

AERC BOD Conference Call Minutes Mon. July 8, 2013

The meeting was called to order by president Jan Stevens at 8:01pm Central Time.

Those on the call were Jan Stevens, Michael Campbell, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Monica Chapman, Connie Caudill, Sue Keith, Nick Kohut, Patti Stedman, Steph Teeter, Gail Williams, John Parke, Lisa Schneider, Susan Kasemeyer, Joe Schoech, Julia Lynn-Elias, Roger Taylor, Maryben Stover, Forrest Tancer, Tom Bache, Olin Balch, Randy Eiland, Susan Garlinghouse, Mike Maul, Bruce Weary, and Kathleen Henkel.

Those not on the call were Susie Schomberg and Terry Woolley Howe.

Connie Caudill moved and Bruce Weary seconded to approve the agenda.

Roger Taylor moved and Joe Schoech moved to excuse the following for the May Conference Call; Gail Williams due to a power outage in her area, Terry Woolley Howe was out of the country and unable to connect, and Bruce Weary was out of cell phone range.

Connie Caudill moved and Joe Schoech seconded to excuse Terry Woolley Howe for July 8, 2013, conference call because she is traveling.

Roger Taylor moved and Connie Caudill seconded to accept the AERC Convention Minutes from the 3/10/13 meeting in Reno, NV and the Conference Call BOD Minutes for May 13, 2013.

Kathleen Henkel gave the July 8, 2013, Membership Report:

Membership as of 7/6/2012 4987

Membership as of 7/8/2013 4910

Rider Fees as of 7/8/2012

\$43,503

Rider Fees as of 7/8/2013 \$45,989

Sanction Fees as of 7/8/2012

\$16,005

Sanction Fees as of 7/8/2013

\$15,506

Sanction Fees for 2014 \$1,135

New Members as of 7/6/2012

583

New Members as of 7/8/2013 524

Discussion ensued about getting membership numbers together for the mid-year meeting in regards to when family member's dues were changed to 2013.

New Pioneer Ride Sanction – New Mexico Desert Classic, Oct. 25-27, 2013. Day 1 25/50/75, Day 2 30/60, Day 3 25/50/100, Ride Manager Cindy Binns-Mendoza, Location – Corralitos Ranch, Las Cruces, NM. Motion Passes with three against and four abstain.

The Trails Committee brought a motion for a Trails Grant to the LBL Backcountry Horseman for \$2563.00 (see below). The funds will come from the Trails Grant Reserve. The motion passed.

Tom Bache AERC BOD Member brought a Preliminary Motion Proposal to the BOD. Steph Teeter seconded the motion so the BOD could discuss it (see below). Discussion ensued about the motion and how it needs to be divided into three separate motions. Tom Bache agreed to change the motion to read:

Proposed
Motion

The AERC Board of Directors requests that the Ride Managers Committee and Competitions Committee review the motion. From there it will go to the Rules Committee if either of these committees feels that the rules need to be modified. The Rules Committee would then recommend appropriate “changes” (i.e., extensions, deletions, and/or revisions) to the AERC Rules and Regulations in the area listed below. If there are significant differences among Committee members, majority and minority recommendations may be provided.

1. Constraints on permissible crew support.

Once the motion was revised it passed with one abstention.

The Education Committee brought a motion for a Weed Control Trail Manual to go to Dr. Gower for \$4000.00 (see below). The funds will come from the Education Reserve. The motion passed.

The AERC International Committee brought a motion asking for \$500 from AERC-I dedicated funds and a matching \$500 donation from AERC General Funds to support the NAJRC at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Ky. The donations would help fund golf carts for the riders to get across the immense Horse Park in a timely manner (see below).

AERC BOD member Olin Balch wanted to amend the motion to also donate \$500 to junior riders at the AERC National Championship Ride in 2013. Bruce Weary seconded the amendment. The amended motion failed with eighteen opposed, two in favor, and two abstaining. It was recommended that a committee bring Olin Balch's idea for a motion before the BOD at a later meeting.

The original motion passed fifteen in favor and seven opposed.

AERC International Committee also brought a motion asking for \$500 to be used for the Young Riders World Championships in France (see below). The money would be used for hay and shavings for the horses. The funds would come from the AERC-I funds. The motion passed.

