

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES REPORT for Huntsville Alabama L5 Society AR~6a
Fiscal year from 1 JAN 2004 to 31 DEC 2004.

Regular Meetings

- The HAL5 Executive Committee meets weekly for an hour every Thursday from Noon to 1 PM. We meet at a local restaurant (Hoppers Restaurant at the Holiday Inn hotel in Huntsville) which does not get overly crowded at lunch time (so we do not have to wait for a table). We usually have an attendance between 2 and 6, and few drive more than 20 minutes each way. At those meetings, we exchange mail from new members, donors, suppliers (bills), and other sources (NSS headquarters mailings, other space-related mailings). We also report on the status of chapter membership, bank accounts, and outstanding bills. We then discuss upcoming events and planned expenses (e.g., monthly programming, conferences, etc.). We then discuss on-going project activities, such as Project HALO, and possible future local and regional activities. The meetings are open to current and prospective HAL5 members, and work well as a recruiting tool. They are also a good place to meet with outside visitors and other special guests.
- HAL5 holds monthly meetings or programs on the first Thursday of every month (unless there is holiday or other conflict). These meetings are usually held at the Huntsville/Madison County Public Library on Monroe Street in downtown Huntsville, Alabama.

Administrative Activities

- The HAL5 newsletter continued to be on hiatus during the entire year, mainly due to the lack of a person with time to serve as Editor, but partly because of a lack of chapter activity news worthy of publishing. The chapter struggled along using email and telephone for communications, and was able to hold the core local membership together. Unfortunately, the remote/out-of-state third of the membership, built-up during the active Project HALO years, is still temporarily lost.
- Chapter annual dues continued to be temporarily cut in half (from \$20 to \$10) since about half covered the cost of the HAL5 newsletter subscription. Despite this, income did not significantly decline because many members paid more than \$10 as donations. The HAL5 bank accounts had a net decrease in 2004, partly due to money owed from NSS HQ for the November conference (which had a net positive income of over \$500), but mostly due to investments in Project HALO.

Special Events in January 2004

- No HAL5 monthly program due to conflict with New Year's holiday.
- Did not send out a membership renewal issue of HAL5 newsletter and thus had no easy way to distribute membership renewal forms, nor chapter survey forms, as had been desired.

Special Events in February 2004

- HAL5 members meeting. Had about 10 attendees. Group discussed changes at NSS Headquarters (closing HQ, hiring MOI), upcoming HAL5 and NSS events (2004 ISDC, Legislative Conference), and the future of Project HALO. Members suggested topics for future HAL5 Program Nights. Members voted to hold a HALO party at the 2004 ISDC. Preliminary dates set for Project HALO milestones (engine firing, launcher demo). Ronnie gets agreement from members to again pursue HAL5 hosting a fall meeting of the NSS Board of Directors.
- Ronnie Lajoie is recruited to serve on a short-term NSS Web Site Migration Task Force, which decides to rescue the NSS Web Site from imminent demise from a dying ISP contractor and place it under NSS-volunteer management.

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Special Events in March 2004

- HAL5 public lecture on “Homebuilt Aerospace Vehicles: A Retrospective and a Prospective” with guest speaker Dr. John Bossard, rocket engineer and HAL5 member (see flyer on page AR~6e). Had a small crowd of about 20 attendees, due to limited advertising.
- New membership renewal forms (see sample on page AR~6f) are designed that Mail Merge in the current member information from HAL5 Member Database (MS Word document). For first time since HAL5 newsletter went on hiatus in 2001, a special mailing is done to recruit back into the fold past HAL5 members, resulting in 33 members for 2004, the highest since the year 2000.

Special Events in April 2004

- HAL5 public lecture on “Back to the Future: Applying Thermal Control Experiences on Apollo Lunar Rover Project to Rovers for New Exploration Initiative” with guest speaker Mr. Ronald A. Creel, Space Systems Engineer and HAL5 member, Former Member of the Apollo Lunar Roving Vehicle Team (see flyer on page AR~6g). Had a decent crowd of 24 attendees, thanks to additional advertising to local NSS, AIAA, and HATS members.

