

**American Racing Pigeon Union, Inc.**  
**Mid-Year Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Ontario, CA – July 23, 2016**

President Coletti called the meeting to order 8:05 a.m.

Attending: Tom Coletti, Karen Clifton, Jay Holder, Kamal Hindi, Freddie Rivera, John Hundrup, Toni Wiaderski, Joyce Stierlin, Shannon Demler, Alan Porter, Deone Roberts.

Delayed by flight issues and joining the meeting later: John McSweeney, Ron Pairan.

Guests present: Kamal Hindi Jr, Fred Frobose, Ronald Whitmer, Steve Whitmer.

After the flag salute and moment of silence, time was allotted for non-board member comments. President Coletti asked that all board members identify themselves for the visitors' benefit.

**Public/Non-Board Member Comments**

Fred Frobose is flying the AU race. He requested phone numbers from Kamal. He has race birds: the feeding, medication and vaccination is working well.

Steve Whitmer expressed dissatisfaction with past club races, as long ago as ten years. He reached out to Kamal Hindi as Zone Director and did not care for the response. He was asked to leave the convention committee meeting and was removed as a handler. He was displeased regarding removal and regarding an issue with the convention website.

Ron Whitmer shared that he asked who was running the convention committee and he was thrown out of the meeting.

Steve Whitmer said that he asked the same question and was thrown out.

Fred Frobose shared that he had never heard of people having many problems with the club/combine. He met all these gentlemen when the committee was formed. Though preferring not to align with any of the parties involved, he stated that the complaints offered should have been

offered years ago and that his interpretation of events is very different from Ron & Steve Whitmer's interpretations.

President Coletti responded stating that he had a better understanding of the situation after the comments.

He shared that the AU has only one way of policing and responding to these issues. That is the infraction process. Regardless of how long ago, the infraction is the only way to get this board to respond. A complaint goes to the infraction chair and it is put to an independent investigator and then presented to the board. Some of the same issues mentioned bothered Tom and that was when he was rules chairman. These issues should have been brought up long ago when it happened.

Second, the AU does not run the convention. We help. Perhaps we need to review involvement of a board member in the convention hosting?

Third, with regard to Steve Whitmer's question about the attorney letter, Tom authorized the letter because the AU was threatened with a lawsuit by the Whitmers. If we are threatened, we notify our attorney. The website issue has already been addressed by the committee and therefore did not understand why it would continue to be an issue.

Tom Coletti shared he can't fix what happened in the past. He stated that they should follow the rules and file an infraction. The AU may need to review how we handle conventions.

Steve Whitmer said the board may have misunderstood their intentions. He is glad he is not part of the convention. He thinks it will be full of shenanigans. He is asking for rules to be put in place so that a zone is not stuck with a personality that is opposed to member wishes. His wife and son have disowned the sport and participants. He asked that a pattern of conduct for AU reps be established.

Ron Whitmer asked that we establish rules so that sitting Zone Director can be removed via petition.

Karen Clifton advised that we already have that in the bylaws. Ron Whitmer requested a copy. Tom instructed him to get with Bylaws Chair, Shannon Demler.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the annual board meetings in October 2015 as posted on the AU website. Rivera/Holder. Approved.

### **Presidents Report (Coletti)**

Tom said board members or members can't understand communications with the home office until they deal with office staff. Staff handles a greater work load than most would think. He complimented the staff and said members can have confidence with how the office operates.

He was concerned about staying ahead of avian flu. Karen and Lee worked with vets and calmed people down. We were told we would have another bad year. Turns out they miscalculated and now we're in better shape this year. No one has been shut down. We won't have to deal with avian flu this year but it's not going away. Companies are working on vaccines for poultry, but not for pigeons. If they're not coming up with vaccines for pigeons, they may realize pigeons are not a threat. That's a good position for the sport to be in.

We had a blip on the radar, on the west coast: a truck was stopped. Hundrup's driver was going through Nevada and was pulled over by an unmarked car brand inspector. The driver did not have the required health permits but was let off with a warning. The Oregon state vet is a pigeon flyer so he is less strict. But we need health permits for Nevada transport.

The loft certification needs to be revived. They are great but they will lose credibility when it is false information on the form. We depend on the loft certification to help defend the hobby and the pigeons.

Tom spoke of recent issues with the Whitmers and Kamal and suggested maybe board members should not chair a convention committee. We have little authority with these conventions.

Holder felt we need to have an attorney take a look at where we stand with board members chairing committees. As we lend the AU's name to event and race, where is our liability in that?

The issue is that we have no authority so how do we monitor what they are doing?

Rivera said two years ago, no one was taking the convention so we advertised we will handle convention if the group handles the race.

Tom said that doesn't change anything because the California issue is about the race, not the convention activities.

Tom also believes there should be mention of the requirement in our agreement to offer a 1 bird entry option. This allows individuals that don't want to invest heavily to still participate in the convention race.

In reference to future convention locations, Tom suggested Oregon and Nampa, Idaho.

### **Executive Vice President Update (Holder)**

Mid-Florida Combine handled the Dixie Convention December 15-17 at the Hilton. Several board members attended. They had a successful race. Auction went very well and brought an average of \$900/each good pigeon. They made about \$2000 apiece. The combine got that amount as well. They are doing it again this year. They would like to make it the Southeast Zone mini convention and will probably solicit birds from the board.

Tom instructed Jay to work something out and present to board. Jay said it will need to be by phone or here at mid-year to make this year's event.

