

VAOBA Board of Directors Meeting August 7, 2007

Attending:

Sue Ives (President)
Judy Howe (Director At Large)
Linda Polak (Past President)
Sherry McEvoy (Treasurer)

Keli Harold (President Elect) (via conference call)
Joanna Maas (Secretary) (via conference call)

Les Fuller (Director At Large) was not present.

Sue called the meeting to order at 7:07pm.

Meeting minutes from last term are still being written; these will need to be approved by previous board via email.

Minutes and membership lists have been submitted to AOBA. Over 90% of VAOBA members are AOBA members, which meets AOBA requirements.

Comments regarding the annual membership meeting – Dr. Merriwether was well-received. Talk to Dawn about rescheduling with him for updates on the research. The suggestion was made to bring him in as part of a seminar at VT (educational setting) to bring in students' interests (perhaps in conjunction with the neonatal clinics?)

WEBSITE: Both VAOBA and the fall show websites are live; members may access with username and password:

User: vaobamember
Pswd: VaobA2007

We now have paid second payment to web developer (\$600.)

We will print member login in newsletter. Keli said that we should keep minutes, newsletters, etc. available as members-only access – “Let’s keep member benefits as benefits.”

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: report from Dawn Dolpp:

Dawn noted several items:

1. Make sure Dr. Merriwether was paid for his return trip (this has happened.)
2. There were a lot of books left over from Dr. DeWitt’s seminar and they were more expensive than expected. Can we get credit on our final bill for these leftovers?
3. Dawn sent in final expenses on the DeWitt seminar – the seminar almost broke even (cost VAOBA \$184.43) which was great considering that VAOBA members were only charged \$75. Total invoice was \$2,226.58.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of the annual meeting, VAOBA had 96 members with two additional farms joining at the meeting. Five other members were rejoining, for a total of 103 members. Of these, there were two associate members and the rest are farm memberships.

However, AOBA shows a total of 151 members in Virginia. Farms need to talk with their neighbors about joining VAOBA – attending even one seminar makes it worthwhile.

It was suggested to talk to the Affiliate Congress about getting AOBA to direct new members to their state/regional affiliates as well.

Someone noted that in the Oct 22 2006 minutes, it was decided to give a free membership to anyone who recruits 5 new farms to VAOBA – this needs to be announced.

Dolce Vita also contacted VAOBA about giving a 1 year membership to VAOBA with the purchase of a female alpaca – this gives the new farm great access to education and networking opportunities.

MARKETING COMMITTEE:

Linda gave a report that a package had been submitted to Gov. Kaine's office for official recognition of National Alpaca Farm Day. Keli will help with the follow-up on this and suggested we call Donna Dawson (Ag Business Council) as she can help track and push this to the correct people.

Would we like an email sent to all VAOBA members to encourage participation? Yes.

Keli told the BOD about a press line – it cost \$125 to submit press releases to all VA newspapers. We could put out a release that would direct to VAOBA/Virginia farms rather than to the AOBA website, as there are so many ways to get “off the beaten path.” We want to try to keep the press and visitors directed to VA farms.

We also need to be careful when issuing press releases and make sure that we know who will be participating in NAFD. It was decided that VAOBA will promote NAFD in parallel with but not dependent on AOBA marketing. VAOBA will promote NAFD as a part of VAOBA marketing strategy (as a membership benefit.)

The Farm Bureau ad was submitted on time.

NEWSLETTER STATUS:

The first physical newsletters were mailed in February and May.

Sue Schmidtke was editor and has resigned as of the May newsletter. Ray and Teresa Tubbs (Evening Sky Alpacas) will be the new editors. We need to decide if we want to move printing/collation/mailing (currently editor responsibility) to outsourcing. Sue is

leaning toward outsourcing as the editing responsibility is considerable and the printing and mailing is a lot of work.

Keli brought up the show flier that had just been sent out (tri-fold, sticker closed, mailed bulk rate) for 30¢ each by a contractor. Sue noted that while the newsletter does accept inserts, these can be passed through to the advertiser; all other submissions can be sent electronically for printing.

Sue made a motion that we authorize outsourcing of the newsletter printing and distribution to \$300/quarter without additional BOD review; additional funding with board review. Judy seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

VAOBA FALL SHOW:

Sherry is the banquet/concessions coordinator. She contacted 5 companies; bids for the show and banquet tents ranged from \$20,000 - \$24,000. Her preference is for Commonwealth Tent – they were very responsive.

There was a condensation problem last year in the tent; Commonwealth does not have the blowers it would take to fix this so we would have to go elsewhere for this equipment.

Does VAOBA have the insurance to cover tents? If not, we must purchase a certificate of insurance from the tent company (not figured into the bid.)

Food – We will be using White House Catering again for the Friday night meal, which will be chili, coffee, hot chocolate, etc. We will need to have a final count to them by Oct 10.

The banquet will be a buffet dinner for \$21/plate.

The concession stand will be available again, and will feature breakfast biscuits and hamburgers, cheese-steaks, etc. for lunch. We should have gotten a “kickback” last year for the concession stand (typical is 10% of gross); they will give us \$200/day (\$400 for the show.)

They will give us a menu/price list; they may remove items on Sunday depending on Saturday’s sales.

Confirmed vendors for the show are Quality Llama Products, Gore Trailer, and Dynasplint. We have contacted but not confirmed Barn Threads embroidery, Southern States, Custom Milling (GA), The Alpacabean Coffee Company. New Era Fiber is already committed for that weekend. Georgia Mountain Fiber would like to donate a certificate for processing and make a \$200 donation in Glen’s memory.

