

Minutes – American Connemara Pony Society Board and Annual Meetings

September 25, 2021

Meeting conducted via ZOOM conference

President of the ACPS, Linda Haines, called the meeting to order promptly at 11 a.m, Eastern time, with the following At-Large and Regional Governors present. The number constituted a quorum.

Catherine Blackmon, Kate Denton, Donna Duckworth, Fonda Eigel, Cynthia Holbrook, Deborah Howell, Karen Laden, Sarah McRae Thrasher, Heather Magnan, Suzanne Phelps, Bonnie Reid, Susan McLaughlin, Tracy Garland, and Robin Mercer, Kay Clements, Annie Balotti-Paleen, and Kim Gates. The three new candidates to the BOG also attended and they are Anne Drogula, Sharon Jantzen, and Kathy Nebel. Also attending were Kathy Lucas, Elizabeth Platais, Sally Oxnard, Christine Kelton, Joan Webster, Marilyn Cheek, Allyson Myers, Jill McNicol, Deb Norman, Julie Keahey, Katherine Short and Pam Liddell. Nicole Zerbee, our USEF Connemara Committee liaison also attended. Stephanie Fenton-Hickey sent her regrets from her stay in the hospital, and Donna Power did almost the same, as she left her rehab hospital.

The attendees followed the detailed agenda sent out by Linda Haines, and discussions were short and to the point.

No corrections or additions were noted for the Minutes from the previous ZOOM meeting, and the Minutes were approved.

In explaining the procedure for the meeting, the directions from the agenda directed: The following reports will not be reviewed at the meeting but will be part of the Consent Agenda that will be voted up or down by the BOG at the beginning of the meeting. Those reports included: Awards, Arbitration, Membership, President's Report, Susan McConnell Foundation for the ACPS, Registrar Reports for Purebred/Halfbred/Connemara Sport Horse, Internet, Nominating, Promotions, and Region Reports.

All were approved unanimously.

The Finance Committee Report and the Treasurer's Report were not part of the Consent Agenda, and were accepted as sent to the Board Members.

The Change to the ACPS By Laws, included on the 2021 Proxy, was also approved by the voting membership, and that was announced. The most western parts of North Carolina will be listed under Region IV, moving from their previous inclusion in Region III.

The following Committee reports were discussed and reports were given:

Inspection – Tracy Garland of Region IX explained the Pre Inspection Clinic held in her region, with Sarah McRae Thrasher as the clinician. It was a big success, she said, and 9 participants from various areas participated, with 7 ponies at an excellent facility. Tracy said, "The impact was many-fold, with a newly energized group in the region. Even non-ACPS members were excited to attend." Tracy lauded Sarah Thrasher's use of informational material, and her format for instructing.

The newest project for the Inspection Committee is an on-line learning program that included videos of interviews with breeders in the U.S. and Ireland. Some of the interviews have been completed, and Tracy said there were some wonderful pony stories included. Sarah Thrasher added "It is exciting to gather information and put it together. We have a wonderful person helping with the video editing and all of us are enjoying it." The on-line Learning Modules will be used for Inspector

Candidate Training and continued education for all. There are three new Inspector Candidates but their names were not given.

Internet – Amy Plavin, longtime committee chair has stepped down and Sharon Jantzen has been asked to take the leadership role. Sharon has experience with Internet sites, and has her own Blog, and publishes an on-line equestrian newsletter for her area. Sharon explained she can help the Webmaster draw more traffic to the ACPS website. A discussion on the value of, or interest in, classified ads on the Website and magazine. A short discussion followed on the Breeders Map on the web site (free), and the Farm Directory in the magazine (a paid ad).

Heather Mangan, Chair of the Promotions committee, included in her reports a new Policy and Procedure for integration and inter-action of the magazine, the web site, and the promotions committee. She added, “Each is its own entity, and social media should draw attention to the web site. Should draw traffic to the web site.” She explained that the P & P she had written would include procedures for Social Media so all three entities would coordinate. BOG members were asked to review the draft Promotion Policies and Procedures and send comments to Heather and Linda for revision as necessary.

Sharon Jantzen explained the importance of being recognized by search engines, to direct traffic to the web site. The FEO (Front End Optimization – a process optimizing the delivery of website resources from the client side – to allow the browser to process a page quicker). In other words, the search engines “get to know” the ACPS.org as a source, and goes there first. Sharon explained key words need to be used, and often, headlines need to be rewritten (if taken from the magazine) to be acknowledged quickly on the internet.