Elizabeth was no longer doing anything with eWinspeed. He let her go. We have used Comnez lightly. He found Alan Walters, who uses dot.net. He has taken what Comnez and Elizabeth have done and put it on our own test site. Preliminary testing will be by Jay and Alan. They will present to the committee to test.

Alan feels he needs to attend our conventions so he gets a feel for the pigeon culture. Don't know where we want to go on covering his expenses. He could attend locally in Florida so he gains understanding of software purpose.

Tom doesn't have an issue with paying expenses, but he is not willing to pay his hourly wage on top of travel expenses. It would be helpful for Alan to be able to have face to face conversations with questions and answers. The AU would cover all travel-related expenses when it is time for him to present the product itself to membership at convention.

### **President Ex-Officio Update (Rivera)**

Freddie said he has been doing PR work with Hispanics in Florida and retrieving stray pigeons. He attended Texas Center representing AU.

Freddie mentioned that Dennis Aycock from Arizona presented race information for the 2017 convention. When he spoke about the California convention, no one asked about cost. People just wanted to know when it would be.

Coletti explained issues that arose within the Texas Center that Past President, Brad LaVerne, dealt with many years ago. The ex officio is the perfect representative to attend the Texas Center Convention to meet the members and communicate as a representative of the AU board.

### **Race Release Times (Coletti)**

Tom received a letter from John Ferraro, in Florida, regarding race release times. Tom distributed John's letter to the board in hopes of having a discussion on the merits of the half hour rule.

Enforcement is via our rules. The question is are we correct with ½ hour? What is the impact? Is this something we should discuss before a BAR is reviewed tomorrow?

We received an email stating we made an exception in Arizona, however, we did not adjust the release times, but rather combined young bird and old bird seasons because of the heat.

Lengthy discussion ensued.

When John spoke with the club last year and reviewed results in the NDB, he advised them to stop releasing less than 30 minutes apart and they complied.

Jay said that in Florida, the issue is the end of the race when temperatures rise when the races exceed 200 miles. Given the same conditions, it won't matter if birds are released 15 minutes apart, the same issue still exists. WinSpeed© does not allow 15 minutes.

Rivera asked how would this skew or impact the awards?

Tom said it needs to be uniform for all.

Frobose interjected he'd like to discourage lowering release time. When you have hundreds and hundreds of trainers, which can affect a race, as a sportsman, we should consider an hour release time minimum.

Hundrup said that basically everything has been covered. He still gets calls about the birds mixing.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Right to Race (Clifton/Kohli)**

Last year we were told by Dr. Styles that we should anticipate a bad fall and spring; however, we dodged both. Though there were some AI outbreaks, they were few and not the highly pathogenic strain that caused trouble last year.

There was one quarantine area in Dubois County with ten sites testing positive, but it was limited to poultry and did not affect us. It was quickly cleared with no further spread.

In October, the board approved Lee and Karen working together to hire a professional who could act as an advocate for us. Lee coordinated with Dr. Marsh, a well-known avian veterinarian.

The Michigan state vet, Dr. Averill, agreed to allow flying as long as we made an effort to get lofts certified. Lee paved the way for that and formed a good relationship with Dr. Averill.

We did fulfill our commitment to the Michigan state vet and it is believed that active flyers have their lofts certified. We explained to Dr. Averill that our membership is somewhat fluid in that new members come in and old members take a break and that the majority of the rosters come in by 3/31 each year; however, there are stragglers. He thanked us by email for our efforts and we think is satisfied, which is important if we want him in our corner next time around.

The Minnesota state vet acted similarly and wanted lofts certified so many of those members have submitted certifications.

Wisconsin decided to follow since a lot of them ship with Minnesota and so many Wisconsin members have certified their lofts.

Along the lines of ordinance issues and protecting the right to fly, Lee and Karen both worked with Michael Morris in Michigan.

Over the last three years, the AU has supplied Mike with literature for his city/county officials and most recently state officials. He has won at

numerous stages; however, his local officials punted to the state and the state representatives are now asking that the decision to allow having a loft be taken from the city health inspectors and given to the city officials.

The concern is that the city officials may get worn down by one neighbor submitting as many as 200+ letters to disallow if they are upset with a neighbor that happens to be a pigeon flyer.

Lee, Mike, Arnold Ludwig & Karen attended a meeting with the two authors of the proposed legislation.

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization. There are several projects and partnerships embraced by the United Nations that bring together many countries.

One of their many programs is the recognition of falconry. Many countries came together and submitted enough information (videos, documents) that illustrated that the relationship between man and falcons and the longevity of the connection proves that they should be listed on intangible cultural heritage of humanity list.

The countries were able to illustrate that falconry is a social tradition that works with nature and the environment and has been passed from generation to generation providing diverse international communities of falconers a sense of belonging, continuity and identity.

UNESCO singled out this effort as an excellent example of countries coming together.

This information was sent to us by a member, Ray Arquette. Karen and Lee discussed and both believe this would lend a great deal of credibility and support for the sport and our members.

We have a good network of federation leaders in different countries through the Federation Colombophile International (FCI). It will take some time, but possibly we can gather enough historical data with our information, that of the museum and other countries. We hope we can get other countries' pigeon federations to work with us so that similar recognition may be given pigeons. It will be a long term project, but should be worthwhile.

Tom polled the board for those in favor of Karen carrying that out. All approved.

### **Historian (position not filled)**

Tom prefers to not fill the position at this time, however, may in the future.

### **Judge's Panel (Rivera)**

We stayed the same with two inquiries. The first annual AU convention show is this year. Rivera and Hindi will work on details. Judges are Tom Coletti, Jay Holder, Tom Fremont, Freddie Rivera.