The Junior Committee brought a motion to change the Youth Advisor to the AERC Board (see below). Kyle Gibbon will be leaving the Youth Advisor position and Hope Elison will be replacing him. The motion passed.

The Junior Committee also provided the AERC BOD with the following update. The Junior Committee has started sending out the Birthday postcards. Each postcard has a horse and "Happy Birthday from the AERC Junior Committee" wrote on the front and a personalized message from a volunteering junior committee member on the back. We are very excited to hear feedback and think this project is going to be a great way to personally get to know our junior riders.

AERC President Jan Stevens went over the letter AERC sent to Mr. John Long, CEO of the United States Equestrian Federation (see below).

John Parke gave an update to the USEF Drug Testing Contract. Dr. Schumacher of USEF Drug Testing has been providing AERC with a discounted price of \$250 per drug test. The proposed new contract will reflect the regular rate of \$315 per drug test. The new contract would test ten rides with twelve riders at each ride. Dr. Schumacher wants specific instructions on how we want the rides tested. He has proposed testing groups of riders. Dr. Jay Mero, AERC Vet Committee Chair, and John Parke, will revise our draft to send back to USEF for comments by the August Mid-Year BOD meeting.

There is a chance USEF overcharged AERC last year for drug testing charges. Kathleen Henkle and Dr. Jay Mero will research the subject. The results will be reported back to us at the August Mid-year BOD meeting.

The AERC Vet Committee is still working on a way to drug test AERC rides held in Canada but not under the Equine Canada tent. The Vet Committee should have a report to the BOD at the August Mid-Year BOD meeting.

Response to Linda & Dennis Tribby

The BOD went into executive session.

John Parke spoke about Endowment issues. The endowment program has been brought before the BOD before. An Endowment would allow individuals to donate cash or land to AERC. It would require AERC to set up a supporting organization to manage the program.

AERC President Jan Stevens included the AERC Action Plan for the BOD to review (see below).

John Parke move to adjourn the meeting and Susan Kasemeyer seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27pm Central Time.

Submitted by Monica Chapman.

**AERC Board of Directors
MOTION PROPOSAL**

Motion Name

2013 LBL Trails Grant

Proposing Committee

Trails and Land Management Committee

Date of Motion (Date to be presented to BOD)

6-8-13

Classification of Motion Request (new, change, add, delete, by-law, rule, policy)

New

Proposed Motion (use exact wording)

The Trails and Land Management Committee proposes to the AERC Board of Directors that \$2,563 be granted to the LBL Back Country Horsemen for horse ties, picnic tables and trail construction at the Golden Pond rest area on trail #11 at the Land Between the Lakes.

Background, analysis and benefit (describe the problem this motion is solving)

This proposal is to repair and build connecting trail and a rest stop/vet check area that was destroyed during a highway expansion. The connector trail construction will place the ties and tables in a shaded area for riders and horses to rest or use as a vet check at AERC rides held on these trails.

Budget effect/impact (Attach spreadsheet if appropriate)

\$2,563 out of the Trails Grant fund.

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization

This project supports two AERC rides—the LBL ride and the Barefoot Run. More and better rides means good publicity and membership growth for AERC. LBL Backcountry Horsemen is a new and enthusiastic part of the national organization with a long and positive reputation for supporting trails issues and which has an MOU with AERC.

Impact on AERC Office (Work load, budget)

minimal

Committees consulted and/or affected

Trails and Land Management

Implementation plan (Schedule, resources, financial)

All work to be completed within 30 days of funding approval. Volunteer labor and equipment are already committed to the project.

Supporting materials (List of any other documents and/or spreadsheets)

N/A

Supporting approvals (proposing committee, participating committees)

N/A

PREFACE

AERC Rules & Regulations are revised frequently. The current paper version states “Revised December 1, 2012,” and the electronic version on AERC.org states “Revised December 1, 2012 and May 1, 2013.” Revisions are necessary when policies change or when inconsistencies and deficiencies are noticed.

Minor incidents and member recommendations suggest that AERC consider some rule modifications (extensions, deletions, and/or revisions) in several areas. But careful thought and analysis is needed to support a decision on what, if any, rule modifications are in the best interests of AERC. Some further context follows.

