

The American Connemara Pony Society Board Meeting - January 14, 2017, Lexington, Kentucky

The January meeting of the Board of Governors was called to order by Amy Plavin, president, at 9:05 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, 2017. After welcoming the members, Amy Plavin asked Scott McGuffin, vice-president, to conduct the business meeting since her voice would not carry in the large meeting room.

Following a roll-call of the Board of Governors and Region Chairs by Marynell Eyles, secretary, a quorum was declared. In attendance were Amy Plavin, Scott McGuffin, Kate Denton, Stephanie Fenton-Hickey, Fonda Eigel, Deborah Howell, Christina Keim, Susan McConnell, Jill McNicol, Wayne Quarles, Martha Slamer, Sarah McRae Thrasher, Joan Webster, Tracy Garland, Bonnie Reid, Kathy Lucas, Linda Haines, Vanessa Morgan, Pru Glover, Katherine Short, Donna Miller. Chris Knox had attended the USEF Affiliates meeting for the ACPS, but had to leave for a competition in FL. The Board expressed good wishes for Deb Norman's recovery from recent surgery, and Donna Duckworth got sick at the last moment before her trip.

Minutes of the September, 2016, meeting in Washington, were approved as emailed.

Report of the Membership Secretary – Sarah McRae Thrasher said she had taken on the job from Anne Moe and had sent the first mailing list to the printers for the magazine mailing. At that time there were 624 members. The ACPS website password for members was about to be changed, and the username and password are now, acpsmember and ride4fun.

Scott McGuffin suggested that the Ethics statement should be included in the New Member “kit”, or perhaps added to the membership form, so all will have signed as members. The USEF site was down at the time the meeting was conducted, so the question about adding that statement to the on-line form could not be checked. Jill McNicol will call the USEF and ask that the code of ethics statement be added to the on-line form.

Sarah McRae Thrasher added that the ACPS Finance Committee had discussed moving toward on-line banking, so checks from members could be deposited more easily (instead of sending them to the ACPS Treasurer via snail mail to be deposited). More investigation into that possible change will be done. Sarah also suggested that the ACPS membership fees should increase for 2018. She noted that the dues for ACPS are much lower than most other breed societies. She suggested an increase of \$5 per member and \$10 per family. In discussion, it was a concern that the Life Membership is very low compared to other organizations. The Board discussed a proposal to increase Life Membership to \$1000 and increase Family Memberships to \$100. There was also a suggestion to allow extended membership (Pay for more than one year at a time), and a 3-year or a 5-year renewal. Susan McConnell proposed, and the Board agreed, that the Finance Committee should look at the various plans and fees, and come back to the Board with a motion for increase in 60 days.

Report of the Treasurer – Stephanie Fenton-Hickey had prepared the reports with help from Cathy Blackmon, previous treasurer, and the array was complete in stacks of paper covering the middle of the table! The Society realized a loss for 2016, but there were some funds from Registrations and some from Membership, still in processing. In looking at Revenue and Expense balance sheets, the question of the expense of Insurance was discussed. Wayne Quarles will look into the possibility of a change to the policy holder used by other groups such as The Pony Club. The Board entertained the idea of taking payment for membership and donations, and classified ads for the Web site, by using PayPal. That suggestion will be further investigated, and a report brought to the meeting in September.

In discussion on the Budget for 2017, the group agreed that the Scholarships should be paid out of the ACPS Foundation funds. It was noted the USEF had contributed more in the last year, and those funds had also been used for Scholarships.

The consensus was that more needed to be spent on Promotions, and in discussion of the Promotion Committee work, Chris Keim volunteered to write articles for use in publications that reach “the larger world.”

A motion to accept the Budget for 2017 was made and unanimously approved.

Report of the President – Amy Plavin said she is trying to get more people involved with the running of, and the activities of, the ACPS. She said her best talent was as an organizer, and that delegation is one of the ways to involve more members in the Society. She has been recruiting new people to work with the Awards Committee, and she is also very interested in getting more people involved with the Inspections Committee and its duties.

Report of the Registrar for Purebred and Halfbred Stud Books – Marynell Eyles - The numbers for registration are all slowly rising. Our purebred foal crop has crept back up to 40 (with more out there I am sure.) It seems, looking at the foaling dates on the registration applications, that people are waiting longer in some cases, to get their ponies registered. Some are waiting until they are sold --- or about to be sold, and then they are in a very big hurry to get the job done!

