (The first Jay Apt Endowed Scholarship was awarded in 2022.) Work continues on establishing endowments for the Trip and Tina

Barber Scholarship and the George Gassaway Scholarship, as well as adding funds to the existing Gleda M. Estes Memorial Scholarship for Young Women in STEM. The Board's goal is to use endowments to fund grants and scholarships to the maximum extent possible, freeing up NAR funds for other purposes.

John provided a financial summary for 2023. Total income was \$1,135,470, while program costs were \$618,002 and operating costs were \$556,412, for a net loss of \$38,944. The NAR's largest source of income was membership dues (\$478,809, or 42%), the largest program cost was the 2023 World Spacemodeling Championships (\$329,145, which was fully reimbursed at no net cost to the NAR), and the largest operating cost was HQ operations (\$203,810, or 37%). Details are available on the slide presentation at <https://www.nar.org/state-of-the-nar-presentations/>.

John announced that NARTS has been partially restored. NAR-branded clothing is available through a fulfillment service, and pins will be available soon.

John informed the members that the NAR will be moving to a new integrated website and member database, with a planned roll-out date of Jan 1, 2025. The new system will integrate mailings, the NAR storefront, the Member Forum, Section websites, and more into a single platform. Digital membership cards will be available for printing or downloading. The new system will promote more efficient business and member services. Junior and Young Adult members will receive membership cards and *Sport Rocketry* in digital format only, with hard copies available for an additional fee. Membership renewal notices will be sent digitally, saving thousands of dollars in printing and postage costs. Additional features will become available as the NAR implements them. John said that help will be available as members log into the new system and navigate the changes.

John announced the recipients of the 2023 NAR scholarships and grants:

Gleda M. Estes Memorial Scholarship for the Advancement of Young Women in STEM 2024 (\$3,000)

Amelia Keefe, University of Central Florida, Computer Science

Jay Apt Endowed Scholarship 2024 (\$2,000)

William Usher, Purdue University, Mechanical Engineering Technology

Fehskens Memorial Scholarship 2024 (\$2,000)

Rebecca Zurek, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Aerospace Engineering

NAR Scholarship Recipients 2024 (\$2,000)

Dominic Bleacher, Ohio Northern University, Mechanical Engineering

William Boersma, LeTourneau University, Mechanical Engineering

Elise Fan, University of California Berkeley, Mechanical Engineering

Sunjum Mehta, University of Maryland – College Park, Aerospace Engineering

Katelyn Morgan, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Aeronautical Engineering

Anna Moses, Virginia Commonwealth University, Physics

Aaryan Nagarkatti, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Aerospace Engineering

Peter Nguyen, Cornell University, Mechanical Engineering

Sam Theil, University of Cincinnati, Mechanical Engineering

Madelyn Torrans, Cedarville University, Mechanical Engineering

Robert Cannon Educator Grants 2024 (\$500)

Kara Anderson, Shephard Middle School, Ottawa, IL
Lisa Balazs, Jagic City Acceptance Center, Homewood, AL
Trina Forrest, Dr. John C. Page School, West Newbury, MA
Richard Heggan, Medford Lakes Neeta School, Medford, NJ
Wyant May, New London Jr & Sr High School, New London, IA

NAR Extracurricular Activity Grants 2024 (\$500)

Craig Beals, Billings Senior High School, Billings, MT
Eric Dorward, Garden Spot Middle School, New Holland, NJ
Keke Kincaid, Cub Scouts Pack 1203, San Pedro, CA
Bob Phinney, New England Sci-Tech, Natick, MA
Matthew Scandrol, Satchel Ford Elementary School, Columbia, SC

John closed the Town Hall by restating the NAR's priorities:

- Continue to make flight safety our organization's first priority
- Support and celebrate all forms of commercial sport rocketry
- Increase our organization's diversity and size
- Support and expand outreach and educational efforts
- Offer members full transparency and the opportunity to participate
- Continue to provide national support to our local sections

He encouraged members to do the following:

- Fly safely and ensure that others around you do the same
- Recruit new NAR members, HPR flyers, competitors
- Take your own turn volunteering to help with your section or with the NAR nationally
- Do community outreach to community leaders, young people, parents, and to those who work with young people

Be safe, have fun, pay forward

The Town Hall adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Wise, Secretary