Rules constraining crew support

The current rules are very detailed in many areas, but they include almost no constraints on permissible crew support. The only place crew support is even mentioned is in Rule 6k [“A crew may accompany their rider down a public road in a support vehicle (unless there is a ride management prohibition against it) provided they do not push or haze the equine.”]. It seems odd that the only rule regarding crew support is one that explicitly permits a practice that seems questionable due to safety and fairness-of-competition issues, as well as ambiguity in the definition of a public road.

Clearly, higher levels of crew support (e.g., support outside designated areas, water & ice beyond that available to other riders) can offer a significant competitive advantage, perhaps equivalent to that provided by some prohibited drugs, so some constraints may be appropriate due to fairness-of-competition considerations. Further, unconstrained vehicle traffic in the vicinity of the ride route can become a safety or land management issue. As another example of a possible rule deficiency, it is not entirely clear that the rules prohibit the use of IV fluids during a mandatory hold or elsewhere. Rule 13.3.2 (“Prohibited Treatments include any diagnostic procedures involving the use of a needle ...”) certainly comes close, but introducing IV fluids is not a diagnostic procedure.

It is generally assumed that Ride Management already has the discretion to constrain crew access and actions. It is true that the rules explicitly mention ride management discretion in many areas (2.1.2 Selection of Control Judges; 6j Setting additional completion criteria; 6k Prohibiting crew support from moving vehicle; 6.1 Discretion for approving a completion; 8.5.3.2 Discretion for allowing small deviations from weight class limitations; 9.2 Decision to use or not use the AERC BC system; 9.3.2 Discretion to select the weight and time contribution to a non-AERC BC scoring system; 10.3.3 Decision to disallow AERC-recognized unsponsored entry by a Junior-age rider). But as noted earlier, discretion to constrain crew actions is only stated directly in the oblique wording of 6k

Rule consistency

As noted above, the Rules & Regulations are very detailed in some areas, but terse or silent in others. For example, that there is no explicit guidance for the number, placement, or location of control checkpoints other than at the finish (a long ride with no intermediate checkpoints appears to be permitted). The unstated implication is that this is left to the discretion of the Ride Manager. The larger point is that the balance between detailed written rules and reliance on Ride Manager discretion seems inconsistent.

Rule 2.1.7 says, “It is recommended that ...” This is the only appearance of the word “recommended.” This word offers an option to provide guidance without being too restrictive.

Elevator Rides

Rule 1.2 states the rules governing “elevator” rides. Such rides were the subject of a lengthy discussion on endurance.net/Ridecamp starting about May 23. While there were strong differences of opinion for how elevator ride rules should be changed, there seemed to be agreement that the current rules aren’t working.

PRELIMINARY MOTION PROPOSAL

Proposing Committee

None. Proposal is submitted by Board member Tom Bache.

Date of Motion

June 16, 2013: Submission for inclusion on the agenda for a future meeting.

Classification of Motion Request

Motion proposes that the Board direct the Rules Committee to specify and analyze options for extensions, deletions, and/or revisions to the AERC Rules and Regulations in the specified areas.

Proposed Motion

The AERC Board of Directors requests that the Rules Committee recommend appropriate “changes” (i.e., extensions, deletions, and/or revisions) to the AERC Rules and Regulations in the areas listed below. If there are significant differences among Committee members, majority and minority recommendations may be provided.

1. Constraints on permissible crew support.
2. Changes to improve clarity and balance between specific constraints imposed by the rules and discretion afforded to ride management and control judges.
3. Changes to Rule 1.2 (elevator rides).
4. Any other changes that the Rules Committee may choose to recommend as a consequence of this analysis.

Background, analysis, and benefit

Interested members and Ride Managers have noticed what may be deficiencies in our Rules & Regulations. The Board should respond by giving serious attention to their concerns and make appropriate changes when they appear to benefit our sport.

Budget effect/impact

Unknown, but expected to be small.

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or AERC

The Board will make the final decision based on Committee Recommendations and Board judgments about the benefits and/or impacts on AERC. This Motion does require a substantial effort by the Rules Committee with significant input for Ride Managers and perhaps others. Additional effort is always a challenge for volunteer organizations, and it may be necessary to bring in new people with fresh energy.

Impact on AERC Office

Unknown, but expected to be small.

Committees consulted and/or affected

This motion seeks consultation and recommendations from the Rules Committee. That Committee may seek advice and consultation from other Committees at its discretion.

Implementation Plan

The Board requests a report summarizing its analysis and recommendations within three months of the date this motion is approved.