Special Events in May 2004

- HAL5 and Huntsville Library joint public lecture on “Light this Candle: Alan Shepard, The Mercury 7, and America’s First Manned Space Flights” with guest speaker Mr. Ed Buckbee, Director Emeritus of the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Founder of Space Camp, and Author of an upcoming biography on astronaut Alan Shepard (see flyer on page AR~6h). Had a small crowd of 19 attendees, due to limited advertising.
- Greg Allison, Ronnie Lajoie, and Rebecca Smith attend the 2004 ISDC in Oklahoma City. Ronnie and Greg participated in a half-day NSS Strategic Planning Workshop (that unfortunately fired the first shot of a 5-month-long “Board War”) and meetings of NSS Committees. Ronnie also participated in a “Strategic Vision Task Force” meeting. Ronnie led two workshops on revamping the NSS Web Site, recently put under volunteer management, and participated in many meetings of the new Internet Communications Committee and Internet Development Team (which he “volunteered” to lead). Ronnie and Greg attended the best NSS Chapters’ Assembly meeting in years, thanks to David Stuart’s leadership and strong participation by our new Executive Director George Whitesides. HAL5 hosted a great HALO room party and assisted with a 2005 ISDC room party. Greg and Ronnie both participated in the NSS Board of Directors meeting. Ronnie succeeds in getting the Board to approve holding a second meeting in November in Huntsville, at an event to be hosted by HAL5. Greg did another great job of emceeding the NSS Awards Banquet.

Special Events in June 2004

- HAL5 members meeting. Had only 6 attendees. Group discussed what happened at the 2004 ISDC, especially the Board approval of holding a second meeting in November in Huntsville. After discussion on utilizing this forum to simultaneously hold a small conference, members approve HAL5 hosting a regional conference in conjunction with the November Board of Directors meeting. This would be HAL5’s first major NSS conference since the 1993 ISDC. Ronnie will be Chair and selects the Sheraton Hotel at the Huntsville International Airport as the conference site.
- Aerospace pioneer Burt Rutan makes space history by having his privately-developed, hybrid rocket-powered, manned SpaceShipOne achieve an altitude over 100 kilometers, the international border of space. HAL5 member Tim Pickens designed the hybrid rocket motor for Burt Rutan, based on work begun in HAL5’s HALO program. Tim Pickens is an invited guest at this historic first launch of SpaceShipOne. Ronnie Lajoie

and Tim Pickens are separately interviewed by the press and articles appears on page 1 of the June 23 and June 28 issues (respectively) of the *Huntsville Times* (see copies on page AR~6i and AR~6m). Overshadowed by the human aspects of this historic flight, this flight is also a first for hybrid rocket motors in reaching space.

Special Events in July 2004

- Ronnie participates in the NSS-hosted “Moon-Mars Blitz” in Washington, D.C. He also meets with NSS Executive Director George Whitesides and gets approval for a free half-page ad to promote the November NSS conference in *Ad Astra* magazine. (This did not happen because that issue of the magazine was delayed and went out *after* the conference.)
- HAL5 public lecture on “Welcome to the Garage Age of Space Exploration” with guest speaker Mr. Tim Pickens, rocket engineer and HAL5 member (see flyer on page AR~6j). Had a small crowd due to limited advertising and movement of event off the normal meeting night.

Special Events in August 2004

- HAL5 members meeting on “Elections, SSDC, and Pizza Party”. Had about 10 attendees. Group elected new HAL5 Officers, and then discuss the upcoming November NSS conference. With only three months to go, and little work done due to Ronnie’s and Greg’s involvement in the NSS “Board War”, there is much work to do. Ronnie shares his concepts to-date for program and meeting tracks, as well as session and talk topics, and members refine these and make recommendations for speakers for various talks. Actions are assigned to track down speakers and begin the publicity campaign. The group also agrees to weekly conference planning meetings.
- Ronnie attends part of the Mars Society convention in Chicago, Illinois; partly to attend a meeting of the United Societies in Space; and partly to promote the November NSS conference. The flyer and pre-registration form debuts at this event on August 20 — less than three months to go. No immediate takers (and none later either), but a HAL5-hosted conference generated interest.
- Initial Web site for November conference debuts on August 27. The Web site is updated and enhanced almost daily up until the first day of the conference on November 12.