### **Constitution & By-Laws (Demler)**

Shannon said the first half of the year has been calm so far. There are a couple hot spots, such as in Florida regarding which direction to fly. All went well with Shannon's suggestions. After all the time and effort devoted to the issue, the club joined another combine.

Then there is the race secretary that doesn't generate combine results, but will do club results. That is under Hundrup's jurisdiction.

Most everything has mellowed.

### **Competition Standards (Hundrup)**

A handout was provided with rule 4.02 written out. Hundrup listed issues that he dealt with since the last board meeting, which include shipping limits, release of non-race birds with race birds, flying multiple teams and multi club races, official race results called in or emailed, race schedule changes and requirements, minimum requirements to assemble and ship, partnership requirements, WinSpeed© update requirements, using google earth as opposed to actual gps reading, mixed A and B race birds, releases less than 30 minutes after the truck arrived at site, flying multiple teams from the same loft, desire for mandatory race secretary upload to NDB, double AU banded bird race requirements, NDB not accepting results of clubs under 5 members, clock security tag coming loose, club mileage requirements for short, middle and long distance races/75 mile rule, member flying birds from a one-loft race in a local race.

### **Veterans Committee (Hassler-not attending)**

Al agreed with Tom that the office should take the lead with the Veterans Committee. Tom contacted past Zone Director, Bill Desmarais, and he agreed to get articles about veterans activity to be published. Shannon said Ensign Magazine had great veterans information and suggested we could get permission to republish their articles.

Ron Pairan and John McSweeney joined the meeting.

### **Vice President Report (Pairan)**

Ron said he had fielded questions about the paratyphoid vaccine progress.

Tom said that the USDA regulations are prohibitive. Manufacturers are frustrated by our regulations, so it sits right now. No PMV at this point.

### **Treasurer Report (McSweeney)**

He explained the process of financials from the AU office through the CPA and shared a report from Dillon & Associates, certified public accounts. The conclusion was that no modifications are needed to the financial statements for GAAP guidelines.

Martin (the AU CPA) is interested only in bookkeeping and accounting presentation of data. The cover letter summarizes what he did. It does not certify, but disclaims they are not aware of material modifications, which is standard language.

Dillon reviews from an income tax standpoint.

Review of statements:

Member comments about legal defense fund – is that for someone to help them when community tries to shut them down?

Cash – We have no bank reconciliation from Martin, where we did receive them from Jackie. However, we have the bank statements.

Receivables – The time frame we're in, the statements are dated December 31<sup>st</sup>. He does not believe the receivables are all valid as some vendors wait to pay at the last possible moment so we carry receivables through the year.

What the AU office was submitting to CPA did not reflect credits. Deferred revenue was established where it was not before.

Restricted cash – We increased the price of bands for revenue and support of member programs. It was decided to keep \$20,000 in operating account and put aside 80% of balance of \$64,000 which was put aside. Nothing happens to this account except adding of interest. Barnes recommended a \$10,000/year building fund and that money has never been touched.

Computer work expense is amortized. It shouldn't be during development, but once set up, amortize.

### **National Youth/School Coordinator (Pairan)**

Ronnie Shumaker was able to get his race going again.

Homeschool convention – Mike Glaab recommended that Devere Burt and his wife assist and they did. He did a speaking presentation and we have submitted paperwork to do it again in 2017.

Tim Tessier is still working with his youth group. He reminded us of the loaner loft program. A Young Bird auction is held year each year to support that.

### **Drug Test Policy Review (Rivera, Coletti)**

John Vance submitted a doping policy proposal

AU Doping Policy:

1. The AU exercises its authority over every race flown by AU chartered organizations, according to AU rules and which are submitted to the AU database for national awards, or for which an AU Diploma or other AU awards are issued by the chartered organization.
2. Should an AU club choose to Drug Test birds entered in any race over which the AU has authority, that organization must submit a full and complete copy of all drug testing results to the AU National Office.
3. Under no circumstance may any AU chartered organization, sanction any AU member, based on the results of a drug test, until the AU has reviewed those results, and the proposed sanctions, and authorizes the organization to enforce those sanctions.
4. All drug testing by AU chartered organizations, on races over which the AU exercises no authority are not covered by this policy. However, should sanctions by that AU organization, as a result of a drug test, effect any AU member's right to participate in future AU races, then that would bring those sanctions under AU review and the organization must follow #2 & #3 above.

Rationale:

In order to maintain the integrity of any AU National Awards, Diplomas, or other awards and recognitions issued by the AU, it is imperative that drug test results be treated uniformly across all AU organizations. The AU

awards system loses integrity, if identical drug test results are treated differently by different AU organizations.

The AU desires to maintain a database of all drug testing done by any AU Chartered organization, so that we can better understand which substances are appearing in these drug tests and at what levels. Therefore, if an AU chartered organization chooses to conduct drug testing, on its members, it must submit all test results to the AU national office, regardless of whether it is a sanctioned AU race or not.

We've always had a policy. Then people from other countries coming into US started winning excessively and were accused of drug use. The AU was approached to do something. The AU created the drug testing policy. We requested testing results be put in a database to see the status of drugs being used. Even caffeine and beet juice have been questioned. Now certain AU organizations want to ban that because it is, in their minds, harmful to the birds.

Fred Werner did some of the first testing and found some substances. Fred had the wherewithal to investigate to see if those substances enhanced the pigeons' performance. He found in this particular test that it did not. This could have created a bad reputation for the user of the supplement. We are receiving phone calls from Florida veterinarians asking if particular substances are banned. In Florida, members are sending birds to vets to see if they can detect what is being used.

