



Volume 21, Issue 1

## Dallas Area Rocket Society ("DARS")



Member - National Association  
of Rocketry ("NAR").

Special points of interest:

- "Ignition!"
- Adam Amick chops up an  
Interceptor!
- Stuart Powley reviews the Estes  
Mini Honest John
- A collection of DARS photos  
from many, many days gone  
by...
- Do you want to be in print?  
Page 13 tells you how!

### Ignition! By J. Stuart Powley



*A rather younger John Dyer poses with his Saturn V PMC model in the late 80's.  
Well, I guess we were all younger then.....*

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Welcome to another issue of Shroudlines! We have a whole new year ahead of us, and it looks like its going to be rather busy! In a couple of weeks we will be having DARSTAR VIII. The events are:

D-Eggloft Altitude with altimeter  
A Altitude with altimeter  
A Streamer Duration multi round  
B Boost Glide  
Sport Scale

It should be a lot of fun as we are having three events that we have

never flown before. So come on out and give it a shot!

In this edition of Shroudlines we have an article by Adam Amick showing us how to make the Interceptor more "Jet Fighter-ish." We have a review of the Estes Mini Honest John that asks the question, "When is a "mini" not a mini?" We also have pictures that are truly blasts from the past!

Anyway, sit back, relax, kick your feet up, and enjoy. Rest up now because the rest of the spring and summer are going to be very, very busy!

## Cutting the Interceptor Down to Size...

By Adam Amick

NAR 93801

Last year I was fortunate to obtain an Estes Interceptor as the prize for winning the Classic Classic category with my Strike Fighter at the DARS Fall Classic. I hadn't thought much about buying this rocket, as the design just isn't my favorite: It's just too long and doesn't look right. This is an issue with several kits, particularly those resembling fighter craft. The Estes Screaming Eagle is another example.

I assembled the motor mount and wing sections back in the winter, but had put it away until a few weeks ago when I decided to catch up on kits I had in various stages of construction. I finished building and have primed the model and am waiting on some warmer and decent weather to paint it.

But the reason I didn't like it much still stuck with me...

Then the Apogee Components website ([www.apogee-components.com](http://www.apogee-components.com)) did two things: I downloaded the trial version of Rocksim, and one of their "How to" videos showed me how to cut body tubes. I had the solutions to my issues with the Interceptor at my fingertips.

I found that the database on Rocksim has the Interceptor-E model built into it. Though larger than my model, I think it provides some good information I can work with. After all, I knew what I wanted to do: shorten the body tube to make the rocket look more like a real

aircraft. The critical question was: What effect would this have on the Center of Gravity in relation to the Center of Pressure, and thus the rocket's stability?

I checked some measurements of the 18mm-powered version and made the design changes in the software on the big version. It appears that cutting the tube down will be fine as long as I add some nose weight to re-balance the CP forward. It was time to go into surgery.

Following the recommendation of the Apogee website video, I made several small pencil marks 6 and 1/4 inches from the front end of the body tube of the Interceptor. This would provide about a half-inch of tube protruding forward of the upper launch lug. I would like to have removed even more of the tube, but with the long wing chine that becomes a structural issue. So I'll be happy with what I've got.

After marking the tube, I cut a strip of paper and wrapped it tightly around the tube, making sure it was aligned with the marks, then secured it with some masking tape. This provided a nice even guide for my knife. I slowly and gently cut around the tube, following the guide, and let the blade do the work for me. After several revolutions the knife cut through the tube and separated the two pieces cleanly. I sanded the new forward edge of the tube with some 400-grit paper on a block and cleaned up the inner and outer edges.

In removing the portion of the tube, I had to cut out the shock cord and re-attach it in the new location. I had replaced the stock rubber band with 1/4-inch elastic and made it longer to hopefully prevent damage during ejection. Once installed I took my knife to the small hole on the back of the Interceptor nose cone and bored it out to a little more than 3/8s of an inch, so I can add one to one and a half ounces of nose weight. I'll start with one, see how it flies, and if needed add in some more.