The numbers for Purebreds in 2016 --- 40 total foal applications. Of those, 27 are complete, and 13 are in the process. Either the hair hasn't been pulled, or we are awaiting a HWSD test result. Amy Plavin is concerned that people are not having their vets insert the micro-chips. I do have 30 forms returned, but they are also from last year. I have improved the identification form so it is easier to fill out, and has information that I have put into an alphabetized chart. We have just ordered 200 more microchips at \$7.00 per chip, so we need to make sure our registration fees cover the costs of the things we now require. Fonda Eigel noted that there was not a blank for the Vet to sign as the microchip is inserted. That will be added to the form.

Purebred mares – permanent – 40

Purebred geldings – permanent – 20

Purebred BEC Gelding – 1

No BEC Mares or stallions

Purebred stallions – 3 – they are: Tullymor's Mountain Steel (HWSD – N/HWSD), Kathy Trum-Searah; Shammer Eagle (HWSD – N/N), Maureen Loughman Abel, and Wildwych Shiver Me Timbers (HWSD – N/N), Sandra Beddor

Halfbreds of 2016

TFCs for colts of 2016 – 15

HB Mares – permanent – 26

Halfbred Geldings – Permanent – 30 (with two of 2016 – proof of gelding)

Halfbred Stallion – 1 - *Diego Dolphin (HWSD – N/N) Donna Miller, imported from Great Britain

The computer is working – and since it was fixed in October, knock on wood, it's been behaving well. The IT guys said it was literally a loose wire. So, I have not spent the “up to \$3000) on a new computer because this one has so much stuff in it, and it's working. If that changes, I will order the new one.

I do have some DNA sample “kits” that have been “out there” for more than 2 years, but in the overall scheme of things, people generally get the hair pulled and samples sent in within a couple of months.

Transfers are creeping up as well.

ICCPS – Susan McConnell said she encourages people to go to the Dublin Show and the Clifden Pony Show. She asked the group to think about a person in America who could be a candidate for the O'Malley Award for Lifetime Achievement. In her report, Susan said that Scott McGuffin had been the ACPS delegate in 2016. The Society of the Netherlands will celebrate their 50th anniversary from March 25-26. There will be a Stallion Parade in Clifden, IRE on April 2, and the ICCPS AGM will be Wednesday, August 16, 2017. She noted that every country in the ICCPS suffers the same problems of membership numbers, registration, and energy. She said she can help people who are looking for ponies in the EU and ICCPS countries with contacts in those Societies. She said there is promotion going on all over the world for the Connemara pony, and in Europe, the pony is very successful in the pony jumper competitions. The U.S. does not have the same number of shows, nor the numbers of ponies in those divisions.

ACPS Foundation – Susan McConnell told the Board that anytime funds are needed, to fill out a form to apply for the Foundation money. She said the Scholarship funds should come out of the Foundation. She said she has sold ties and scarves “around the world”, and in fact, she had some in the meeting room too! She said she likes to work closely with the Finance Committee to know what funds are needed and where the money should go. She thanked Sally Oxnard for all the contributions that were generated by sales of the history book. That total is \$1,565.00 from the 100 books that were printed.

The funds in the Foundation began the year at \$38,069.39 with deposits of \$2,763.71 (sales from scarves and ties and donations from the Pat Lightbody book) and expenses of \$300 (scholarship) for a current balance of \$40,533.10.

Report on the History Book project – Sally Oxnard wrote: I wanted to report to the BOG on the success of the (partial) ACPS History book written by Pat Lightbody and published in July We published 100 copies with the significant help of Anne Moe and Joanie Webster using Evenhouse Printing in Hamburg NY. Most of the printing expense was born by a sponsor, and we have now sold all 100 copies except a few that are between Deb Norman's house and mine. Each buyer was asked to make a contribution to the ACPSF and we have reached a total of \$1565 in donations at this point. The Foundation was started with the participation of Jim Lightbody in the beginning. I donated three books to the new members of the Board of Governors.

We are ready for the next edition and Joanie and Marynell and I have found an error on one of the awards pages, which will be amended. Anyone else who has read the book and has edits and corrections, please get them to me Many thanks for the support from all of you and for the PR which Marynell is putting in the magazine. Further volumes need to be written.”

Committee Reports – Standing Committees

Arbitration – Fonda Eigel reported all is quiet.

