



Maine Alpaca Association  
Membership Meeting  
Sunday, June 27, 2010  
Great Wall Restaurant, Augusta, ME

Present: Dawn Brooker, Pamela Drew, Paula Ickeringill, Jill McElderry-Maxwell, Steffi McKeith, Cindy Mingle, Ursula Munro (left early), Patricia Perry & Bruce Weymouth (left early), Virginia Rebar (left early), Alan & Linda Russo & Joyce DeFisher (guest) (left early), Ernestine Slaven (left early), Erica Waltz (left early), Nancy Williams

Matt Randall, a Maine State Compliance Supervisor, spoke before the meeting, beginning at approximately 11:45 AM.

The formal meeting was brought to order over lunch at approximately 1:00 PM. There were not enough members present for a voting quorum.

- I. The secretary (Jill McElderry-Maxwell) requested a motion to approve the last meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and approved by those present.
- II. The treasurer (Pam Drew) reported. Minor activity was discussed at the meeting, and the treasurer's report is hereby appended to and included in these minutes. A motion was made to approve the treasurer's report. The motion was seconded and approved by those present.
- III. A discussion of the next two meeting dates was held. January 22, 2011 and March 19, 2011 were tentatively agreed to, with the caveat that the January date needs to be checked for possible conflicts with the NEAOBA veterinary conference.

It was suggested that since the June meeting has historically had low attendance, it might make sense for MAA to move to meeting exclusively in the fall and winter, i.e., in September, November, January and March. It was noted that this poses challenges for organizing summer events as well as the fall Open Farm Days, however. The topic will need to be revisited at the January meeting.

- IV. The president (Dawn Brooker) informed the membership that MAA will be filing the appropriate paperwork for non-profit status, as the organization is currently in danger of being required to file taxes. After consultation with member Claudia Raessler, an attorney specializing in non-profits, the 501(c)6 (business league) designation was chosen as offering the most flexibility to the group going forward. It permits current activities (promoting alpacas, promoting fiber) as well as possible projected activities (bulk buying, product design).
- V. Steffi McKeith presented the Marketing Committee report. The committee will be meeting by conference call on June 29 to begin planning the publicity campaign for Open Farm Days. It was noted that the dates of the national open farm days conflict with Common Ground Fair again this year; the membership will be surveyed to determine if MAA members prefer to stay with the national days or choose another weekend.

It was suggested that greater emphasis on alpaca animal sales might be appropriate going forward, along with sale of fiber products. Members would prefer to target potential owners or fiber enthusiasts, rather than families looking for an afternoon outing. To this end, the Marketing Committee was requested to investigate advertising in more agriculturally oriented venues such as Farm Bureau publications, via the Women's Agricultural Network, etc. Members are encouraged to offer suggestions for new advertising possibilities to the committee.

VI. Jill McElderry-Maxwell presented the Website Committee report. No member feedback was received from the recent Yahoo! group posting, leading the committee to believe that the members would prefer to be presented with a finished vision for the website which could then be discussed by the membership. The committee will attempt to work this "rough draft" up in a timely fashion. It was noted that having items for sale on a website may negatively affect the site's placing on search engines; this will be discussed with whatever vendor is eventually chosen to create the website.

VII. Pam Drew presented the Fundraising Committee report on behalf of Karen Woods. The raffle at NELE sold \$41 worth of tickets. The prize winners are listed on the website.

The idea of MAA sponsoring a fall fiber show/event as a fundraiser was again discussed, with the consensus being that this may be more appropriate as part of Fiber Frolic and/or too expensive as a stand alone event. The concept of a cash calendar was also discussed. Given the low turnout, further discussion was tabled until the January meeting.

VIII. Paula Ickeringill presented the Education Committee report on behalf of Ursula Monro. Possible speakers for the September meeting include state veterinarian Don Hoenig (EEE and transport regulations) and Ursula Monro (Nuñoa Project), while Cindy Kilgore has been approached to speak at the January meeting. The committee has had considerable difficulty in pinning speakers down to a commitment due to the nature of their jobs.

IX. Nancy Williams presented a report on the Fiber Frolic, which this year had approximately 1,200 attendees and 90 vendors. 51 attendees took part in workshops at the Frolic. Unfortunately, all scheduled speakers canceled at the last minute.

The Frolic is now an official state agricultural fair, with the first three years being a probationary period during which the Frolic will be evaluated by state officials. Premiums offered as prizes must total \$750 each year for this time period, and then will increase to \$1,200. The Frolic will receive a state stipend to assist with prize money after the probationary period.

The number of alpaca farms in attendance was up this year, with five farms bringing animals. Nancy noted that vendors are more successful if they are not in the animal area, however. In order to increase traffic through the barn areas, the Frolic is considering a "passport" that needs to be stamped in each barn in order to qualify for a small prize, perhaps. Angora rabbits were successfully added to the fair this year.

The Fiber Frolic committee is in need of members as well as volunteers. There are typically three meetings in a Freeport location prior to the Frolic. Some volunteer positions require a lesser commitment. At the current time, a volunteer coordinator is needed, which is largely a weekend commitment. This individual locates volunteers, assigns them positions, and oversees the volunteer effort during the Frolic.

Nancy also noted that the Frolic fair book has grown large enough to need its own committee group. Volunteers are needed to help pursue potential advertisers, work on layout and proofing, etc.

X. The search for a MAA sign photo has not yielded many entries to date. We continue to ask members to submit high resolution images emblematic of Maine alpaca farming, suitable for use in the MAA booth sign. Although MAA requests all rights to the chosen image, credit will be given to the photographer whenever the image is used.

XI. Ricki Waltz presented an update on NELE to the membership at the beginning of the meeting. The event was a success, with relatively good volume of traffic at the alpaca pens (located in the pulling ring with sheep breeds). The MAA booth did not attract much attention on the Path of Distinction, however, and it was suggested to move the booth to the animal area next year.

The borrowed showmanship component of the show was successful and enjoyed by all participants. More youth programming is being considered for next year, and member input and/or suggestions are welcome.

XII. The remainder of the meeting agenda was tabled due to the low attendance and inability to hold a vote on new business.