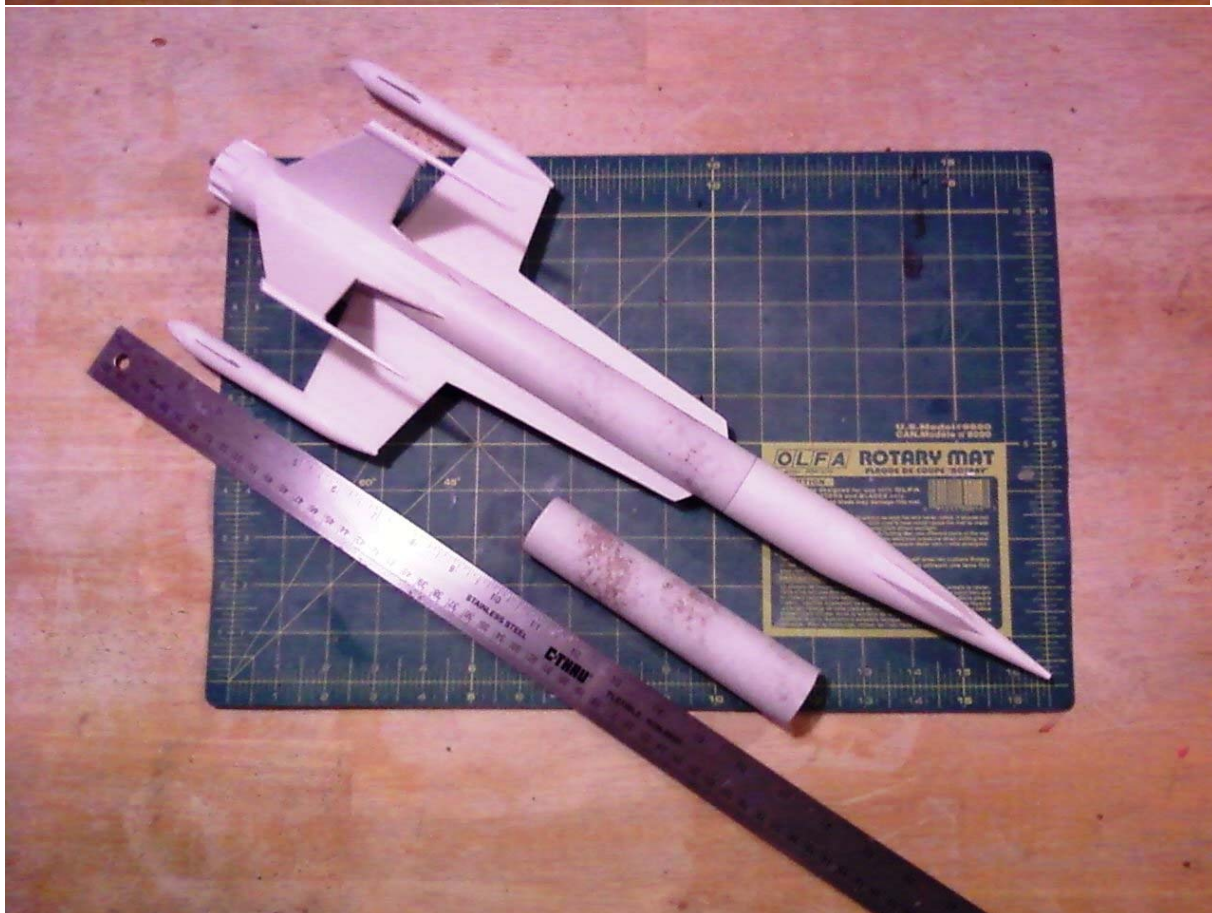
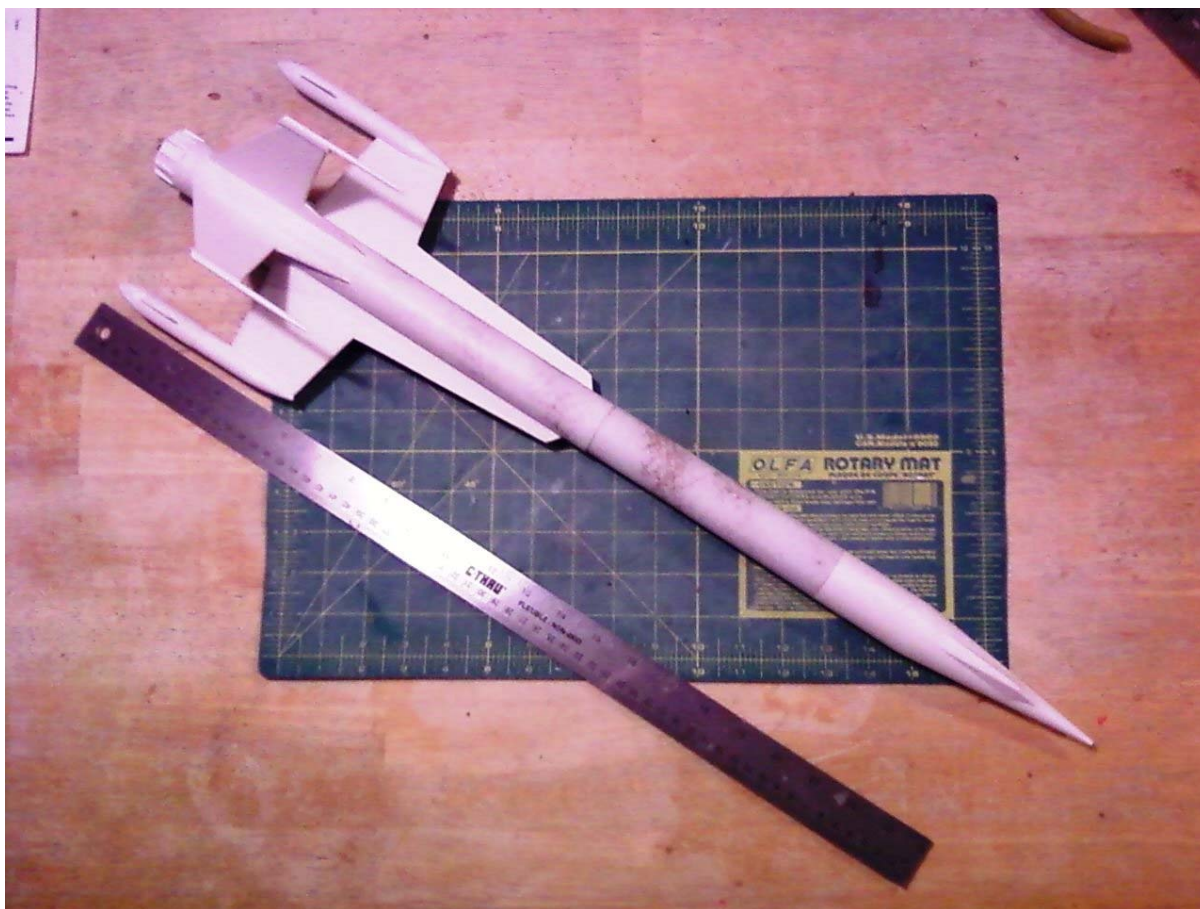
After test-fitting the nose I was very satisfied with the results. Though still a little long, the Interceptor now looks much more realistic, and will be a nice addition to the fighter fleet. Hopefully we'll have good weather for painting before long and she'll be ready to take flight. Look for it at a launch soon!