Breedings have been donated from Morning Moon Alpacas, Poplar Hill Alpacas, Heronwood Alpacas and Magical Farms.

All platinum sponsorships are sold out. 8 gold sponsorships are still available. 30 class sponsorships are available. We will close sponsorships as of Sept. 1 so they can get information into the show program.

The number of pen panels we need are dependent on the configurations requested. (Hank is looking at becoming a distributor.) KY Alpaca Equipment (Larry Roach) has panels available for rental. Their equipment is similar to MSA – expensive due to shipping.

We still have a lot of chain-link panels from last year; we will sell them off as we can. Glenstone helped us last year with the outside panels.

We are still looking for security and a show electrician.

MAPACA PROPOSAL:

VAOBA has been approached by Carol (president of MAPACA) and Monica. She would like to put together a committee of affiliates with members in MAPACA. The initial approach was very confusing; possibly placing MAPACA as another “layer” between AOBA and the state affiliates.

Monica would like to have more communication between affiliates and would like to promote each others’ events. She said that MAPACA does not consider itself above VAOBA.

VAOBA doesn’t need MAPACA grant money but we would co-sponsor events; MAPACA isn’t interested in running events.

Linda is concerned about this – she doesn’t see a benefit for VAOBA. This appears to be marketing for MAPACA, MAPACA members may take VAOBA members’ seats at discount prices, and raises concerns about VAOBA autonomy.

Keli asked what are the repercussions tax-wise toward education grants/co-sponsorships? Linda said that we are not a charitable organization, but a non-profit. MAPACA would get publicity without having to do the legwork.

It was decided to ask MAPACA to provide further information in writing on what exactly they are proposing so that VAOBA can more fully explore the implications of this policy.

AFFILIATE CONGRESS

The hot-button issue at the meeting is the possible change from AOBA’s incorporation in Colorado to incorporation in Tennessee.

The presented reason to move is that currently, changing by-laws requires a 2/3 vote of all eligible voters. Changing would allow a change in by-laws by 2/3 of voting participants.

There does not appear to have been any thorough analysis between state incorporation laws of CO and TN. The Affiliate Congress has formed a task force to see what questions should be posed regarding any change in incorporation site. Sue is on this committee to compile questions.

The membership also would like “real” numbers on AOBA finances; reports are generalized and don’t read in “real dollars and cents.”

AOBA also stated that they recently made a \$200K tax payment. Three sets of accountants have worked on AOBA taxes, but the third discovered that money generated through the AOBA Farm and Ranch Guide and through the AOBA National Auction were considered income. AOBA will not be penalized as AOBA discovered the error. AOBA is creating a for-profit corporation and will be running all taxable income through this corporation.

Other discussed topics:

2009 has been declared the Year for International National Fibers. A committee is working on fiber promotions, including fiber from bamboo, soy, and animals. They will have a float in the 2009 Rose Bowl Parade, which will feature alpaca fiber.

AOBA is working on a business model for fiber production.

AOBA has checked on a group rate for farm insurance – this is not a good deal for alpaca owners.

AOBA leads were discussed; currently, AOBA will only sell names pre-printed on address labels, and buyers must agree to a one-time usage only. These are priced at 35¢ for members and 30¢ for affiliates. Leads through the FRG are 45¢ and only purchasable to FRG members.

ARI received a software update as of August 3, which allows members to update their own information. Also, ARI and AOBA Show Division software should now be able to talk with each other. Owners are requested to make updates such as color changes and microchip numbers; owners are also asked to report deceased animals.

There is concern about the rising cost of the AOBA National Show fee – control of these fees are being investigated. Maybe starting a point system for qualification? There is also concern about the length of the national show and stress on animals. There is some support for moving the educational seminars to the fall show.

(Keli left the conference at this point.)

The Executive Committee of the Affiliate Congress needs to submit a budget to the AOBA BOD by October. (The Friday night work session had no refreshments.) They would also like financial support for new and small affiliates. It was suggested that left-over grant money be used for this.

NEW BUSINESS

The F2F Conference will feature a Student Design Competition – there are at least 4 design schools in VA (that we know of.) This is a good opportunity to expose students to the alpaca world and fiber. There are opportunities to sponsor the competition for \$1000 – the affiliate would be well-promoted.

Affiliates could also sponsor student for \$100 each (entry fee); it was also be nice for the affiliate to pay for students' conference attendance and expenses.

Students don't actually need to create the design; schools would receive fiber/fabric samples (goody bag) to work up their design once contacted.

Linda agreed to take on the project and coordinate with schools. We need representatives to go to each of the design schools to introduce VAOBA and the competition. Linda moved to form a committee to investigate sponsoring the four design schools for the Student Design Competition. Sue seconded; motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET

We need to do a budget for the fiscal year – haven't really needed to in the past. The goal is to have a budget in place for the next fiscal year, which runs April 1 – March 31. The president, treasurer, and registered agent are authorized signatories on the account.

There was discussion about continuing to take PayPal for payment of dues, etc. Sue hates to pay the fees, but it is currently the only way VAOBA can take credit cards or secure payments.

OTHER

Did we give an honorarium to Andy Merriwether? Last time we gave him \$250 and a nice thank-you note. BOD agreed to table until after the show – maybe make a donation to his research.

Judy moved to adjourn the meeting; Sherry seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Maas