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### Dallas Area Rocket Society ("DARS")

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## SHROUDLINES

A Dallas Area Rocket Society Production

# SHROUDLINES

A Newsletter of the Dallas Area Rocket Society



DARS  
NAR Section #308  
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Volume 13, Issue 2

## Dallas Area Rocket Society ("DARS")

### Good News!!

By James Gartrell

With all the rain lately, I've been wishing for some good news. Actually, any news would be good. It's hard to write a newsletter when we aren't having any launches. Well, finally, I got my wish! No, it rained the last launch too, but I'm talking about the recent April 24 joint statement from the NAR and Tripoli. District Court Judge Walton recently agreed with the NAR/Tripoli interpretation of his recent ruling that "fully assembled rocket motors are propellant actuated devices under the law and are exempt from regulation by BATFE." Woohoo!! Basically, the BATFE did not follow proper rulemaking procedures. Until they do, we are allowed to follow the old rules for motor purchases. NAR President Mark Bundick suggests members keep a copy of the ruling, which can be downloaded from the NAR website, to show any agent if needed. Also, alert NAR immediately if threatened with any punitive actions. Judge Walton is fully supporting the interpretation and has requested the NAR to seek an injunction against the BATFE if field agents are violating his ruling.

That certainly leaves us free to purchase and store pre-assembled motors, regardless of size. No more LEUP required, even if the motor exceeds 62.5 grams propellant. The understanding I have from talking with other rocketeers is that also includes reloads, assuming the motor is assembled at time of purchase. While that inherently involves some inconvenience, it is a much better situation than what we've been facing to date. Still, motor vendors may be hesitant to sell to folks without a LEUP, but hopefully their fears will diminish over time.

We aren't out of the woods yet, though. The BATFE is expected to pursue establishment of rules supporting their desire for limiting model rocketry activities. The NAR is ready this time, however, and are watching for these actions. A public notice of a rule-making will be required soliciting comments from interested parties. The NAR will



I don't remember whose rocket this is, but it sure looks cool!! Bill Gee took this photo at the last Shoot for the Stars.

immediately alert members to action when this comes about. At that time, members will be advised as to how to proceed. So, stay alert! Visit the NAR site frequently and be prepared to act in support of our hobby.

Obviously, a considerable amount of money is required to mount a fight of this nature, so the NAR continues its request for member donations to continue funding of its actions. As we all know, legal expenses are not cheap. Monetary support from members is crucial to fund the necessary legal assistance required to protect our hobby. Please consider sending in a small contribution as you renew your membership. I did. Despite the recent increase in dues, we need to reach a little deeper into our pockets and help fund this important NAR initiative. I know that's tough to do these days, but it really is important. Pay forward. Aim high!



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

#### Special points of interest:

- Good News! Pre-assembled motors don't require a LEUP!
- Find out what happened at DARS Outreach events, March 27 and May 8.
- Suzy Sprague catches DARS members up on some of the rich history of DARS.
- DARS member, Neil Tarasoff, is recognized for his effort printing our newsletter. Take a look at his ad on page 7.
- Don't forget to see what's happening in the "Did You Know" section. Could be something you don't know. :-)
- Check out THE PAYLOAD BAY to find new members.

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### YMCA Outreach, March 27

By James Gartrell

Wow! DARS members Jack and Suzy Sprague, Rags and Shea Fehrenbach, John Dyer and myself met George “the other” Sprague at a family farm just outside of Irwin Park in McKinney about 8am to set up for the YMCA launch. Bryan Anderson, the YMCA coordinator for the program, was putting up the last directional sign as I arrived. Just as we finished setting everything up, one of the early-arriving parents wanted to know if he and his son could launch their rocket, a nicely finished Estes Skywriter. “Well,” Jack says, “we do need a test rocket, but you might want to wait to see what this wind is going to do.” The wind was blowing at a steady 9-10 mph with strong sustained gusts to 20-25 mph, according to Rags’ wind meter. I was thinking maybe Rags needed to get that meter checked out. It sure felt more like sustained winds at 10-15 mph with strong gusts to 25-30 mph! There were even times when it was difficult for me to stand upright without leaning into the wind. :-). Nevertheless, the folks weren’t going to be put off by a little wind. “We’re ready!”, one of the other parents said.