*Right:*

*The Interceptor before and after the cut down.*

*You could use the extra body tube section for a payload bay for something else, if you wanted to! Bonus!*

*All Photos by Adam Amick*



*Right Top:*

*The nose cone opening that was carved out for additional weight.*



*Bottom Right:*

*The almost completed Interceptor. You know, it does look a little more like a fighter jet....*



## The Estes Mini Honest John Scale Done Easy!

By J. Stuart Powley  
NAR 29573

Estes Industries has had its ups and downs when it comes to scale model rockets (and rockets in general, for that matter). They have introduced such classics as the Saturn V and IB, and they have given us dubious contributions such as the “profile scale” Vostok (hey, it looks great at a distance...of 100 yards....if you’ve been drinking vodka...) Anyway, I was somewhat surprised when I was checking out the racks at my local Hobby Lobby to see a new scale bird, the Mini Honest John. I figured “what the heck” and plunked my debit card down.

At first blush the Mini Honest John looks like a scaled down version of older Estes Honest John kits. This would have been easy enough to do, since they have had at least two other versions (the 13.74 inch long regular Honest John, and the beautiful 37 inch long Maxi Honest John). However, this isn’t the case. The Mini Honest John is actually modeled after a different prototype. The first two Estes kits were modeled after the MGR-1A and the Mini is modeled after the MGR-1B. The biggest difference is that the fins on the 1B are much smaller than the 1A. It is also shorter (24 feet, 10.53 inches as opposed to 27 feet, three inches) which brings us to this earthshattering bit of truth: the Mini Honest John isn’t “Mini” at all!

You see, the Mini honest John is actually the exact same scale as the regular Estes Honest John, but because the prototype is

shorter, the model is shorter. Weird, huh? Unless they are just talking about the engine size, it doesn’t make much sense. I guess the name “Mini Honest John” rolls off the tongue easier than “Regular Honest John That Happens To Be Based On A Smaller Prototype.” Of course, they could have just gone with “Honest John MGR-1B” but who am I to question great marketing minds?

The Mini Honest John is based on the BT-50 body tube and is 11.75 inches tall (two inches shorter than the “regular”) The paint scheme is based on the operational round (olive drab), although there are some pictures floating around on the web of a cool orange and white prototype. Beware of just slapping on any Honest John paint scheme, however, as most of the pictures that I have found are actually the 1A, and would therefore be wrong.

Speaking of “wrong,” there is a huge, glaring, horrible, awful, hideous, problem with this kit. The decals. First of all, the decals are of the “peel and cuss” variety that never go where you want them to, never look like they are painted on, and never stick for very long. But, believe it or not, that’s not the worst of it. On these wretched things is printed “US Military.” WHAT????

The rumor that I have heard (and that I haven’t actually been motivated enough to check out) is that Estes was getting flack from the

government over trademark issues. So, even though every toy and model company on the planet has always used “Army” or “Navy” or “Air Force” on their products, Estes wimped out and went with “Military.” Bogus, guys. However, take heart! There is a solution! More on that later...

At this point, I would like to take a hard left and go into the actual building of the kit. The parts are all typically good Estes quality and the instructions are typical Estes instructions (easy to read and understand with LOTS of pictures) However, there are things that need to be improved upon; namely the shock cord. Yep, you get the Estes Rubber Band of Death on this kit (weren’t they putting in sewing elastic for a while?) That cord HAS to go in the trash. I just grabbed my 1/8 inch sewing elastic and substituted it. I didn’t go with a Kevlar anchor because I didn’t really think a mini motor powered bird required it, and I couldn’t find any in my rocket drawer.

There aren’t a lot of parts or steps to this kit. Pretty much, once you have sanded and sealed the fins and built the motor mount you are done. I built mine one Saturday morning before a DARS meeting. I didn’t even break a sweat.

On a side note, I really like the plastic chute they put in this kit. Two things make it a winner; 1. it’s delightfully retro (but why did they put that Semroc kit on there? nudge nudge wink wink) and 2. its

pre-assembled. I HATE building parachutes. Enough said.

And now for the finishing. I hit the whole model with Testors olive drab and that was it. Done. Now I had to tackle the issue of those ^%@&%\$ decals.

I e-mailed Gordon at Excelsior Rocketry ([www.excelsiorrocketry.com](http://www.excelsiorrocketry.com)) and asked him if he had something that would work. Of course, he did, (they're the best there!) and they were dirt cheap too! He had scaled down the Maxi Honest John decals for the Mini. Hit Paypal pay button. Done.

Of course, there is one slight issue with the decals. They are for the 1A model, so the fin decals won't fit on the smaller fins. That's no big deal, though, since they still look great and everything else fits perfectly.

And there you have it. Estes almost got it perfect with this one, and it was easy enough to plus it up to a great model. I could have left off the launch lug with the huge standoff, but I was just building it for fun. If you want to build it for competition, a pop lug is your friend.