Supporting Materials

None at this time

{{{ Weed Control Manual Motion

AERC Board of Directors
MOTION PROPOSAL

This Motion Proposal form is to be used in the development, presentation and approval process of submitting motions to the Board.

Motion Name AERC Weed Control Trail Manual

Proposing Committee Education Committee

Date of Motion (Date to be presented to BOD) July 8, 2013

Classification of Motion Request (new, change, add, delete, by-law, rule, policy) New

Proposed Motion (use exact wording) Approve \$4,000 from Education Reserve to fund an AERC weed control manual for the Upper Midwest to be developed by Dr. Sith Gower.

Background, analysis and benefit (describe the problem this motion is solving). This is the first manual and Dr. Gower has already contacted many people who will use this manual. The proposal is to then do other areas of the US where manuals are needed for weed control and eradication.

Budget effect/impact (Attach spreadsheet if appropriate): The \$4,000 funding would be from the Education Reserve.

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization: These manuals will allow AERC to get its name out with Land Managers and riders who use the trails.

Impact on AERC Office (Work load, budget): Minimal - financial changes

Committees consulted and/or affected: Education Committee

Implementation plan (Schedule, resources, financial): Dr. Gower will move forward as soon as funded

Supporting materials (List of any other documents and/or spreadsheets): Dr. Gower's proposal to prepare the "Weed Control and Eradication Trail Guide for the Upper Midwest" which has already been sent to the board.

Supporting approvals (proposing committee, participating committees): Education committee

@@@ AERC International NAJYRC Funding Request

AERC Board of Directors MOTION PROPOSAL

This Motion Proposal form is to be used in the development, presentation and approval process of submitting motions to the Board.

Motion Name Request for matching funds for US Young Rider Team support for 2013 North American Junior/Young Rider Championship

Proposing Committee AERC International

Date of Motion July 2013

Classification of Motion Request repeat from 2012

Proposed Motion The AERC International Committee would like to donate \$500 of AERC International funds in support of the US Young Rider Team that will compete in the 2013 North American Junior/Young Rider Championship. The committee requests a matching donation from AERC itself from the General Funds.

Background, analysis and benefit Growing our sport has long been an important endeavor, and how better to accomplish this than by supporting our youth? This year was the first time that the North American Young Rider Championships, a multi-discipline event, included endurance as a fully recognized discipline at the 4*, championship level, with all the ensuing requirements for qualifications for both horse and riders. Our young riders were right there, in the mix of the event, competing on equal ground for the very first time. They received well-deserved recognition from riders and managers of other disciplines, as well as from USEF staff, for their excellent attitudes, fortitude, and horsemanship skills. Our young riders gained excellent exposure for the sport of endurance, because kids competing in other disciplines could meet and watch and learn from the endurance kids. Not only was our sport of endurance seen by many people from other areas of equestrian sport, it was represented in a skillful and professional manner. The parent organizations and USEF National Affiliates for other disciplines donated money to their young teams in order to support their competitive efforts, and the AERC International Committee feels that we of endurance would be remiss if we did not likewise support our young riders. AERC is the USEF National Affiliate organization for Endurance, and while our membership is smaller in outright numbers than some of the other affiliates, we should by no means be smaller in our commitment to our youth. If anything, we should be even more rock solid in our support of our riders, because we cannot afford to lose even one of them. Last year, in 2012, AERC I an AERC with matching funds, were able to supply each of the three full Young Rider Endurance Teams with their own golf carts for four days, to assist the riders in travel around the Kentucky Horse Park. The Park is a very large venue, and it is most necessary for the riders to have transportation to get to and from the stables and other locations within the park.

Budget effect/impact \$500 from AERC I dedicated funds, \$500 from AERC general funds

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization \$500 from each of the AERC International and the AERC coffers is a paltry amount to pay for the benefit that will be received from support of our Young Riders Team at international competitions. International competition is a highly effective venue for dissemination of information about and positive exposure of endurance competition to riders from other disciplines. The North American Junior and Young Riders Championship is such an event, and may be one of the best advertising opportunities out there for us, in terms of recruiting new members who have the potential to participate in our sport for many years to come.