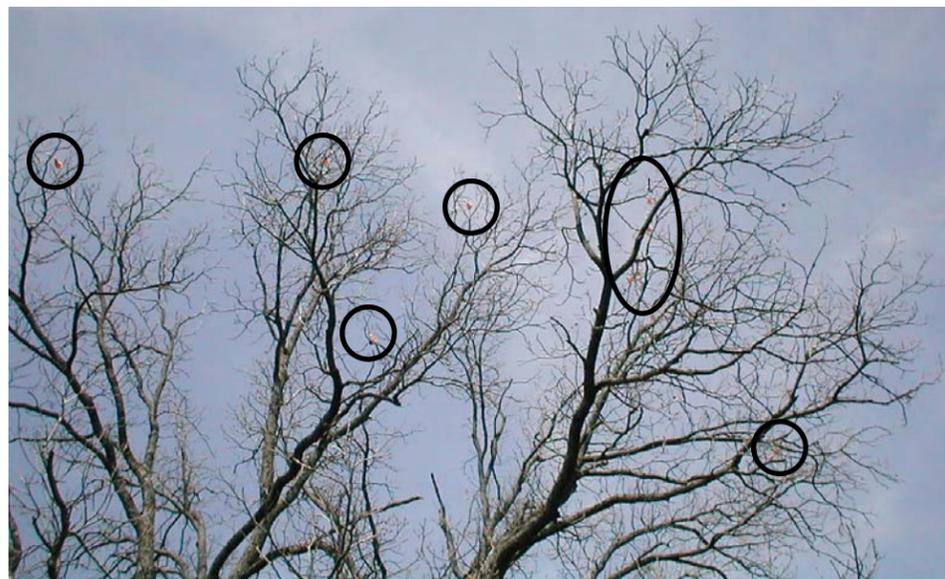
So, Suzy helped the first three rocketeers set up on Blue pads 1-3 of the 12 pads that were set up, and the day began. Suzy and I were helping to get rockets on the pad, Rags and John were checking the rockets in, George was at the mike, and Jack and Shea were troubleshooting the pads and helping Bryan at the motor table. John also helped get rockets on the pad when I was busy doing my “newsletter thing” or when we were overwhelmed with rocketeers. We all stayed pretty busy up to the last rocket launched, just after noon. Some of the rocketeers got to launch their own rocket, but often George had to send up two and three rockets at a time to keep the line of rocketeers moving.

Kid-decorated rockets look fantastic. I was also impressed by how well the kids and parents had constructed the rockets. Most held together, despite the strong wind. The biggest enemy was the rocket eating trees. Many in the lower branches were salvaged, but many were lost to one big tree that seemed bent on destroying the day for some kids. “Ohh, can we get another one?” Nyah, nyah, nyah, tree!!! Great event!!!

Below—The dreaded rocket eating tree. Circled are eight rockets captured by the greedy tree. Upon leaving, I counted 12 in the big tree, and 5 in other trees. Grrrr!!!

Right column—1) Dad and his son with the Skywriter; 2) Suzy helps the first group set up their rockets; 3) George assists the first rocketeer send up his rocket. The look on this boy’s face reminds me of the look I had when I launched my first rocket. ; 4) A proud papa and kids watch with amazement as their rocket soars through the sky.

Photos by James Gartrell



### DID YOU KNOW? By James Gartrell

> DARS member Neil Tarasoff personally prints our newsletter at Kinko’s. I decided it was time to give him the credit he deserves, so he now has a regular ad for his real estate business. Need to buy/sell a home, then give him a call. Support your fellow rocketeer. ;-)

> John Bittner asked me to let everyone know that an October Sky dvd has been added to the DARS library. Check it out—literally!

> Don’t forget to go by HobbyTown for those Aerotech motors. Last I heard, they still had a real good supply.

> Disney has released a 3-set dvd, “Tomorrowland—Disney in Space and Beyond.” It’s fascinating to see how visionary folks like Disney and Von Braun were regarding what it would take for mankind to travel in space. This is

a tremendous opportunity to own a spectacular piece of history. Only 105,000 of the set were produced, so you’d better hurry to get yours. I know for sure they only have, at most, 104,999 left.