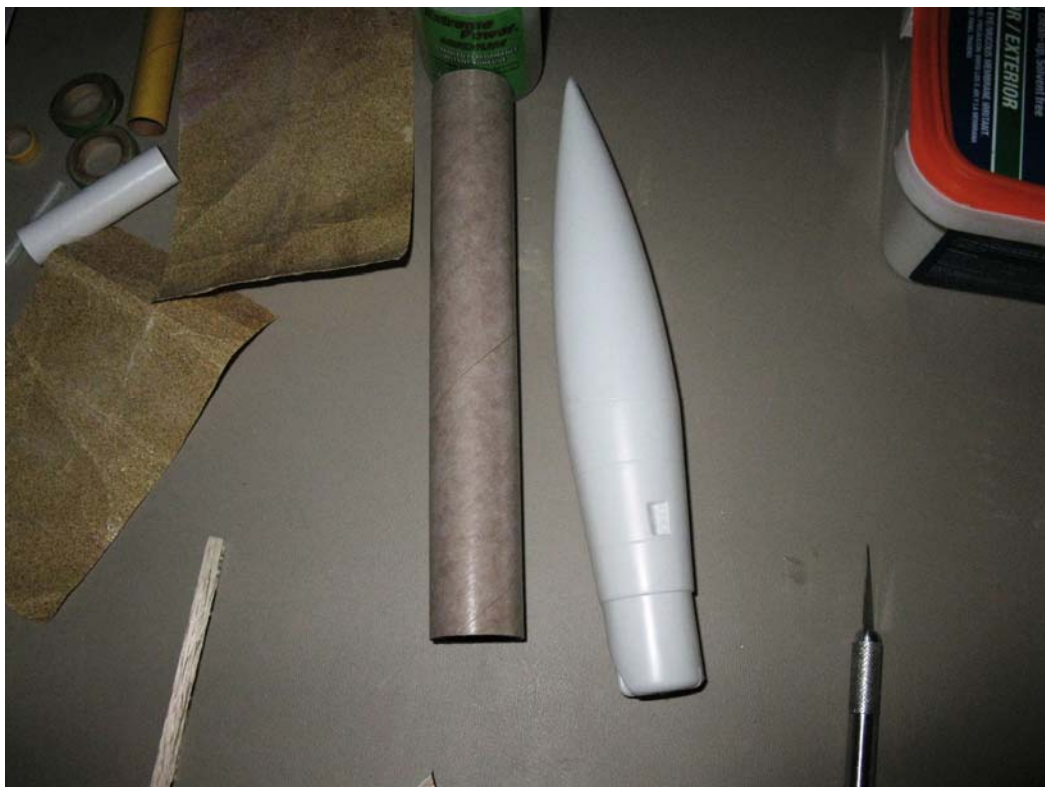
Therefore I recommend this kit. For either fun or sport scale. My likes and dislikes are:

Likes: New round modeled  
Detailed nose cone  
Pre assembled chute

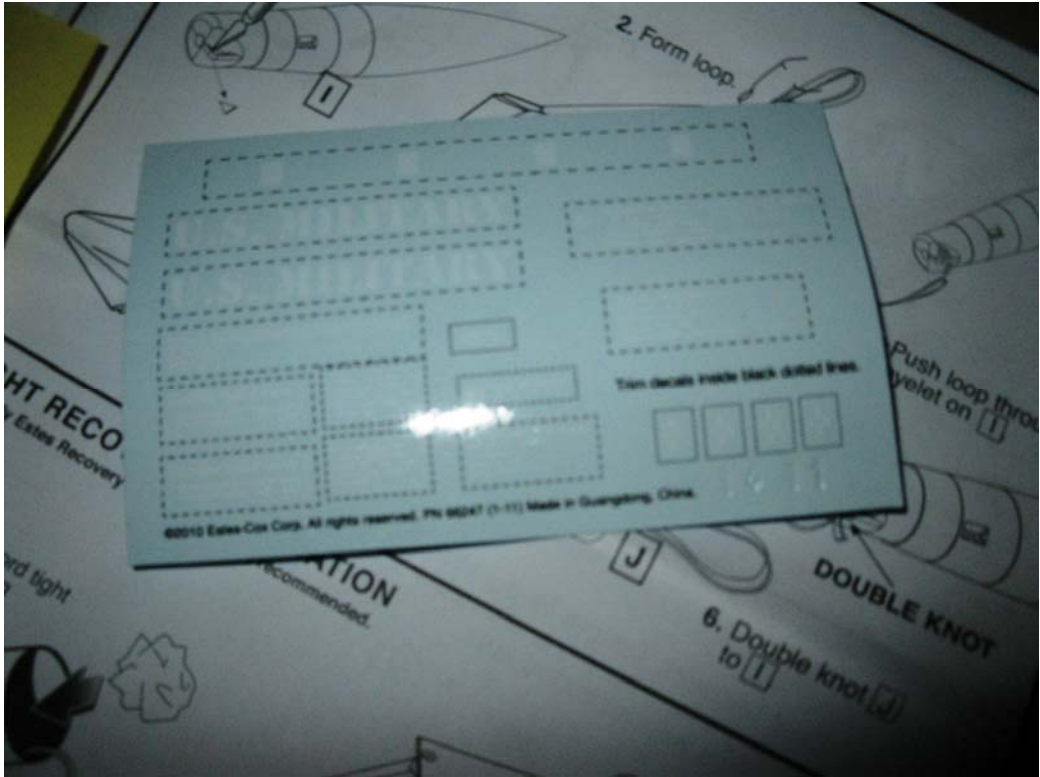
Dislikes: It's not really "Mini"  
DECALS



*Four itty-bitty fins and a standoff coated with Fill & Finish.*



*The rest of the parts....there ain't many!*



*Evil stickers!!!! Evil stickers!!!!*



*Evil shock cord!!! Evil shock cord!!! Ok, enough of that....*



*The really cool retro (and pre-assembled!) parachute*



*The completed model, minus paint.*





*The final product....Coming soon to a launch near you!*

### Retro-Picture-Rama!!!

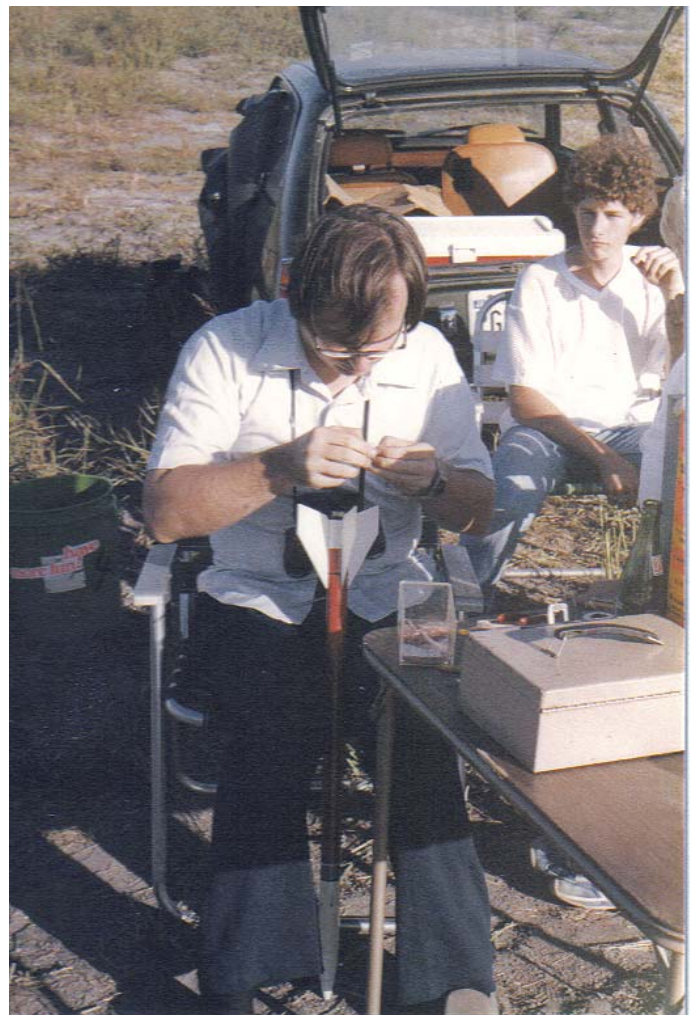
Or: What You Get When I Haven't Been To A Launch In A While