Awards – Marilyn Cheek and Sally Oxnard – neither attended the meeting but Sally Oxnard sent the following:

The Awards Committee had a successful year. We awarded all of our Hall of Fame Awards to worthy ponies and owners, and the winners came to Portland to receive them. The winners generously paid to ship these huge trophies so we did not have to.

We have the Achievement Awards calculations done at this time, and just need to call all the winners to have them get their bio and pic in to Marynell for the magazine. Deb Clinch is looking forward to having Karen Laden help her with that job. Deb has also suggested that we spend time in VT at the annual meeting looking at all the points required for the various Achievement Awards so we can see if there are unnecessary barriers in some disciplines. In the last 10 years we have had a range of 32 to 85 ponies receiving Achievement Awards in a given year with no regular pattern.

We also have a new volunteer working on the USEF awards this year, Chris Keim worked with Marynell and the USEF to select the winners for the Clifden, the McKenna and the Seldom Seen awards and notify them early so they can be here at the HOTY awards banquet. She may help me get the policies updated as well.

And Cathy Blackmon has taken on the USEF Awards, so she is getting the contact info on all those winners and all I have to do is send them a nice congratulatory letter and their medal. Awesome!

The USDF All Breeds awards went to 27 winners and we had two ponies at the USDF Dressage Finals in Lexington: Kynnymont Cooper O'Grady owned by Pam Liddell and ridden by JJ Tate, and Fifinella GCF, Bonnie Canter owner/rider. They will receive ACPS saddle pads from Melanie Trimper.

Our budget this year was \$2000 and we spent \$1554- it goes primarily to ordering ribbons and frames for the HOF awards and the Achievement awards and to the USDF for the All Breeds Awards which they ship directly to the winner, so we are requesting less for 2017.

Thank you call for supporting the Awards program and for nominating ponies for these awards. We will hope to have more in the future! Sally Oxnard for Marilyn Cheek

In discussion, Fonda Eigel asked how the process of selecting Scholarship winners worked – the application and the process. Linda Haines and Susan McConnell explained the procedures, and Fonda Eigel replied that her daughter had been awarded a Scholarship but had never gotten the check. Linda will rectify that error.

Chris Keim read a thank you letter from Coralee Richardson.

Amy Plavin said the Awards Committee can delegate and improve the work of the committee to which Vanessa Morgan added, that the awards' process can be cleaned up to make it work better. Katherine Short was applauded for her success with Amy Plavin's pony, to win a Golden Shamrock Award.

Bylaws – Scott McGuffin said there are some Bylaw changes that the Board has approved, that need to be presented to the Membership on the next Proxy. He requested a copy of the Insurance Policy for Directors and Officers, which will be sent to him. A motion was made by Susan McConnell to accept the recommendation from Scott McGuffin, to allow amendments to the Bylaws to be approved by a simple majority of votes from the membership. Fonda Eigel seconded and the motion was approved.

Finance – Cathy Blackmon – the Budget had been presented during the Treasurer’s report and had been approved.

Inspections – Sarah McRae Thrasher and Gloria LaCroix – Sarah McRae Thrasher reported that 2017 would be a year to regroup and restructure areas of the program that needed attention. There are no Inspection sites planned for 2017. Joan Webster suggested the Committee invite anyone interested to learn about being an Inspector Candidate. Amy Plavin said she is encouraging new people to take part in the committee’s work.

Internet – Amy Plavin reported that the webmaster has been very easy to work with, and has even lowered the fee for the ACPS. One issue has been the password for the Members section, with many members don’t remember or don’t know. Anne Moe had put the username and the password on the email and/or the membership card, but members can’t seem to find it. The password is due to change in March, and the only confidential part of the Website is the Membership Directory.

It was suggested that the Log-In “button” be moved to a more prominent place on the Home Page – it has been under the Membership menu. Amy will have it moved to the front page.

Connemara Sport Horse Inspection proposal – Donna Miller asked that her committee report be moved ahead of its schedule because she had to leave early. The crux of the matter for a sport horse inspection of any kind is, “Can the individual do a job?” Donna Miller said she took much of her program from the ISR program, and she asked the Board, “Do we need a standard and guidance” for the Sport Horse program, and do we need a Voluntary Inspection program. Carol Kozlowski had joined the meeting, and she noted that the Sport Horse should be a balanced animal that still preserved the Connemara type. She said that even if the ACPS used the ISR for the inspection, the program should preserve the Connemara integrity.

