

**2/20/2010**

**10:40 am Pacific Time**

**General Session AERC Annual Convention**

AERC Board of Directors present: Susan Keil, Laura Hayes, Kim Fuess, Roger Taylor, Bruce Weary, Roberta Harms, Randy Eiland, Maryben Stover, Gail Williams, Michael Campbell, Mike Maul, Susan Schomburg, Joe Schoech, Susan Kasemeyer, John Crandell III, John Parke, Connie Caudill, Sandy Terp, Laura Hayes, Tom Noll, and Jan Stevens.

AERC Board of Directors not in attendance: Patti Pizzo and Monica Chapman.

The following new Regional Directors were sworn in by Robert Ribley:

Sue Keith (MW)

Kevin Meyers (SW)

Lisa Schneider (PSW)

Forrest Tancer (W)

President Connie Caudill thanked the following Regional Directors for their help and hard work for AERC of the past years: Dianna Chapek (W), Terry Woolley-Howe (PSW), Joyce, Mocilian (MW), and Jeff Trinkle (SW).

Michael Campbell addressed the board and the AERC membership that was present about this year's annual convention theme: Preserve Our Trails. He emphasized the importance of trails for our sport and encouraged everyone to attend the speaker seminars given by Mary Hanson and Rick Potts, both of the National Parks Service.

The call for nominations for Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President and President were made.

Susan Schomburg, seconded by Susan Kasemeyer, made the nomination of Roger Taylor for Treasurer. Nominations were closed. All members of the BOD voted in favor of Roger Taylor for Treasurer.

Susan Kasemeyer, seconded by Sandy Terp, made the nomination of Jan Stevens for Secretary. Nominations were closed. All members of the BOD voted in favor of Jan Stevens for Secretary.

Susan Keil, seconded by Kim Fuess, made the nomination of Laura Hayes for Vice President. Jan Stevens, seconded by Roger Taylor, made the nomination of Susan Kasemeyer for Vice President. Nominations were closed. The vote was taken by written ballot. Votes were counted by Executive Director Kathleen Henkel and reported by Robert Ribley. The BOD voted Laura Hayes in as Vice President.

John Parke, seconded by Susan Kasemeyer, made the nomination of Connie Caudill for President. Nominations were closed. All members of the BOD voted in favor of Connie Caudill for President.

The meeting was then turned over to the General Session with comments from the membership of AERC.

Marianne Stuart from the West Region commented that the BOD should consider requiring trail maintenance as a part of membership in AERC. She further explained that much of volunteer work done on trails is 'word of mouth' – she would like to see AERC have notices placed on our website that indicate where scheduled trail maintenance is being done and if volunteers are needed.

Helen Koehler from the Southeast Region recommended that AERC should become a member of the Equestrian Land Conservation Resource (ELCR). Helen also spoke highly of the speakers from the National Parks Service, Mary Hanson and Rick Potts – suggesting that everyone should attend their programs this weekend.

Marci Cook of the Northwest Region requested that AERC reconsider its elimination of the Yearbook. President Connie Caudill explained that it was a cost cutting measure saving AERC \$15,000. She went on to explain that the AERC Office is offering to print copies of the 2009 AERC Endurance and Limited Distance ride results for \$10.

Susan Garlinghouse of the West Region suggested that AERC should consider putting *Endurance News* on-line and/or CD form instead in printed magazine form.

Helen Koehler addressed the BOD and membership suggesting that we should think of ourselves as ‘nature based equine tourists.’ She also suggested that ride managers could look towards tourist dollars from their local tourist councils. She further explained that they could become members of their local tourist councils and/or chamber of commerce. She also elaborated on counting volunteer hours as ride volunteers and/or trail maintenance volunteers and that these hours can equal money when applying for grants.

Stephanie Teeter from the Northwest Region commented that ride managers are busy and that AERC should push this type of information to the ride managers – be more pro-active in helping ride managers with this type of information.

Cynthia Ariosta from the West Region indicated that the Cooley Ranch Ride needs help with working with land managers and ride managing in general. She requested that AERC provide more mentorship for ride managers.

Tom Noll, Northwest Regional Director, spoke to that comment and suggested that all members should feel that they can (and should) contact their regional directors and/or directors at large if they have questions.

Diana Campbell from the Central Region and President of the Texas Endurance Riders Association (TERA) explained that every year they put on a clinic for ride managers to help support new ride managers.

Joe Schoech, Southeast Regional Director, indicated that the Southeast Endurance Riders Association (SERA) has offered to help a new ride manager in their region who has never put on a ride before.

Gail Williams, Northwest Regional Director, explained that Pacific Northwest Endurance Rides (PNER) is ride manager representatives and rider representatives within their club to help ride managers and riders.

Laura \_\_\_\_\_ of the Northwest Region told the BOD that she was devastated that the Yearbook was cancelled. She suggested that the BOD should consider saving money by reducing the number of awards given out and/or offering an ‘opt out’ option for the bigger awards and just offering certificates of people preferred.

Randy Eiland, Director at Large, indicated that he felt that the membership was riding for fun.

Valerie Kanavy from the Northeast Region suggested that the BOD and AERC Office should consider closing much of the AERC website to members only – specifically rider and horses records.

Karen Balch from the Northwest Region asked if the AERC Office ‘shopped’ around for places to hold the Annual Convention that might be less expensive.

John Parke, Pacific South Regional Director, explained that our Executive Director, Kathleen Henkel, spends a great deal of time researching and working out deals to find AERC cost effective locations for the Annual Convention.

Helen Koehler suggested that AERC should consider ‘piggybacking’ our convention with other organizations. She thought that combining it with other trail usage organizations (non-equestrian) might be a good idea.

Ms. Koehler also asked the BOD to look into our ride insurance that we have. She indicated that it is difficult for late season rides to have policies in hand early enough when our ride season starts on December 1 instead of January 1.

Stephanie Teeter requested that the BOD consider opening up the BOD email list to the membership. Members of the BOD addressed this issue indicating that many of the BOD would feel that it if were open that many of the BOD members would not express their feelings. The BOD does understand the request but feels that it would make these conversations more private and into secrecy.

John Parke noted that the minutes are open and available to all once they have been approved. He indicated that the BOD used to have all private discussions via phone and/or letter and that these discussions were not to the entire BOD. He emphasized that the BOD list is not one big on-going meeting. He further explained that some BOD members are on it and commenting all the time, while others may read it and choose not to comment and others are somewhere in between. He stressed that no business is transacted on the BOD list.

Hope Lundquist of the West Region asked for a clarification from the BOD concerning the interest rate and the payback to AERC from the loans taken out by AERC International. The BOD explained that AERC International had no outstanding loans from AERC.

Mike Marino, chairman of the AERC Protest and Grievance Committee, requested guidance from the BOD concerning a current protest. He requested that the BOD consider allowing the P & G Committee permission to bring the parties together to gauge their demeanor since the information that the P & G Committee from the parties made it difficult to determine who was telling the truth or not. He felt that neither party would be happy with the decision and that it may come to the BOD on an appeal.

John Parke, Legal Counsel for the AERC BOD, stated that we (AERC) are somewhat limited by what we have available when dealing with Protest and Grievance issues. He felt that the rewrite of Rule 14, which deals with Protest and Grievance issues, benefited AERC and the BOD. His suggested was to allow the process to work and that if it came to the BOD as an appeal the BOD would deal with it.

With there being no further business brought to the BOD at the General Session the meeting was adjourned.