*What did a DARS launch look like in 1978? Well, it looked a lot like this!*

*Top: The range with miscellaneous people*

*Right: "Rocket God" Alan Wilcox preps a Sandhawk*





*These are from the mid 80's.*

*Top: Yep, that's me and my beloved FSI Black Brant. And, yes, I actually did think the hat was cool....*

*Top right: The Brant lifts off on an F7*

*Right: The last shot ever taken of the Brant. It landed on a high security government contractor's building and that was that!*



*Top: Four D12's were pretty cool in 1988. Heck, they're still pretty cool!*

*Bottom: My wonderful and now extinct Maxi Honest John in about 1993. I still have the nose and tail cones, and someday she will fly again!!!!*



## How to Contribute to Shroudlines

And now for the “last page begging part” of our publication. As I have made clear in the past, without you, we have no newsletter. We all have differing interests and areas of expertise, and that is exactly what this newsletter needs!

Once again, I'd like to thank all of those who have contributed material so far. You are very much appreciated! Still, we need more! Therefore, if you have any kind of article, picture, cartoon, rambling, etc., just send it to [stu29573@yahoo.com](mailto:stu29573@yahoo.com). I usually work best with Word documents, and JPEG files, but I can make just about anything work if I have to. I can also handle stuff that is written down, but that means I have to type and that can be a bit touch and go... But I'll take it anyway!

You can also give me things at the meetings (which I almost never miss...almost), and I promise to try my best not to lose them. I can return stuff at the next meeting if need be.

As I have said many times in the past, I really want this newsletter to be by the club and for the club. You guys can think up much better stuff than I can (as is evidenced by the articles we've been getting lately). So, stop just thinking about maybe writing something and actually do it! You'll be glad you did! (as will everyone who reads it!)




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## DARS Officers

<b>President</b>	<b>Jack Sprague</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Dave Shultz</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Suzie Sprague</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Bill Gee</b>
<b>NAR Senior Advisor</b>	<b>Sam Barone</b>

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# DARS

The Dallas Area Rocket Society is a non-profit chartered section of the National Association of Rocketry (“NAR”). Its purpose is to promote the hobby of consumer rocketry in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metropolitan area.

Membership in DARS is open to all interested persons. Membership in NAR is encouraged, but not required. Annual dues are \$10.00 for individuals and \$15.00 for families. The entire family, including children, are welcomed to the meetings. Go to the website and fill out and send an application to join or renew your membership.

The club normally meets on the first Saturday of each month at 1:00 p.m.

Visit the DARS website for the meeting location: [www.dars.org](http://www.dars.org)



Stay connected! All of us will reach greater heights with your attendance at the club meetings.

Vendor Links (\* DARS member discount—confirm before ordering)

[Aerospace Specialty Products](#)

[Apogee Components](#)

[BMI Hobbies](#) (\* 10%)

[CLE Enterprises](#)

[Excelsior Rocketry](#)

[Hawks Hobby](#)

[JonRocket](#)

[Mercury Engineering Co.](#)

[Public Missiles Ltd](#)

[Quest Aerospace, Inc.](#)

[Red Arrow Hobbies](#)

[Roadrunner Rocketry](#)

[Semroc Astronautics Corporation](#)

[Sunward Aerospace Group Limited](#)

[RC Zone](#) (\*10%)

[Aerotech Consumer Aerospace](#)

[Art Applewhite Rockets](#) (\* 20%)

[BRS Hobbies](#)

[Dr. Zooch Rockets](#)

[FlisKits, Inc.](#)

[HobbyTown USA— Dallas, Walnut Store](#) (\* 10%)

[MadCow Rocketry](#)

[Pemberton Technologies](#)

[Qmodeling](#)

[QuickBurst](#)

[Red River Rocketry](#) (\* 8.25% on field)

[Rocket.Aero](#)

[Sirius Rocketry](#)

[The Squirrel Works Model Rocketry](#)

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