> Keep checking on the X-prize competition, too. It sounds like several folks are getting real close to achieving the goal. On June 21, Burt Rutan’s SpaceShipOne is scheduled to make its first attempt to achieve the record of being the first commercial manned flight to leave Earth’s atmosphere. The flight is open to the public. I also heard a news report that Congress is reviewing for ways to provide more support for commercial involvement in the US space program. These truly are historic times, and folks like John Carmack, Armadillo Aerospace, and Burt Rutan are paving the way for all of us.

### THE PAYLOAD BAY By James Gartrell

Give a big welcome to new member, Steven Mitchell. Be sure to look him up at the next meeting and say hello! He would probably love to hear about your experiences.

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MLS



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.

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

Meetings are held in Plano, TX at:

Plano Late Night Bingo

1805 Ave K (18th and K St.)

Plano, TX 75074

Exit off Hwy 75 to East Plano Parkway (just north of George Bush Turnpike—Hwy 190) and go east, turn left on K St., and turn right into the shopping center just north of 18th St.



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

*(Continued from page 5)*  
 the premier flying site we had arranged. The Allen business park under their water tower west of Hwy-75. We could fly High Power and model rockets, on the same field, at the same time, regularly twice each month. We were one of the first clubs that could do both activities at the same launch. This gave the adults a challenge while fostering the interest of the children with the model rockets.

We host and attend various rocket contests throughout the year leading up to each NARAM. Our high power rocket launches are held numerous times during the year, alternating between our two fields in Windom and McGregor, Texas. DARS has a history of hosting one of the longest running High Power launch events in the country. These are called our North Texas High Power (NTHP) launches. We host one of these in February and September every year.

The club has emphasized an Outreach program into the community since the early 90's. We work with various schools, the YMCA (Indian Guides/Indian Princesses), CAP (Civil Air Patrol) and many Boy/Girl Scout troops. We have been interviewed by local papers, been on local morning programs and had a five minute story done on Good Morning America.

Some current-day members are making DARS famous again, with help from the Discovery Channel. Dan and Terry Stroud put their Aurora to 30,000 feet at twice the speed of sound, while Dave Schaefer (and the rest of the X-30 crew) showed NASA that one of its designs could really fly. Beth Sapp led an all-woman team in the giant kit-bash event at LDRS.

DARS currently has 200 plus members on the books. Unfortunately, we have added another name to our memorial list. Here are the names of some of our rocket members lost in the last 30 plus years: Phillip Gargas (lost in Vietnam), Terry Wilson, Carl Feldhaus (first president of DARS), Ellen Chance, Jim Turner (Trailing Edge Technologies), Larry Crump,

Tom Lanier and most recently Beth Sapp.

We did have one year in our most recent history where we weren't able to fly for almost the entire year because of rain. Every time a launch was put on the books it would rain on the flying site and have to be canceled. This started after the September NTHP and continued for almost a year. We were tempted to change our name to the Dallas Area Rainmaking Service! So far, that trend is being repeated again for the 2004 launch calendar. We may be able to charge for scheduling a launch someplace, just to make sure it rains there.

I'm sure that I've left out more important things than I've included, but you should get the idea that DARS likes to fly rockets. We teach rocketry. We compete in rocketry. We push the envelope in hobby rocketry. And we are seen as one of the leading model and high power rocketry groups in the nation. Rocketry the DARS way is good, outdoor, family fun. When it doesn't rain!

same guy that used to be with DARS. I said I didn't know but would ask. Turns out, he was! I invited him to come to the April meeting where this photo was taken. I also found out Stuart is in a band now, Code Blue. If you get a chance, check out one of their gigs. You can find out when and where the band plays at [www.codeblue.ws](http://www.codeblue.ws) Rockets and blues—Oh yeah! Photo by James Gartrell.



Above—Destined for "old rocketeer" fame, Shea Fehrenbach, with his fiberglassed G-power Estes Patriot. Simply awesome!! Photo by James Gartrell.