Special Events in September 2004

- HAL5 members meeting on SSDC 2004. Had about 8 attendees. Actually are getting more during the weekly SSDC meetings. Despite being our first conference in over 11 years, SSDC 2004 does not seem to be inspiring the bulk of HAL5 membership, nor local regional chapters, as had been hoped. The new members recruited to help with conference, however, are very inspired, and will eventually result in 3 new officers, filling our Executive Committee for first time in years.
- Meal choices are finalized and Web pages and PDF files are added to SSDC Web site in early September, as are pages on hotel. Web pages on transportation are added by the end of month.
- A beautiful new poster for the November conference, designed by Carrie Alderfer of Chromaddict designs, debuts on September 29 (see flyer on page AR~6k). Copies of the poster are quickly made and distributed to volunteers for posting all over the town and local region.
- Meanwhile, HAL5 Publicity Chair Evelyn Sabino is heroically working hard to promote the conference by all other means — our biggest, and most successful, publicity campaign since the 1993 ISDC.

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Special Events in October 2004

- HAL5 members meeting on SSDC 2004. Had about 8 attendees. Still getting more during weekly SSDC meetings. During October, much progress is made on finalizing speakers and room layouts.
- Tours continue to evolve (especially pricing), but Web pages are added to SSDC Web site in early October, as is a detailed program grid showing the status of speakers. Pages on the few vendors and exhibits are added in late October; as is an “All-in-One” form (see flyer on page AR~6l).
- An initial Web page on speakers is finally put up in very late October — but more emphasis is put on keeping the detailed program grid and speaker status page up to date. Hindsight indicates that the lack of advertised speaker names, photos, and bios was biggest reason for lack of attendance.
- Ronnie performs a mass E-mailing to NSS members in a 300-mile radius on October 26 (two weeks to go!), after delays in getting a special E-mailing to the NSS Online Report list. A special PHP code was written that took a list of names and email addresses and automatically generated and sent out customized email messages to each person on the list, one at a time, with a second delay in between. No bounced email was received, unfortunately (though half probably did). Received two replies from members who could not attend but appreciated the nicely worded invitation.
- Boeing finally joins as “just” a Corporate Sponsor on October 29, after a failed month-long attempt to woo them as the “exclusive” Corporate Sponsor for the event. Barnhard Associates comes to the rescue by making a generous donation to cover the planned Friday night reception.
- A great article on the conference appears in the local *Valley Planet* newspaper on October 31 (no copy available), to be followed in early November with similar promotion in the larger *Huntsville Times*. Despite the best support in years from local media, and the lowest possible registration prices imaginable, turnout from the general public will be far below expectations, especially from the target high school and university student population.

Special Events in November 2004

- HAL5 members meeting on SSDC 2004. Had about 8 attendees. Despite months of searching, no “big name” speaker is obtained for Saturday night banquet. Instead, a session speaker is elevated.
- HAL5 hosts its first major conference since the 1993 ISDC on November 12 through 14. After a delayed start of operations, everything proceeds mostly smoothly. Attendance is well below what had been hoped (see Statistics on page AR~6n), but a slight profit is made thanks to donations and careful tracking of finances that allowed for last minute deletion of planned expenses (e.g., program book). Every meal event paid for itself, and small loss on tours was covered by other gains (see Summary on page AR~6o). Sheraton Hotel was pleased with turnout and made a slight profit too. Even our one vendor (Barnes & Noble) was happy with its limited sales. NSS Board of Directors meetings were very well attended and provided the face-to-face time needed to begin “post-War” recovery and healing process. In that regard, this conference was completely successful. Another success was that volunteers remained inspired throughout the event and have emerged with the determination to keep HAL5 on the path to growth and prosperity. That’s worth it weight in gold!

Special Events in December 2004

- HAL5 Christmas Party at the new home of Steve Mustaikis and Carrie Alderfer. Had a good turnout of about 15 members and their spouses.