We have not received results from the organizations that are testing birds that we have requested. If we're going to support these AU organizations, they have to report their results. They should not take action on the flyer until they at least come to the AU, as John Vance suggested. Tom read Vance's drug policy for that was submitted for review as a BAR.

Shannon advised that this is a slippery slope in light of chain of command of possession and analysis to AU review.

Tom said there has to be a way to protect individuals from false accusation. Changing rule 400 to say you "shall" share your results with the AU. The GHC developed the list of substances and that's where the support stops. They did not share the results of their testing for the AU's database. It is a no-win proposition. Do we leave the language as is or make the change to "shall?"

Stierlin suggested no changes while we are unsure of the source of information.

Tom polled the board to see if they wanted to keep it the way it is.?

For modification – 4

Against modification - 5

It stays the way it is.

Drug policy 400 stays as a “should” in regard to drug testing.

Tom will advise John Vance.

## **National Office & Director Updates**

### **National Office (Clifton)**

During the first half of the year band orders and memberships came in. It looks like more bands were sold for 2017. The majority of the rosters are in and individual memberships continue to come in. Likewise, there are some members that only fly young birds and tend to renew in the late summer/early fall so we are hoping to maintain our momentum with membership growth. Four zones had slight growth.

Also, during the first half of the year, the review of club, combine and concourse by-laws was complete. Alan Porter, Jim Greelis and Don Riedel helped with this as well. We have reviewed by-laws for 585 clubs, 83 combines and 9 concourses.

We have found that of the 585 clubs, 60 are not active. Of the 525 active clubs, 66 are not in compliance with the 2/3 majority issue in their by-laws and 459 clubs' by-laws are compliant.

Letters and email have been sent and we are now in the process of following up on those. Initially there were more that were not compliant, but many have responded and submitted revised by-laws.

Of the 83 combine by-laws reviewed, 11 are not in compliance and 72 are compliant. Of the 9 concourses, 2 are not compliant.

Karen shared that shortly after returning from our annual board meetings, we received a call from a club member who had been contacted by the Department of Interior notifying they would possibly prosecute because birds were released from a national park and they claim that was introducing wildlife in the eco system, which is illegal.

Our lobbyist did a lot of research for the member and forwarded it to him so he could pass on to his attorney. This serves as a reminder that it is best to check laws before releasing from a national forest or reservation.

This year for the AU Youth Race, we have 99 birds entered. The Midwest Convention will also include a youth race and Karen will report following the convention this year. Just as with the AU Youth Race, the AU will provide certificates and plaques for the kids participating for the Midwest Youth Race.

We received 15 scholarship applications for the AU Youth Scholarship Program. All were very qualified and impressive. Unfortunately 4 did not submit complete applications including proof of GPA so they were disqualified.

It was difficult to select from the remaining 11 as they all stood out. The three that were selected are Mariah Moore, Paige Steigerwalt and Anne Vogrinc.

They will be notified. Those that did not win, will also be encouraged to submit again next year. All will be recognized in the yearbook and at the awards banquet during the convention in December.

They were weighted to an extent – 40% academic accomplishment/goals, 40% financial need, and 20% based on giving back to the community and leadership.

During our annual meetings last year, we were asked to vet our current Speakers' Bureau panel to determine who is interested in remaining or stepping down so that we could entertain new speakers. It was decided to do that prior to bringing on new speakers as the program is so underutilized. We have heard from only 6; list has shrunk by 50%.

Karen asked the Board if a committee should be formed to revise the application, request a video with application, etc?

Kamal asked if we should we advertise to get more speakers.

Tom said we will accept the list as is. If Hindi would like to work on revising the program, he can report at convention potentially. Karen was asked to forward the application and policy to Kamal.

While working with the CPA that does our annual review, he noted no abnormalities or deficiencies. He did suggest moving some accounts to another bank so to protect assets under the FDIC. The board suggested John and Karen check into this and report in December.

Election results were presented. The only director position that was contested was the Northeast Zone. Very few votes were received from members in the Northeast Zone. Bob McKenna will be sworn in and seated during new business in December.

Tom thanked Toni for his service on the board and encouraged him to remain open to serving again. Toni has been an asset to the board and to the organization.

Karen described a promotion project in progress with the Ute Firetower Lookout. We received a call about a year ago from the Ute Firetower Lookout in Vernal, Utah. It is the oldest tower lookout and is still in use. They want a living history display to include live pigeons. We put them in touch with the Vernal club, however, they apparently didn't understand the potential and provided birds but nothing further.

In the meantime, we sent samples of all of our literature so they could tell us what best fits for their use. They want birds and a loft on property and then to be able to offer literature if people want to know more about pigeons. They have a history board as well.

The Fire Management Officer called a few weeks ago and indicated they are still working at it. They received little help other than receiving birds so were anxious to be put in touch with members that could share knowledge. We sent them more brochures and have since sent a supply of those they felt were most appropriate.

We also put them in touch with the club in Grand Junction because one of their fire fighters lives there and didn't mind the commute. So we put him in touch with Crazy Al and he gave some amazing birds to the group. He gave them a lot of information and advice. Several of the firefighters and their kids want to join the club.

They will take birds with them when they do presentations to school kids throughout the year about fire safety.

Karen provided an update on the 2017 convention to be held in Phoenix. Dennis Aycock in Phoenix has experience with the Texas Center conventions and agreed to host the race. The dates will be November 16, 17 & 18. The host hotel will be the Four Points by Sheraton in Phoenix. Registration and shipping will occur on Thursday, November 16. We will provide a pizza dinner that evening and we are coordinating a meal for Friday night and for Saturday for the awards banquet. The office is also coordinating guest activities and tours, entertainment and seminars.