Impact on AERC Office minimal

Committees consulted and/or affected AERC international

Implementation plan Total of \$1000 (\$500 from AERC International, with \$500 matching funds from AERC) to be donated to the US Young Riders Team for the NAJYRC in 2013, to directly support the athletes. This will take the form of paying for their uniforms or other supporting materials such as golf carts, a necessary expense for the athletes. AERC International Committee, along with the Chair of the AERC I Young Riders Sub-Committee to oversee fund distribution as well as the Treasurer.

Supporting materials (List of any other documents and/or spreadsheets)

Supporting approvals AERC I meeting minutes to follow with a unanimous vote in support of this motion.

**AERC Board of Directors
MOTION PROPOSAL**

Motion Name Request for funds for US Young Rider Team support for 2013 Young Rider World Championship

Proposing Committee AERC International

Date of Motion July 2013

Classification of Motion Request New

Proposed Motion The AERC International Committee would like to donate \$500 of their own funds in support of the US Young Rider Team that will compete in the 2013 Young Rider World Championship.

Background, analysis and benefit We have an excellent opportunity to revitalize US International Endurance by supporting a fantastic cadre of AERC Young Riders who are preparing to travel to France for the Young Rider World Endurance Championship. These kids have worked hard, have grown up within AERC, and can show the world the best we have to offer in athletic talent and sportsmanship.

Budget effect/impact \$500 from AERC I dedicated funds

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization International competition is a highly effective venue for dissemination of information about and positive exposure of endurance competition to riders from other disciplines, as well as to riders from our own discipline. It is important to show our Young Riders that we support their endeavors, in order that they continue to strive for excellence. The knowledge and experience that these kids will bring home cannot help but benefit all AERC members. We should seek to elevate ourselves, and to be the best we can be, and we can do that by showing our youngsters we are serious about putting forth a good effort.

Impact on AERC Office minimal

Committees consulted and/or affected AERC international

Implementation plan Total of \$500 from AERC International to be donated to the US Young Riders Team for the YR WEC in 2013, to directly support the athletes, in the form of using the funds to provide hay and bedding for the team horses. AERC International Committee, along with the Chair of the AERC I Young Riders Sub-Committee to oversee fund distribution.

Supporting materials (List of any other documents and/or spreadsheets)

Supporting approvals AERC I meeting minutes to follow.

**AERC Board of Directors
MOTION PROPOSAL**

This Motion Proposal form is to be used in the development, presentation and approval process of submitting motions to the Board.

Motion Name Youth Advisor to AERC Board

Proposing Committee Junior Committee

Date of Motion (Date to be presented to BOD) 7/8/2013

Classification of Motion Request (new, change, add, delete, by-law, rule, policy) Change

Proposed Motion (use exact wording) The AERC Junior Committee would like to submit a new Youth Advisor to the AERC Board of Directors.

Background, analysis and benefit (describe the problem this motion is solving) Currently Kyle Gibbon is sitting on in this position. He has held this position since spring 2012. The Junior Committee was viewing this as a yearlong position in a trial basis.

Budget effect/impact (Attach spreadsheet if appropriate) N/A

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization: New perspective.

Impact on AERC Office (Work load, budget) Change in Endurance News and the website

Committees consulted and/or affected Junior Committee

Implementation plan (Schedule, resources, financial) New youth advisor would start immediately.

Supporting materials (List of any other documents and/or spreadsheets)

Two candidates have expressed interest. We have received a letter from one and are awaiting the letter from the other one. We will forward it to the BoD if received by Friday July 5, 2013.

Letter from Hope Elison, Colorado

As a member of the Junior Committee and a young rider in AERC I think I would fit well as an advisor on the board. I joined AERC in 2007 and was a junior that year. Since then I have done my best to fit endurance into a busy high school and college life. I don't have the impressive record that many of our committee members do, but I think I can bring the perspective of the typical junior and young rider trying to pursue endurance while continuing their education. I can always relay the thoughts of my more experienced committee members.

My personal goal for endurance is to start riding many more miles now that I am settled into nursing school and almost done with my education. As for my goals in serving AERC, I plan to promote our sport and do my part to keep our junior and young rider memberships growing. I would like to find ways to make it easier for our youth to excel in a sport that is heavy on cost and time.

