

Good Evening

MaryBeth and I joined MARS officially in 2006 after hanging out at the fading BRS launches. In 2016 MaryBeth at the request of Tom McCarthy and Greg Young joined the MARS BoD becoming its Secretary. Near the end of 2017 I volunteered and was approved by the BoD to fill the officer position of Senior Advisor after the disappearance of Ferenc Gy'Roka.

In 2016 MARS was a different club.

- MARS was not really a family friendly place especially for “special” kids and frankly woman who wanted to fly or heaven forbid participate
- MARS leadership had become unwilling to listen to anyone when it came to changing anything, very discouraging.
- The club struggled with a poorly designed, expensive home brewed launch control system that even after spending \$4,000 on was never reliable.
- Launch pads for larger BFR's were antique, hurting NYPOWER and our ability to host a national event.
- NYPOWER had lost its luster
- Equipment was not being upgraded or properly maintained, far worse than a few broken pad heads we have today.
- The audio system was better suited for use at a rodeo or jail yard than a pleasant afternoon in a field flying rockets.
- We had to borrow a generator from former member's for every launch
- The clubs online presence was so bad MARS had even lost the domain name nypower.org our signature event.
- MARS membership was below 50 members.
- Rightfully so, many members like Dennis Jurus struggled with their involvement.

In 2017 MaryBeth was elected by the Board of Directors as President. First order of business was to build better relationships with the membership and get people involved in the committees that were supposed to run the club. Discovering people's skills and encouraging them to step up and participate. Subject matter experts were needed!

- Denis Jurus and Tom McCarthy were naturals for equipment committee.
- Greg Young being a pilot and having a lifetime of experience with government bureaucracy was a perfect choice as the waiver holder. He owned the entire process, start to finish. Answering the many inquiries was his duty.
- MaryBeth was able to involve other woman like Janice Jurus who was able to help MARS finally navigate the financial part of running the club. Somehow arm twisting Dan MacNeil into taking over that role when the Jurus family sadly left NY.

Working with my employer, I arranged for a grant to purchase the first components of a Wilson F/X launch system to replace the old “MARS” system. That move caused a lot of drama, with a former board member literally calling MaryBeth attempting to bully her into backing down.

Just the first of many times that will happen in the years to come!

MaryBeth worked with Nat Kinsey to replace the low power racks that were in constant need of repair.

Dennis Jurus with the input from myself and few others designed and built our first hydraulic launch tower for the BFR flights.

Financing was secured to purchase

- Honda generator MARS is no longer at the mercy of others.
- A new audio system was purchased to replace “old sparky”.
- More Wilson F/X pieces were purchased. We went from expensive and unreliable to a start of the art F/X system in what seemed like a blink of an eye.
- Tom and I disassembled the non functioning solar charging system in the trailer. Replacing the panel and few internal parts. That system is now the envy of every club in the world!

In 2018 we hosted the first of 2 national events, the National Sport Launch. That event was HUGE, 325 flyers from all over the east coast, made 1200+ flights in 2.5 days. The first ever NSL banquet was a raging success. NAR President John Hochiemer and NAR Trustee Ed Lacroix both quoted Dan Micheal at the Banquet saying, “nobody runs a rocket launch as well as MaryBeth”.

In the leadup to NARAM, MARS had problem, the board had agreed to allow composite clusters and multi stage rockets but Greg due to the pandemic was unable fulfil his duties as chairman of the operations committee. With BoD approval I replaced Greg as chair of the Ops committee, and we worked to create those rules. With the help of Tom McCarthy and donations from Brett Carrier and use of Solepoxy equipment, Tom and I were able to prove composite cluster could be done without the need for huge batteries. A few folks bawked and still do at the rules but Tom and Science could not be argued with. At that time I was able to get a revised and greatly simplified set range rules that Greg Young had written years earlier approved and posted on the website. Further making MARS a fun place to play!

MaryBeth and I now volunteering at the museum as well, worked to further solidify MARS long term arrangement with the Wadsworth family. Friendsgiving dinner in 2022 was another raging success, bringing MARS members, NAR leadership, the volunteers, pilots and even the Wadsworth family together for Dinner in Swanson Hall where we now have our meetings. The Christmas parties were becoming EPIC.

During the worldwide Covid catastrophe, after being diagnose with cancer, having an 11 hour surgery, suffering through 6 months of Chemo only to be told she had 6 months to live. MaryBeth didn't blink, she put a smile on her face and showed up at every MARS launch, with the help of the Jurus family, MARS unlike many clubs in the world was flying and she continued planning of the second National Event NARAM62\*.

MARS membership had gone from 50 members in 2015 to 200 members in 2022 a 400% increase! MARS had become a truly family friendly place to come and play!

MaryBeth spent weeks and countless hours on the phone negotiating the purchase and delivery of the big red aluminum tower, another piece of equipment other clubs COVET!

Since the Jurus family left, before every launch I took a day off from work using my vacation time, where we met up with members on Friday morning to setup the range. This allowed for others to arrive at 10am on Saturday and JUST FLY! If I haven't said it already, you're welcome!

With the success MARS has had under MaryBeth's leadership, the tendency for far too many humans is to become Envious, jealous, the lust to control that success, grows into an obsession, even in a little rocket club. As I am sure many of you saw on social media over 2023 a few members decided to take their jealousy to new lows! To add to this Drama, 2023 saw the death of both our mothers inside 3 weeks and decline in health due to cancer of MaryBeth's best friend Gloria who ultimately passed away.

With all that was going on who was still arranging every launch, organized NYPOWER, setting up the field, running the safety check, pulling shifts at LCO and still smiling at every new face as best she could.

To stop the assault on our beloved MARS, MaryBeth and I have decided to step back, hopefully Todd Smith, Tom Ha and Dan MacNeil can keep this ship floating!

Two last points I need to make

- Normally a statement like this would be read at the banquet but MARS Christmas party went from a huge success to not even having one in 2023 in just a few months the poison spread!
- There are now 3 trustees instead of 4, with those 3 forced into holding 5 officer positions.

If you want MARS to continue you need to support those 3 men! It's a LOT of work. If you are not willing to step up and help at least have the decency to check your EGO and not be dramatic about something you don't like!