Tom spoke with Ed Minvielle regarding the possibility of getting Colin Walker as speaker for the 2017 convention.

Shannon asked if we are handling the convention part, who gets the money?

Karen explained registration will come to AU and be applied to meals and activities. Race entry goes to Dennis' group running the race. Holding an auction to help offset expenses was discussed. Any other funds would be used to help seed scholarship fund. Tom asked Demler and Pairan to serve on a committee and report on how we're going to coordinate the auction. They will report to the board in December during annual board meetings.

Freddie said it should be advertised as an all American auction with U.S. birds only.

Kamal suggested the auction benefit City of Hope.

Tom wants all profits going to the AU Youth Scholarship as the only recipient.

Jay said we should use the AU database to our advantage and select performance based pigeons from donors as the spotlight in our AU auction.

Alan Porter was in favor of all American birds being auctioned and advertising that all money generated will be donated to the AU Youth Scholarship Fund.

We are tentatively looking at a tour of Coretta Candy Factory and a day of shopping/lunch in old town in Glendale for either Friday or Saturday and will work on the second day of tours. Nothing is confirmed as yet. We will report in December. The price for registration has not been set yet.

Dennis has 49 handlers lined up. The handler list and convention registration information will be in the yearbook and in subsequent publications going forward.

Two convention proposals for 2018 have been received. One is submitted by the Greater Chicago Combine. They have experience with the Midwest and previous AU conventions.

The second application is submitted by the Corn Country Combine (Rock River Valley, Moline East Moline and Galesburg). They have 45 lofts with 3 sections. Handlers are in S.E. Iowa and N.W. Illinois. The largest city in the area is Davenport, IA.

Both were advised that we would hope the one not selected would be agreeable to taking 2019.

The board agreed to travel on December 4, meet on the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> and a partial day on the 7<sup>th</sup> if needed; the convention begins on Wednesday, December 7. Return travel December 11.

### **Sport Development (Roberts)**

Roberts shared various activities members have done to promote. Those items will appear in the Summer Update newsletter. The items that will not appear:

Alabama – William Randolph sought information for his 10 year old son, Jesse, to join the AU. Jesse was so excited to become a member of a racing organization that, though he joined in May, he was able to have a bird placed in the AU Youth Race. Thanks to Kamal for making that happen. Jesse was “stoked” to already be involved in the race. He will be learning more through materials sent to him and through area members. Jesse is also a Cub Scout.

Louisiana – a gentleman contacted John McSweeney regarding getting information into the World War II Museum in New Orleans. We contacted the museum. They do in fact have a display that includes a small pigeon trailer. They are aware that we have helpful handouts, should they want to have a time that they would want to highlight the pigeons. They also do oral histories and though Ed Schmidt (Illinois) had to miss a previous session because of illness, they will consider visiting with him again to record his history.

Missouri – Robert Car contacted us for information for kids. He is not an AU member, but he wanted to be able to share information with the kids so we supplied a video copy and handouts.

New York – Luis Gutierrez was an AU member in California a few years ago. Life challenges interrupted him: his wife battled cancer and he lost his brother. He is in New York now and was approached by a town hall employee to share homing pigeon information at an upcoming family day. We supplied him with materials to share.

Oregon – Gary Braden typically coordinates the Zone Meeting at the Mt. St. Helens Combine Meeting each year. We supplied him with materials that would be pertinent to this year's discussions on Loft Certification and Drug Testing.

Deone created the 2017 Convention Website has been started and will be published once the 2016 convention is completed.

### **Member Retention (Kohli, Hindi, Roberts)**

Roberts reported that nearly 100 average/month new members still join the AU, but others do not remain, making totals remain nearly the same. If it is a matter that can be addressed by retention measures, Clifton and Roberts discussed retention ideas and shared an itemized list of things to try, to improve retention numbers.

### **Zone Director Reports (NW/Pacific/SW/Plains/Lakes/SE/Mountain/NE)** **NW Zone Report (Hundrup)**

John shared more information about his club's expo event. They had a good turnout, no new members yet, but a lot of interest in the hobby. He urged members to do an expo with the help of the AU office and/or Zone Director.

The two Western Open race were flown again. The race is becoming more popular each year and he has already heard from more organizations that would like to participate. The Winnemucca race and race from Yerington were also successful.

Hundrup attended the annual picnic/NW zone meeting and auction in Oregon, sponsored by Mount Saint Helens Combine. John and Tom met with AU members to discuss the latest AU information and answer questions.

John also reminded everyone that AU staff is there to assist with promotion & materials, questions/concerns etc.

### **Southwest (McSweeney)**

McSweeney attended the Texas center convention. It went really well. Dennis Aycock promoted the 2017 convention there.

John has remained in contact with the national office regarding financial issues (see report above).

McSweeney has also been actively involved in several promotional opportunities in his area. Many of John's efforts have been featured in local publications and state-wide magazines.

### **Plains (Porter)**

After last year's annual meeting, one of the first issues in his zone was from Norman Benoit in Kansas regarding drug testing information in the U.S. He wanted information on what the AU and others were doing. Alan gave Norman references and contacts out East on their program, what the GHC and Bill Mitiu in FL were doing, Karen/AU and the name of the lab in CO doing most of the testing. Alan recommended that Norm write up a procedure they want to follow, vote on it at the combine meeting and have it written up and possibly signed by their flyers.

Alan attended and handed out a new AU charter to the new Royal RPC in Minnesota.