Discussion followed on the process of the Inspection and who would conduct it, and how would it happen? There are too few of the Connemara Sport Horses for the ACPS to fund sites and train Inspectors. Should the program also include free jumping – which would demand a site that is safe for building a jump chute.

After much discussion, the recommendation of the Board was for Donna Miller and the committee to come forward with procedural ideas, whether using the ISR program, or build one, with thoughts of adding jump chutes, and which venues could handle those requirements. She will investigate the AMW, ISR, Future Event Horse, and NASP programs. A report will be expected in September 2017.

Magazine – Marynell Eyles reported the computer is working well, and that the 4-color high resolution pages have been a learning curve that required some re-jigging of page sizes, but the overall look of the publication seemed well accepted. The quality of the photos has been dramatically improved. Thank you’s were voiced to all the ACPS members who had contributed articles, to the committees who provide updates and information, and to everyone who placed ads.

Nominating – Linda Haines reported that the committee welcomed any suggestions for nominees for the Board. She welcomed Martha Slamer, Chris Keim, and Tracey Garland to the meeting. She said that in 2016, the committee had filled three Regional Governor slots and that Sue McLaughlin had been left off the magazine’s list of Governors. Marynell Eyles said that would be fixed. Susan McConnell asked if she should be sending the Policy and Procedures notebook to the new people, and got an affirmative answer. She will send those, and updates for the others on the BOG. The committee for 2017 is Sally Oxnard, Linda Haines, and Chris Knox.

Promotions – Melanie Trimper and Heather Magnan - 2016 Promotions Report January 8, 2017, Submitted by Heather Magnan, Promotions Co-Chair US Equestrian Collaboration On December 9, 2016 I spoke with Dana Rossmeier Manager of Media Relations & Sport Communications for the USEF. Dana had inquired on partnering with the ACPS as they are in the process of rebranding and revamping the USEF (soon to be US Equestrian). They have asked for all affiliates to partner with them to help spread their new messaging and in turn help promote the ACPS as well. They have asked if they can put a short article/ad in the March/April issue of our magazine, as well as cross promote on our website and social media. They are working on a new ad campaign to bring the joy of horse

sports to a larger audience. They are hoping to expand membership in this grassroots campaign. They have asked for our collaboration on a regional and national level. As soon as their campaign is ready, I will share with all region chairs, on social media, and have the information/ads posted on the website. They are also working on an editorial piece for the American Connemara Magazine. I think this is a great opportunity to show our willingness and ability to promote both our ponies and the joy they bring to the equestrian community and general public alike. Social Media Both Facebook and Instagram are receiving high traffic. These outlets seem to be a good fit for the ACPS. Facebook likes are up to 1,794 with the #BitofBritanNextTopRider posts having the highest engagement this quarter (up to 3.5K people in reach!). Instagram followers are up to 68 people with the highest liked photos consisting of ponies in the elements (snow!) and repost photos of performing ponies. Instagram photos that are uploaded to Facebook have the highest reach to date.

The ACPS magazine is a good hand-out at various competitions, and Jill McNicol said her daughter, Meg, was an ambassador for *The Paisley Pony*, a publication that is always looking for articles on ponies and their riders.

If the ACPS decides to take part in the World Equestrian Games (with a booth for promotion IF the organizers are allowing that), it was suggested a letter be sent to Life Members to solicit funds for the promotion if it is possible. Susan McConnell and Katherine Short are investigating the possibilities.

Region Chair Liaison – Gloria LaCroix has been the “aide” for Joan Ervin, and has been on the job for several years. In discussion of the job, it was noted that mentorship is vital to the success of Region Chairs. With the advent of Region Chairs and Region Governors, many regions did not know exactly how to manage the positions. Vanessa Morgan has been appointed by Amy Plavin to work with the committee to help Region Chairs and Governors learn their new responsibilities. She will write the Policy and Procedure updates for the work, and it will be included in the Policy and Procedures Notebooks.

USEF Connemara Committee – Susan McConnell, Cathy Blackmon – liaison to USEF governing committee – Susan McConnell told the Board that most of the committee’s work is done via conference call. Natalie Norwood of the USEF is the ACPS committee contact. In 2017, a repopulation of the committee will be undertaken by the new president of the USEF. Cathy Blackmon has represented the ACPS and the Connemara Committee at the National Breeds and Discipline meetings (within the USEF). Susan McConnell congratulated all the Horse of the Year winners, and she urged more people to get their ponies into the recognized Connemara divisions.