I am thankful to have been thought of for this opportunity and would love to fill the position.
Hope Elison

Supporting approvals (proposing committee, participating committees) Junior Committee

***** Letter to FEI**

June 25, 2013

Mr. John Long, Chief Executive Officer
United States Equestrian Federation
4047 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511

Dear Mr. Long,

As President of the American Endurance Ride Conference (AERC), and at the direction of our Board of Directors, this letter serves as a request that the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) submit a letter to the Federation Equestrian International (FEI) in regard to increasing concerns regarding Endurance at the international level; and specifically as support for the letters publically issued by Equestrian Federations of Belgium (October 2, 2012), France (October 12, 2012) and Switzerland (March 26, 2013).

We share the alarm voiced by the European federations of Belgium, France, and Switzerland in regard to profoundly disturbing evidence of deficiencies in horse welfare issues, including an increase in equine fatalities, orthopedic injuries and serious drug violations. We note that these letters have been widely circulated throughout world press, and that the reputation of the sport and all those federations involved is likely to become irreparably tainted if decisive action is not taken at once to resolve these issues. The AERC prides itself on our motto, "To Finish is To Win," which illustrates our uncompromising bedrock principles that welfare of the horse must remain of paramount importance and never become subordinate to an attitude of "win at all costs." We are further disturbed that AERC's cornerstone principle of remaining a drug-free sport has in recent years deteriorated at the international level to the extent that FEI Endurance has the highest number of violations of anti-doping rules, specifically in regard to teams originating from the Middle East.

AERC remains very dismayed over an apparent unwillingness on the part of FEI to follow through with their own Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse as described repeatedly throughout the FEI's rules and schedules for every equestrian FEI discipline. May we draw your attention to the FEI Endurance Rules:

"800.1 Endurance Riding is a competition to test the competitor's ability to safely manage the stamina and fitness of the horse over an endurance course in a competition against the track, the distance, the climate, the terrain and the clock. Therefore, the most important responsibility of the Technical Delegate, the Ground Jury, the Stewards, the Veterinary Commission, the Chef d'Equipe, the Team Veterinarian, the Grooms and ultimately the Athlete is to ensure the health and welfare of the horse by diligent application of their skill together with a caring, knowledgeable attitude by the Athlete. To be successful, the competitor must have knowledge of pace and efficient and safe use of the horse across country."

We support these principles, in which the health and welfare of our equine athletes is held as primary importance. As such, it is of the highest priority that the rules previously set in place to support these values be consistently and strenuously upheld, regardless of the influence and financial

sponsorship of one or more individuals involved as competitors, owners of vast racing stables, and/or as elected officials within the highest echelons of FEI. A failure to do so on the part of FEI threatens the integrity of the entire sport, but most especially endurance racing at its top international levels.

In addition to the above issues, AERC is alarmed about the increasing speed requirements in order to obtain a Certificate of Capability. It is understood that endurance events are a race, and therefore the winning horse and rider is by definition those who complete the course in the fastest elapsed time. However, we are dismayed that FEI endurance has evolved from its prototypical roots of challenging, technical courses requiring advanced horsemanship, strategy and judgment to a long distance flat race where horsemanship is subordinate to speed and speed alone.

While we understand the desire expressed by some individuals to make endurance a more spectator-friendly sport, such choices in course design and venues also encourage racing at unsafe speeds on the flat courses. It is therefore of little surprise that the incidence and types of injuries and fractures within FEI Endurance now approach those observed in traditional flat-track racing. Specifically in 2010, a peer-reviewed scientific journal, Equine Veterinary Education, documented musculoskeletal injury rates of one limb fracture per 236 FEI starts in the 2007-2008 European endurance season. Similar to the most common bone injuries seen in other racing disciplines, three-quarters of these endurance-horse fractures originated from the fetlock joint. When examining injuries in AERC endurance starts from 2002 through 2012, we were able to verify only two horses sustaining fractures of the fetlock region despite more than 140,000 starts during that 11-year period.

We note that articles in highly respected publications such as the New York Times detailing drug rule violations and catastrophic injuries within flat-track racing has resulted in increased scrutiny and negative perceptions by the public, animal welfare groups and governmental agencies. Additionally, the New York Times has even detailed official blatant partiality to certain Middle East nation teams at FEI's highest level (world) competitions. Should FEI fail to take decisive action to correct the current serious deficiencies within the federation and Endurance discipline, we cannot help but predict a similar fate for the entire sport of endurance.

It is therefore AERC's request that USEF add their strenuous support to those federations, which have previously expressed their concern over the current state of horse welfare issues in the Endurance discipline. We look forward to working with you on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Jan Stevens, President