Porter attended several spring young bird auctions in WI this year. Alan donated birds for their auctions and answered any questions they might have. At this time, the most important topic was fear of another bird virus outbreak. The lofts in WI, MN and MI and a few in IL and IA, were planning to get their lofts AU certified. After the paperwork was sent into our AU office, the Minnesota veterinarian was going to allow release in MN this year even if a virus outbreak occurred since lofts are being certified. While we were able to get through old bird racing in our zone this year, he read of a few outbreaks on some poultry farms.

Alan received a few comments from non-pigeon flyers that they saw the New York evening pigeon fly around with lights on the birds. They were impressed, thought it was a very cool show, but PETA took a different viewpoint.

Alan had a couple inquiries on WinSpeed© uploads and that they were getting errors on their uploads to the National Database and had to go through a longer upload process. Alan emailed Sonny and Mike Tobin if they had any suggestions but didn't hear back from either of them. Not sure who currently is answering any of our WinSpeed© questions for us.

Alan planned to talk to Shannon before the interim meeting about the AU sample constitution and by-laws to see if he would like any help going through it and/or whether the AU sample Constitution and By-laws needs any corrections.

Porter volunteered to help Jay and others with AU awards and the math equations; however, has not received any assignments or questions from anyone.

Alan still gets several calls for lost birds that he handles or finds others to help handle getting birds picked up and back to the owners.

### **Southeast (Hassler)**

Not attending.

### **Lakes (Kohli)**

Not attending.

### **Mountain (Stierlin)**

Fort Sutter Club is conducting new member recruitment: they pay for the clock and bands, and have a mentor. This is financed through auction and the fireworks stand. Clocks and such belong to the club; new members can try 1 season, and then hopefully continue.

Joyce said the club continues promotion with great results. We should look at an award for them at convention. The Fort Sutter Club is one of the most progressive. Joyce will check if they will attend 2016 convention.

### **Northeast (Wiaderski)**

Toni made some presentations. Got call from a member in the Boston Concourse who was kicked out. Toni worked with him and the club extensively, but he simply is not liked by the members. Then there was a distance problem that Hundrup handled. Wiaderski plans to do a presentation to a new youth group in Pennsylvania. Toni also retrieved lost birds.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

## **Mid-Year Board Meeting Minutes** **Ontario, CA – July 24, 2016**

Attending: Tom Coletti, Karen Clifton, Jay Holder, Kamal Hindi, Freddie Rivera, John Hundrup, Toni Wiaderski, John McSweeney, Joyce Stierlin, Shannon Demler, Ron Pairan, Alan Porter, Deone Roberts

President Coletti opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. No guests were present. Tom offered comments. He again expressed appreciation for Toni's service to the board. Tom stated there was not a large number of ballots submitted. Toni will be leaving the board after old business is discussed in the December board meetings held in California. Tom mentioned that Toni is indeed one of the nicest board members to serve on the board. He takes on jobs when called upon. Toni also has one of the toughest zones in the AU. It is not an easy zone compared to the others.

Toni thanked everyone for their friendship. He has attended international shows and the AU conventions and will never forget the AU Board. He vowed to stay in touch.

### **2016 Convention Update (Hindi)**

Kamal said that all birds are doing well. All have been vaccinated. Everyone is excited. He is still working on convention activities, which will be tweaked just a little bit.

Karen asked if they will have maps printed to all the handler locations and offered to print and bring to the convention hotel. Kamal will accept assistance from the AU office with the maps and noted that arrangement for transportation is the responsibility of the attendee and should be done ahead of time.

### **Review/Update President's Agenda (Coletti)**

Tom said there were no additions to Presidents Agenda. Tom reviewed each item with the board.

### **Item 4 - Release Guidelines Revision**

McSweeney said there are challenges from a release trailer sitting until sunrise with the truck running – on release stops or any stop along the way. The truck running risks carbon monoxide poisoning and release failure.

Hundrup would like to see more teeth put into policy where release trailer sits for at least an hour and watered prior to release.

Tom asked the board to keep all these things in mind when we vote on BARs as the board will have to help enforce this. Tom asked John McSweeney and John Hundrup to have a draft of the release guidelines ready of the policy for review at the next board meeting at the 2016 AU convention. This will allow time to publish in the AU Update.

### **Item 6 – Mini Zone Conventions**

Tom asked the board if anyone is aware of an AU organization that would like to put on a mini convention.

### **Item 7 – Rework of alternate AU By-laws and Constitution (Demler/Porter)**

Shannon said he and Alan Porter have been working on this. We have bylaws that apply to the AU. We have a sample for use by clubs. It is confusing referring to sample bylaws – maybe change to bylaws for clubs to use.

Tom said it should be a basic format that allows clubs to update their own by-laws. Sample is simply a template for their use.

Shannon said the negative is that clubs often just print out the sample and write the name on the document. They're great to refer to, but maybe make another set to let them see what the rules are.

Tom asked Shannon Demler and Alan Porter to bring us a sample by-laws and constitution in December at the meetings, which will be held at the 2016 AU convention.

Joyce suggested calling it minimum standards that can be used as basis of the club's own by-laws.

Tom said having an updated by-laws and constitution makes it easy for Shannon Demler, our By-laws and Constitution Advisor, to rule on issues.

### **Item 10 – Membership Database to reflect multiple member clubs.**

Jay told the board this has fallen off to Mike Tobin and Alan Walters.

Tom asked that Jay place on his to-do list of projects to complete to be sure that it is included when working on the database for the office.

Shannon said they have two members of other clubs flying out of his club and asked if the NDB recognizes them and if they are eligible for awards in their club.