Ad Hoc Committees and other Reports

Melanoma Research – Maureen Loughman Abel – Joanie Webster read Maureen’s report, and added that Maureen has put in three and a half years of work, with real dedication, to the project. Over 80 members of the ACPS have participated in the study. And, with the ongoing work, the research could be completed within two years.

I have received an update from Dr. Theon, which will be included in the article for the magazine. In the meantime, here are a few highlights which will interest the board:

- Funding from the ACPS has facilitated the continuation of this project and Dr. Theon is very grateful.
- Funds were received too late to reapply for a grant from the Morris Animal Foundation in 2016 as applications are due in July. A grant application will be submitted to Morris in July 2017.
- If funded, Dr. Theon is planning to go on sabbatical leave to make sure this project is completed.
- Dr. Finno of the HWSO study has joined the team. “Her experience in equine genomics and familiarity with the Connemara Pony genome provides a strong scientific support for comprehensive analysis of data and competing for additional funding.”
- The cost of gene sequencing has come down considerably which will allow the ACPS funding to go further.
- The samples received for Groups 2, 3 and 4 are adequate for statistical analysis. I will not be looking for any more ponies for these Groups.
- **More Group 1 ponies are needed.** (Acquired melanoma by age 6, even if older now.) **Blood samples alone will be accepted** “as long as owners agree to provide additional samples should we find significant gene variants in blood samples that need to be confirmed”.

My original report stated that this will be a long term project. With this news from Dr. Theon, MAYBE it will be completed within the next year or two!

Maureen Loughman Abel

Strategic Planning – Members of the committee are Kate Denton, Laura Balding, Scott McGuffin, Vanessa Morgan. Kate Denton chaired a committee meeting the day before the Board meeting and the members addressed

the following:

Increasing breed recognition – suggestions included making banners available for stalls at shows and on trailers.

Greatly expand promotions

Stallion DVD – Is it time for a new one?

Press Releases – Chris Keim was asked to write press releases and articles for equine publications.

Get the ACPS magazine in tack shops.

E-Learning – give people who are not in the mainstream of the ACPS or equine world, information and/or an E-membership.

Update the current promotional articles to have names of people and Connemaras in the news now.

Pony Ambassadors – come up with a program, and commit to doing something with the pony.

Breeding – Much of this discussion focused on the importance (or lack of) breeding to type.

Liaison – between people upset with the ACPS for various reasons (Inspection, Board action, etc.)

Genetic diversity – does the ACPS need more? Not as many people are breeding – do we need more ponies bred and is there enough diversity? In discussion, it was noted that the US population is the most diverse in the ICCPS – based on a study done through that organization.

Trainers and training – Should there be a list of approved trainers to start youngstock? How, where, facilities?

Competition – the lack of divisions in recognized shows.

Membership – keeping members involved.

Facebook – how to “like” a posting – how to use the app.

As the committee evolves – should they use more conference calls to conduct business.

Discussion was brisk on all the above topics. No motions were made but many ideas were shared.

New Business

World Equestrian Games – Tryon, NC 2018. Katherine Short said she would help coordinate an ACPS presence at the WEG. “If affordable, if possible”. At this point, it is not known whether promotional venues will be included in the competition since the grounds are new and the information is not available. Scott McGuffin suggested the ACPS should form a committee to investigate the possibilities and develop a plan. No decisions were made except to investigate further. Wayne Quarles and Martha Slamer were asked to be the “ears on the ground.”

2017 Annual Meeting – Region I has volunteered to host the Annual Meeting at a Holiday Inn, Brownsville, VT. Details will be forthcoming.

Treasurer’s request – Stephanie Fenton-Hickey said the treasurer’s job was a huge task. She said she was a novice at the job, and had no idea how much time and effort it required. She said reimbursement would be welcome. She left the meeting room to give the Board time to discuss the options. It was hoped that by putting the Quickbooks program “on -line” that Cathy Blackmon could help Stephanie through the posting procedures for the program. The Board discussed the possible ways to make the work less demanding, from enhancing on-line banking to finding another person to fulfill the job. As the meeting adjourned, the matter was in discussion with Amy Plavin and Stephanie Fenton-Hickey on how best to proceed. Amy will continue discussions with both Cathy Blackmon and the current treasurer to resolve the issues.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Marynell Eyles

ACPS Secretary