Below—Bill Gee and John Dyer catch up another "old rocketeer," J. Stuart Powley, on the more recent advances of high-power rocketry. If you'll remember from the last issue, I mentioned Stuart's Screamin' Red Max. Little did I know that he was an old DARS member from way back. Several of us involved with the McKinney outreach decided to eat before going home, and while there, Jack Sprague asked if he was the

## YMCA Launch, May 8 By James Gartrell

Here's some photos from an Outreach at the Rockwall YMCA. DARS members, Royce Frankum, Pelham Swift and myself, assisted the YMCA group, Adrienne Hergert, Mike Atkins, Grant Windahl, and others, to launch Alphas the kids had built earlier. Adrienne was out of town the day of the launch, but Mike Atkins and Grant Windahl capably kept things organized and kids moving through the launch line. Mike and other assistants helped the kids prep their rockets for flight, Royce performed safety check-in, Pelham helped the kids get their rockets loaded on the pads, I was RSO, Grant supervised the kids waiting to launch and directed recovery efforts, and each kid got to launch their own rocket. We had two sets of 3-pad launch platforms set up and would launch one set while kids were loading the other set. Due to the hard work of everyone, we managed to run through about 50 to 60 kids in three hours, each launching 2 to 3 times.

The field was really small, but handled the Alphas on A motors with few problems. When the B motors started getting loaded, several managed to fly the field and landed in trees that almost surrounded the range. Mike and Royce coordinated to have two rockets back to back for demonstration purposes, one with an A motor and the other with a B motor. Participants and spectators quickly learned the difference in impulse of the two motors. After that, every kid wanted to send their rocket up on a B motor! At the end of the day, Pelham challenged the kids to put one up on a C motor that he would provide, but only got one taker. Needless to say, everyone was in awe of the power of the C motor, but after Royce exhausted all efforts to recover the rocket, the boy gladly chalked up the loss to experience.

For demonstration purposes, I brought

*(Continued on page 4)*

Below—Royce Frankum, on this side of the fence, watches on as Mike Atkins (black ball cap) assists a parent while parents and kids gather supplies for the launch. Photo by James Gartrell.



Below—Grant Windahl (center) assists prepping some of the rockets for the first group of kids, as brightly decorated Alphas stand in line. :- ) Photo by James Gartrell.



Right—Spectators are provided the ultimate at a rocket launch—bleachers!! The bleachers are located right behind launch control. That way, folks could watch their children/little friends from a comfortable vantage point. They were a great crowd, cheering the young rocketeers with every spectacular flight. Photo by James Gartrell.



(Continued from page 3)  
 the Squirrel Works Space Ranger and my Big Bertha D-mod and Pelham brought some Art Applewhite Cubits and a saucer, plus a “big” rocket. Pelham placed his big rocket on display and the kids and parents alike just oohed and aahed as Pelham provided close up viewing and an explanation of the flight characteristics of the rocket. They were even more impressed when he flew the Cubits and saucer, especially when he launched one of the Cubits on an F motor. My Space Ranger was our “wind test” rocket, launched at the very beginning. The kids were really impressed with the unique look of it, and more than one asked if they could have it. ;-) I flew the Big Bertha with

a streamer and angled the rod where I thought it might drift back before the trees, but it found its way into one anyway. We left it there until after the launch. Grant and a couple of the boys spent several valiant minutes trying to recover it without success. Royce then rigged up a string on a coke bottle and after several more minutes of effort finally managed to snag it out of the tree with minimal damage. It was easily repaired and ready to fly again. Thanks, Royce!!

All in all, it was a great day. This was the Rockwall YMCA’s first rocketry event, but Mike said everyone was so impressed with the way things went that they were all ready to make it a regular event. Yippee!! This was also

Pelham’s first Outreach., but I don’t think it will be his last. He told me afterwards that he really had fun and was impressed with the ingenuity the kids used in finishing their rockets, especially the girls. Their rockets, as usual, were very impressively adorned with glitter, pink paint, etc. Pelham’s reaction is typical for those that get involved with the Outreach events. If you want to get in on the fun, contact George Sprague, our Outreach coordinator, and let him know. I guarantee it will be an experience you will treasure for the rest of your life—just ask Pelham. ;-)



Top photos—A young rocketeer provides a loud countdown as Grant (background) looks on and other flyers wait their turn with patient anticipation. Bottom photos—This young lady presses the button to launch her rocket as Grant (background) looks on and other flyers wait their turn with not so patient anticipation. ;-) Both kids were so excited to see their rocket speeding into the sky! That is so cool. Photos by James Gartrell.