Karen said the office database does not have fields for multiple club listings in each members' record so we can't capture that data. It would be helpful to know if members belong to more than one club.

### **WinSpeed©/eWinSpeed©/NDB/Programming (Holder)**

Jay told the board we're still on Version J. One of the biggest problems at this time is all the calls for tech assistance going to Jay. Even members with Windows 7 have minor problems. Windows 10 has a few more problems. Jay has begun testing section by section with Alan Walters. Comnez (a programming company) was used strictly for code writing. Elizabeth and Jay wrote templates for the pages and Comnez wrote the code to populate the template.

Jay sought a dot.net programmer and found Alan Walters, who is an independent contractor. Jay writes on line applications and dot.net used by taxi and emergency transports, which involves GPS tracking etc. He has done well to date.

Jay and Alan worked to get old birds set up for 2016. He has worked with the old NDB so he has the hang of it now.

Alan Walters is dealing with award issues and he proposed fixes. The Hall of Fame is the biggest concern. It seems okay for 2016.

To date, we have stayed well below the budget for 2016.

Tom asked to receive a proposal from Alan Walters reflecting his schedule for working on database projects. The proposal should include schedule and related cost.

Shannon said it is difficult for members to understand why the delay on eWinspeed. Shannon said it appears to be a black eye on the AU. It is a hot topic in his combine. Shannon said he is not able to appropriately respond to member inquiries and that members are restless awaiting the program.

Jay discussed national awards and said Greg Glazier (Utah) put together reports and BARs for Champion awards. It's been almost a year. He

wants to know where his BARs stand. Jay will submit the BARs this Fall and the board can decide validity. When we get to the programming, we can make a note to put it into effect if board approves. This change of having 1 race per date has validity to him vs. clubs that run 3/day. No change will fit everybody's shoe.

Jay said Greg Glazier's BAR is a simple mechanical issue and he will forward to Karen to include with BARs to be reviewed at the annual meeting in December. Jay feels it may be best to address when working on database programming. To vote in favor would simply result in us implementing the changes.

Ron suggested solving the problem by using all the races, not just one. He said in other sports you don't submit just your best games and take from the total. Ron doesn't see how there can be complaints when you take all there is and come up with the best taking an average over a period.

Jay expressed that by calculating that way, would result in predicting the winner. Members will be dissatisfied.

Joyce said we should exclude special races and require a minimum number of races.

### **Review of New Board Action Requests**

NW-162

Reword 4.02 to clean up the rule after passing three member rule (10/15). Reword the exception to make it clear that a regular race must have been conducted before applying the exception (less than) three flyers. Rule to read:

4.02 Club Participation. A minimum of three competing members from three separate physical loft addresses are required to assemble and ship the race. In such cases, the three competing members from the three separate physical loft addresses must be present to complete the shipping process at the club.

Exception: If the club Race Secretary and committee are still present after shipping another regular club race and supervising the basketing and shipment of races with less than three lofts shipping, those lofts may ship at the combine level.

Important: See AU Race Rule 4.05 paragraph 3 as well as “NOTE” in 4.05 (December 2011). In the event that there are less than three lofts shipping an additional race, such as a “B”, “C” or special race, etc., they may ship at the combine level as long as the club race committee is still present to supervise the basketing and shipping of those races.  
Holder/McSweeney. Passed unanimously.

MTN – 049

Clarify Race Rule 17.02 so that it is clear that only active racing members vote on race rule changes. This brings Race Rule 17.02 in conformity with 5.0.

Rule to read: 17.02 A local organization may modify or change its race rules only after first giving reasonable notice to all members of the proposed change(s) and opportunity for the active racing members to vote on any such change(s). Pairan/Holder. Passed unanimously.

PAC-060 Append Race Rule 5.0 (Race Schedules) to show transparency by organization’s reporting voting on race related matters.

Append rule with the following: 5.0 When reporting the vote on race related matters to a higher organization, clubs must, along with the results, name the active racing members present and voting, along with the tally of how these members voted.

Example: Eligible active racing members voting on the measure, six: Jose Baca, Bob Trove, Ivan Crowe, Eddie Bly, Samuel Clemens and Mary Vasquez. Two voted for Schedule A, one voted for Schedule B, and three voted for Schedule C.

### Discussion

Jay felt that the club is accountable for voting responsibility. It’s not the combine’s business to know specifics about club voting matters. It will clutter combine meetings.

Kamal said this happened in his combine and that the delegates spoke for club falsely per club vote count.

Freddie disagreed. He has been a delegate and has been instructed how to vote, and disagreed with club vote, but voted as instructed.

Tom said it helps with transparency because false voting took place. The actual count is skewed.

Jay expressed that if the delegate is trusted to give the true vote, then it's the club's business to get a delegate that does what he is told, putting combine in position of auditing and policing the club.

Kamal agreed transparency is needed.

Tom said he didn't think it's controversial at all.

Jay said each club in his chartered combine has equal power.

Pairan agreed with Freddie. Keep in mind as a combine, you can put this rule in. You're going to have a complaint later that involves this that all the proper procedures were not followed. If delegate is not voting the way the club gave him, get rid of him.

Shannon expressed that it seems proxy voting allows email voting.

Pairan again said he thinks it should be left up to individual combines.

Hundrup/Hindi. Passed with 9 in favor and 1 opposed.

PAC-061 Establish consequences for Zone Directors that act in bad faith and do not route complaints through the proper channels.

#### Discussion

7.00 & 7.02 covers this issue. Shannon explained this is already in our by-laws and shared that information with Steve.

