

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Virginia Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association
(VAOBA)
June 26, 2010

The Annual Meeting of Membership of the Virginia Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association was held on June 26, 2010, in the conference area of the Doubletree Richmond Hotel, Richmond, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER

Sue Ives, President Elect, called the meeting to order at 5:23 p.m., and presided. Linda Polak, acting secretary for the meeting, recorded the minutes.

ATTENDEES

Attendees: Judy Howe – Wildwood Alpacas; John and Cindy Ferrante – Otter Peaks Alpacas; Fred Obenchain and B.J. Ellis – Hollycroft Farm; Pat Rice and Pat Hamilton – Virginia Breeze Alpacas; Henry Boyd and Linda Polak – All About Alpacas; Lisa Darley – Maranatha Alpaca Farm; Lynn Snively – RoLynn Hills Farm.

Officers and directors present: Sue Ives, President Elect; Fred Obenchain, Treasurer; Henry Boyd, Director-at-large.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The first item of business to come before the meeting was formal approval of the Minutes from the prior Annual Meeting held July 18, 2009. Sue Ives called for review and discussion, and upon motion duly made and seconded, a vote was taken and the Minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

PRESENTATION OF TREASURER'S REPORT

Fred Obenchain, Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report, including projections for the balance of 2010 with the Fall Expo factored in. The current balance on hand is approximately \$35,000, fluctuating with memberships and renewals posting daily. Discussion ensued regarding association finances. The Treasurer noted that certain reserves are prudent and necessary; as is evident from the Report, year end 2009 showed a small operational loss and, particularly with economic conditions as they are, we should be prepared for 2010.

Members discussed some cost cutting measures, such as seeking volunteers local to specific events to save on hotel and/or meal expenses (for instance, agribusines or educational events at which VAOBA should have a presence).

Suggestions were made as to the format of the Report itself, in that, for clarity in understanding the Report, it might be helpful to have a separate detailed accounting sheet for each event, with the Report itself compiling the totals.

The Treasurer confirmed that VAOBA now accepts credit card payments, easily accomplished online, for all dues and fees, including Expo fees. If debit card acceptance is not included, he will take necessary steps to accept those as well. This should effect an increase in attendance at VAOBA events.

Discussion and suggestions having concluded, upon motion duly made and seconded, the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fiber Committee –

Chairperson B.J. Ellis presented the Fiber Committee Report and update of committee activities: (1) in October, a Fashion Show was added to the Expo – and was such a hit it will now be an ongoing part of the festivities; (2) a "Fiber Corner" is now a regular section in the quarterly VAOBA newsletter detailing committee activities and interesting/noteworthy fiber information; (3) working constantly between November and May, the committee worked to research and draft an Amendment to the Virginia's Finest Standards for Alpaca Fiber and Goods, and to formulate a series of workshops to improve farmer grading and sorting techniques. This package was sent to all Virginia alpaca farms for review and comment. In June, the committee met to study all responses; and the package was sent to VDACS. The VDACS committee meets late in the summer to review. VDACS response will be circulated to all Virginia alpaca farmers.

A series of hand grading and sorting workshops is a top priority for the committee, and Wini Labrecque has been contacted to finalize presenting a hands-on, day long instructional seminar in Virginia in late fall. Notice of this will be distributed to all alpaca farms as well.

It will soon be time to be contacting the Virginia colleges regarding the student design competition. Linda Polak will coordinate with Ruth Fuqua regarding information and packages for schools and will coordinate volunteers for school contacts; also, Virginia farmers can add fiber and samples to the AOBA packages for students.

Industry Relations –

Chairperson John Ferrante presented the Government & Industry Relations Committee Report. He is attending Virginia Agribusiness Council events on behalf of VAOBA and feels there is not enough information about alpacas within the agricultural community. In that regard, he has prepared a draft informational brochure which he presented to members for review – a very nice tri-fold which could have many purposes: to send to legislators, Agribusiness Council members, etc. Sue Ives will present to the board for review.

There is a public comment period coming up regarding the testing requirements for camelids entering the state. John and Sue Ives will keep a watch for the timing, and the membership will receive an e mail blast asking for their participation in responding to remove the requirement for Brucellosis, Bluetongue and TB.

John noted that he is a member of the AOBA affiliate committee, and that there is grant money available for seminars and events. In the past, VAOBA had secured grants for every event until AOBA requested – unless the affiliate needed the money to hold the event – that the affiliate not seek the grant. Knowing that there is once again money available, VAOBA will again apply for all available grants for its events.

Membership Committee –

Chairperson Hank Boyd presented the Membership Committee Report noting that credit and debit card acceptance will be very helpful for new and renewing members. An article detailing the benefits of membership was included in the last quarterly newsletter to remind members to renew, and membership was encouraged – with a website link - in the package that was distributed by the fiber committee to all Virginia alpaca farmers.

Improvements for members on the website include the addition of the “Farm Locator” link. This is a valuable member benefit in that the site can be searched by farm name, individual name, county, etc. Also the site can now publish member farm logos and up to 200 word details of member farms and products.

AOBA currently requires that 100% of affiliate farm members be AOBA members in order for the affiliate to be “in compliance” (have access to affiliate benefits, such as grant funds). VAOBA is grandfathered in at the 90% required when it formed. In the fall, once the majority of renewals have occurred, the membership rolls will be reviewed to determine VAOBA’s compliance.

Hank reported that he attends county, state events and shows promoting membership in VAOBA at all events, and is a farm member of the Virginia Agribusiness Council, so attends as many of those functions as possible promoting the industry and VAOBA.

VAOBA EXPO UPDATE

Judy Howe, event coordinator for the Expo, presented the Expo update noting that sponsorships are going well. The rebate this year will be \$25 per stall – up to 2 stalls - for VAOBA members. Debbie McLeish is the volunteer coordinator. Instead of a Saturday dinner, a new, herdsire breeding auction has been added; Joe Kyger and Tonya Urban are the coordinators for this event.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion duly made and seconded, a vote was called and the meeting was, unanimously, adjourned.

Linda Polak, Acting Secretary