

Virginia Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2009

Attendees:

Ken Crews – President
Ray Tubbs – President Elect
Keli Harold – Past-President
Fred Obenchain – Treasurer
Hank Boyd – Director at Large
Les Fuller – Director at Large
Robin Watson – Secretary

Joining us to give updates:

Sue Ives – Past President
Judy Howe – Past Director at Large

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 pm.

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance: \$55,834.35
Available Balance: \$59,567.59

Fred moved to accept the minutes from the July 18th membership meeting and they were unanimously accepted.

Fred reported that he received a refund from Ablemarble County for the membership having to leave the building early during our annual meeting and for leaving it the room in a neat and orderly fashion.

Fred moved to adopt the Treasurer's report and it was unanimously agreed.

Youth Committee: Ray reported that there are 10 youth already registered for the VAOBA Expo. We are expecting 80 youth, sub-junior thru senior performance classes. Linda Hayes, the judge, will do a workshop with the youth.

Ray also reported that the youth show at VA Tech may be in May 2010. We need to work around the school's schedule. VA Tech will be a great facility – show ring, bleachers, PA system, 2 classrooms and a kitchen – at no cost to VAOBA. And they will include a link to the show on their website. Jennifer Folkman, a fleece judge, may judge the show “Blue Ribbon Alpacas” workshop with the youth if we pay for her expenses. A doctor from VA Tech will also talk with the youth.

Les suggested that maybe Kathy Songer may be available if it does not work out with Jennifer since she is located right in Blacksburg, so no expenses for us.

Ray reported that there are now 2 new 4-H clubs in Virginia and another farm has started the paperwork, which will bring our total to five (5) 4-H clubs in the State of Virginia. Fred moved to accept the report and it was unanimously agreed.

Education Committee: No report received.

Fiber Committee: No report received.

Industry Relations: Keli will head up this committee. The fiber committee needs additional volunteers. Fred says that BJ has volunteered. Need to send a request to the current membership to see if anyone wants to repond – the request is already on the website.

Marketing: No report received.

Membership: Hank received 2 new membership checks, he will deposit them and send deposit slips on to Fred to file in Treasurer's box. Fred reported receiving 14 new memberships. We now have a total of 85 members which is a 66% renewal rate. A few years ago we had 130 members. Hank called everyone that did not renew. Fred would like to consider some sort of amnesty for renewals so we don't lose members. July 31st is the cutoff to receive a \$50 discount for VAOBA Expo.

Hank requested that there be a new password for the website. Ken already had the new password and would be emailing that out. Hank suggested that we cross-reference our membership list with AOBA's membership list and AlpacaNation to see who is not a member or who has not renewed their membership yet. Les thought there may be some members from years past that we could reach out to. There was a motion to approve the membership report and it was unanimously approved.

Newsletter: Ray has the newsletter names and addresses. Fred and Hank will make sure he gets the updated list of new members. Ken suggested we include the VAOBA membership application in the newsletter which is scheduled to go out this month. Ray will make sure past members that have not renewed receive a newsletter.

Sue Ives joined the meeting at 8:20

Regarding the ad for the Alpaca Fiber Symposium, Fred asked what was the timeline for the money to be received for the ad – concerned about our financial position. The Fiber Symposium is still in the planning stages – will be held a week after VAOBA Expo. Ken asked the Board what they would like to do. Fred moved to donate \$500 to the Alpaca Fiber Symposium and the motion was unanimously accepted.

VAOBA Expo: Regarding registration for the show, it has been a slow start, much quicker last year but there were more entries today. Superintendants will be allowed access to the reports. AOBA wanted access. Updating of the computer system will be done at night, the server is in CA. It has been a learning experience. The ability to share stalls with others/be near other farms

will be added tonight, so only a few growing pains. Les commented that the spin-off entries started off slow as well but that there are now over 200 entries – only 20 off from last year. Fred reported that there are only 3 corporate sponsors and we need 15. Jay from Light Livestock Equipment is going to be a corporate sponsor and a vendor (will receive a reimbursement for doing both). Unfortunately, Cas-Cad-Nac is doing a pen sale that weekend.