Died for lack of motion.

SE-041 Change Race Rule 10.6 to allow multiple races to be released at the same station 15 minutes apart instead of the current requirement of 30 minutes or 35 miles apart.

#### Discussion

Hundrup reminded the board that this is the 4<sup>th</sup> time this BAR has been submitted. We have enough problems with 30 minute release and he would hate to see it moved to 15 minutes. This statement is that it is for the

welfare of the birds and John has a lot of trouble with people who release in poor conditions.

Tom has heard criticism that we made an exception for Arizona. Tom stated we did not. It's 30 minutes in Arizona. We made allowance for releasing young bird and old bird races at the same time. The problem with releasing young birds and old birds together was getting awards done quickly enough sorting through data. That has been fixed since.

Tom shared the discussion yesterday morning that took place prior to Ron being at the meeting. One public comment from Fred Frobose was that release times should be an hour because people are throwing up young birds and trainers that are combined on the trailer at the same time.

Jay said the reason it was set up at 30 minutes is because at one time we had an antiquated system. An Idaho club let 8 races go 5 minutes apart. It was deemed stacking, which is a violation of AU race rules. The Champion loft award was most affected. Training tosses were combined and listed as races. The current system is that with that many races they have more opportunity for champion loft. Each guy is in 8 races to allow them to win an award. It was solved by throwing out results before. That is why the 30 minute release rule was established.

Freddie asked if the NDB would need to be changed.

Jay advised that WinSpeed© would need to be changed to accommodate less than 30 minute release time.

Holder/McSweeney. Three in favor. Six opposed. The motion failed. Tom confirmed by polling the board.

### **Review of Director Manual (Clifton, Pairan, Demler, Hundrup)**

Clifton distributed a proposed Member Participation in Board Meetings Policy, which was reviewed and adopted.

With regards to Competition Standards, Hundrup advised no issue to present. The rules seem to be fair and benefit the majority of members not just a certain group in a specific area(s).

Pairan discussed the Infraction process. He said we used to have a lot of complaints. That was resolved, in part, by charging \$50. We also implemented a new complaint form and encouraged problems to be

resolved locally. If members have a complaint, they should try to resolve on the local level. Next would be to file the complaint and when there is satisfaction that local resolution was tried, then it is assigned to an investigator and a report is provided to the chairman and presented to board for vote.

### **Committee Assignments**

Freddie – In charge of show for 2016 convention.

McSweeney/Hundrup/Stierlin – Beta test on eWinspeed.

Demler – Draft updated sample by-laws to allow a new club to get started.

Shannon reported that he talked to Dennis Aycock regarding the auction for the 2017 convention. They are envisioning them not doing anything but the race and race auction. The auction would be on the day of the race. Other club members want to wait a week and get pedigrees and put information on IPigeon. The speakers, auction and tours are on the AU.

The opinion is that European speakers cost too much. Our thinking is having an American auction: 30 best flyers in the U.S. and ask for 1 bird. They were not sure of split yet. They will refine this and present at a later date.

Ron asked if the convention speakers usually bring in birds to offset expenses.

Tom said members seem to like hearing from veterinarians such as Colin Walker.

Karen explained that tentatively we are thinking of asking McLaughlin and Shewmaker to attend and put on seminars and that possibly we would have a round table with Hundrup, Demler and Holder. We are considering reaching out to Jean Smith or Dr. Harlin.

Ron Pairan and Shannon Demler will pursue, discuss and bring back suggestions for the 2017 AU Convention auction in December. The office was instructed to wait to contact speakers right now.

Freddie agreed that a round table is different and can be very well attended and informative.

## **Pending**

Tom discussed the concept of going to convention host area for mid-year board meetings. So far, only a few local members have attended. Our hope was that the local members would attend our board meetings to share concerns, ask questions and hear updates. Tom suggested to meet in cities that are major hubs to reduce expense.

The board agreed to rescind the idea of going to host cities. Tom said we can get better fares when going to a hub city, therefore, recommends meeting in Denver for the 2017 mid-year meetings and the board agreed.

Convention choices: Greater Chicago Combine & Corn Country Combine.

Motion to award the 2018 convention to Corn Country Combine. Rivera/Wiaderski. Passed.

McSweeney's combine meeting is this weekend and will determine if they would host an AU convention.

After reviewing the convention agreement, it was determined the board needed to rescind the vote to go to Corn Country for the 2018 convention because of the convention agreement language. The convention agreement indicates convention proposals will be reviewed and approved on first come basis. The Chicago proposal was actually received a couple days prior to the Corn Country proposal.

Pairan suggests following the rules, we must select first proposal received. The board agreed to have Joyce Stierlin create a BAR to amend the convention agreement.

## **Board Action Request**

MTN – 050 To amend the convention agreement 6 paragraph down, page 122 to read:

“A two year lead time is preferred for optimum convention planning however proposals from clubs to host a convention will be reviewed and approved by the board. Convention agreement criteria must be met. Those requirements include large enough hotel, guest activities considered, youth handler for the junior race is considered.

Under application requirements of the convention agreement, the 10<sup>th</sup> agreement requirement will be that a single bird entry option shall be offered.”

Holder/Pairan. Unanimous.

Motion made to rescind the vote to go to Corn Country Combine convention because of procedural error by the board pertaining to the convention agreement. Holder/Stierlin. Passed unanimously.

Motion made to accept Greater Chicago Combine bid for convention 2018. Rivera/Wiaderski. Passed unanimously.

**Good of the Order**

Pairan and Demler will meet regarding the auction for 2017.

Meeting adjourned 2:00 p.m.