## A Little History of DARS By Suzy Sprague

The Dallas Area Rocket Society (DARS) is very proud that we have been flying rockets safely and responsibly in the Dallas area for over 30 years. This club started up with a handful of excited teenagers with the common link of model rocketry. DARS started with roots in Lancaster (Lancaster Association of Rocketry), Grand Prairie (Grand Prairie Association of Rocketry), and Garland (Garland Association of Rocketry). A combination of the Lancaster and Grand Prairie clubs initially formed DARS in 1972.

The original DARS membership shrank with the call of college and work. Phillip Gargas (early LAR member) designed the original LAR double delta that morphed into the DARS logo we are all familiar with today. It has only been changed to make reproducing it easier. Otherwise, it is as it was since he designed it before going off to Southeast Asia. Phillip never saw how much we have used this now very well known logo. Sadly to say, Phillip lost his life in Vietnam. However, our logo stands to this day in his memory.

Allen Wilcox was another one of the original DARS members. After serving a tour in Vietnam, Allen was ready to gather anyone interested in flying rockets by lecturing at science classes in Garland. He left a note at one of the Classic Arts & Crafts & Hobbies hobby stores for those interested to call him. John Dyer and Randall Victory answered this note, along with Scott Hunsicker. These teenagers, Allen, and Robert Turner started having meetings and called the group GAR (Garland Association of Rocketry) around 1973. Their meeting places ranged from libraries, local hobby stores and member's homes. At one time the meetings were at John's house with his mother as the treasurer.

GAR also had a sister organization called GASA (Garland Aero Space Association). The two groups soon

merged and GASA members became a part of GAR. During this time DARS was still on the books as a chartered section of the NAR, while GAR never did go any further with their plans to join NAR. Eventually realizing that a majority of their members belonged to both groups, a motion was made to combine GAR and DARS in 1976. At this point there were about 50 members of both clubs. There was a core group of Allen Wilcox, John Dyer, Scott Hunsicker, Randall Victory, Robert Turner, Billy Humphreys, Mike Calhoun and Carl Feldhaus (first DARS president). DARS first official contest was in 1976 with John Dyer and Scott Hunsicker setting a world record in “B” Parachute Duration. The first time that DARS went to the national level was at NARAM-19 in Kansas City.

By 1977, the membership had dwindled down to between 10 to 20 members. This is part of the normal cycle that we now know about rocketeers; teens grow up and out (doing other things like dating, cars, jobs and school) then come back again as young adults. One of the first DARS flying sites is now what we call “Fry’s” off of Northwest Highway in Dallas. Several other fields (like Williams Stadium, Shiloh Airpark,

Renner Road, and Jupiter business park) have gone by the way side for the progress of houses, businesses and freeway development.

With the help of DARS in 1989, NARAM (the National Annual Meet/Contest) was brought to Dallas by Scott Hunsicker. This wouldn't be the last time that DARS would be seen in the national light. DARS hosted the National Sport Launch (NSL) in February of 1994. Our theme was “When Pigs Fly”. Our spot landing was a pig pen. ... Yes, you had to fly a pig! DARS has also hosted the NAR Convention for two years (NARCON 2000 and 2001). We had a large range of speakers at NARCON from education to high power. We covered it all! We again hosted NARAM-44, in McGregor Texas, August of 2002. The entire community greeted us with open arms.

DARS is a family organization that grew to it's largest numbers in the early 90's. It went from a small group of guys once in a while, to families coming out and flying twice a month. By 1994 we had 500 members in DARS. The interest of High Power Rockets had started in the early 90's. The big reason for our growth was

(Continued on page 6)



“The old guys.” Left to right—Mike Calhoun, Scott Hunsicker, John Dyer, Martin Catt, and Allen Wilcox. Mike and Martin are long ago DARS members who just happened to show up at the May DARS meeting, when Suzy gave me this article. Way cool!!! Photo by James Gartrell.