Judy Howe joined the meeting at 8:29

VAOBA Expo Sponsorships: Fred suggested that we think of an alternative strategy for sponsorships. Judy was excited to report some new ideas for corporate sponsors. She suggested going out to the bigger corporations that have bigger advertising budgets (i.e.; Lowe's, Home Depot, State Farm, hotels, Ford, trailer companies, magazines, feed companies like Mazuri, Southern States, etc.). They would not need to have a representative present – just have a newsletter, banner, hand-out material available, website info. Our demographic is most desirable to these companies and alpaca farmers have the means.

Ray and Hank said they would be willing to help contact these businesses – do we have a sample contract. Les said that with the current economy that the smaller farmer is unable to be a sponsor and afford to come to the show. Sue reported that the Palmetto sponsorships were also down and that they may break even. It was discussed that the CA show is not hurting for sponsorships – maybe we should change the price from \$2000 to \$1800. The MD show is \$1500 but they do not include any stalls. Ben Rogers from Heronwood was approached but said it was too much money and he did not have time to help with getting sponsorships. Hank noted that farms can come together for Platinum Sponsorship. Ray said he will include something in the newsletter. Sue said we have no suri entries but 1 sponsor that is a suri farm. Judy said that some people have expressed that they do not like the judges – particularly ones judging the greys.

VAOBA Expo Seminars: The following seminars are on schedule:

Hobby Horse Farm – “EPD's & ARI”, Saturday and Sunday. Alpacas of Sunset Fields - “Alpaca Care for Beginners”, Ray Tubbs will do a 4-H seminar. Sunday, a showmanship class will be held for all ages and given by the performance judge. Friday evening Les and Patti Fuller will give a “Showing for the First Time Exhibitor” seminar. Saturday and Sunday, Morgan Flynn from DynaSplint will tell us about “Limb Deformities & Nutrition”. Candace Lingo – “Herd Health Using Natural Therapy”, Karl Persons – “Farm Security”. Fred thought we need a fiber seminar, perhaps Pam Whiting. Les will have Patti ask Kathy Songer if she would be available to help.

Judy reported that the menu was getting finalized. Fred stated that the corporate sponsors receive a free dinner so it needed to be a good meal. Mandatory meeting on Friday night.

Judy is waiting for one more bid on the panels and sod. Jim Patrick, a motivational speaker, is the person that gave Judy the idea of reaching out to alternative corporate sponsors. He teaches people how to market to people that are within a 50 mile radius. Perhaps we could have him be a speaker at an educational seminar outside of the show, maybe in Bolling Green, VA – free room and cater lunch thru a local restaurant.

Sue & Judy left the meeting.

VSU Field Day and NAFD: Ken reported that we need participation from VAOBA. Les said that Patti would go and do flyers – do we have any. VAOBA will be co-sponsoring Alpaca Parasitology but unclear what they want, a table, leave materials there? Hank thought a flyer with the VAOBA show and National Alpaca Farm Day would be good. Les suggested also putting a link to the VAOBA website and that we need a “VAOBA Trail” for NAFD – there is a lack of information out there. Larry Dudding may work with Patti on this. Les commented that AOBA’s presence is slipping and that possibly due to a decreased budget, they may want the affiliates to pick up the slack.

Hank wondered if the NAFD proclamation for the State of Virginia needed to be approved each year – Ken will ask Keli about that.

Student Design: Hank said that Linda will help with the student design. Fred said that BJ talked to a national person last year but that person did not follow thru with any information so nothing happened, Hank asked how we can get a presence there again. Possibly the fiber committee can pick this up – some schools have expressed interest – VA Tech, VCU, Washington. There was some discussion about a banquet “Best Use of Alpaca Fiber in Apparel”. The banquet speaker could be the judge. Fred will ask Judy and Sue and if so will post it on the website.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Watson
Secretary 2009-2010