Breeders Committee – Kate Denton, chair, said her committee members are Fonda Eigel, Kathy Sparks, Deb Norman, Chris Knox currently, and that Lisa Martin-Gerdes had asked to join. The mission for the committee is to expand the recognition of breeders of Connemaras especially in local shows and events. Kate suggested that in all show results, reports for publications, and announcing at shows should encourage the identification of the pony’s breeder as well as the owner and rider. Some of the next steps are to encourage more breeding, to expand knowledge of breeding “lines”, a project being undertaken by Caroline Nesbitt. The aim is to provide information on the history and background of the breed, and how it impacts the current production of foals. The preservation of the breed is an important focus for the committee. An adjunct to the committee’s goals is the proposed on-line lending library of Pat Lyne books, now in the process of being digitized. The lending library will allow a reader access to an on-line book for one hour at a time. The process of digitizing is going very slowly.

New Business:

Succession Planning Committee for the office of the ACPS – chaired by Cathy Blackmon, moved to appoint Kathy Nebel as the Secretary to the Board of Governors. She will take minutes, conduct the process for the proxy voting for Board Members, and keep track of terms for serving members, for Committee chairs, and Governors. The appointment was approved unanimously. The Registrar will stay the same, at the address in Middlebrook.

Insurance questions – Becky Jordan has been managing the insurance policies for the ACPS shows and regional events. She found this year, that Equisure suggested insurance coverage for Inspectors and Show Managers. A discussion followed with no decision. The topic will be discussed again at the January 2022 meeting. Discussion on the Release Form was also discussed. Becky Jordan has the one we should use for all ACPS activities at this point. Cathy Blackmon agreed to follow up with Becky Jordan regarding our next steps. The question of “what do other breed societies do?” will be answered by ACPS member

Allyson Myers who volunteered to conduct research and report about Inspector liability, how other Societies protect their inspectors, and how they are covered. She will report her findings in January 2022.

Allyson Myers also asked if the “other half” of a Connemara halfbred is DNA checked when halfbreds are registered. The answer, NO, was discussed as to the merits of checking parentage and/or DNA of the non-Connemara. Marynell Eyles will check with other pony registries to see how that process is handled. Discussion was included on how this change would affect the cost of registration, and the long held policy of trusting breeder’s to tell the truth.

Linda Haines accepted the motion to adjourn the Board meeting at 12:18 p.m, and opened the ACPS Annual Meeting. Bonnie Reid, Nominating Committee chair, announced the three new Board Members At-Large – and they are Anne Wadlow Drogula (OH), Sharon Jantzen (CA), and Kathy Nebel (NC) who will serve 2021 – 2024.

The slate of officers for 2022 was approved unanimously, and the slate is: Linda Haines, President; Suzanne Phelps, Vice President; Stephanie Fenton-Hickey, Treasurer; and Kathy Nebel, Secretary.

The Election of the Nominating Committee was also approved unanimously, and those members are Bonnie Reid, Joan Webster, and Cathy Blackmon.

Discussion from the members included more discussion on registration of halfbreds and DNA sampling.

At present, only Hoof Wall status is tested for halfbred foals if the sire or dam are Hoof Wall carriers.

Some members reported they had difficulty printing the registration forms from the web site. People who used iPhones reported difficulty, but in the conversation, they were advised that downloading the file into the phone is a step that must be done, and the form will print. More FAQ’s will be added to the ones already posted on the website.

Fonda Eigel asked if there could be a committee formed that would handle problems that were not officially Grievances (the previous name of the committee she chairs). She gave examples of Connemaras in bad physical circumstances, and how the Society might help. At present, the statement in the By Laws directs all “condition” complaints and problems to a local SPCA. Sometimes, the ponies are not at that level of neglect or abuse, and Fonda wondered if there was some other process. It was suggested that the Arbitration/Grievance committee could act as a “gate keeper” to send some issues to the Executive Board to discuss and find answers.

Fonda emphasized, “People need to be heard.” Fonda will follow up with the Executive Committee to see if there are next steps that should be taken.

Nicole Zerbee of the USEF offered to share a feedback sheet the is used by the USEF for any grievances from a USEF show or event.

Cynthia Holbrook, who manages the database of ACPS members asked how the change in the Region III and Region IV should be handled on the information sent to Regions and Chairs. Kathy Nebel and Suzanne Phelps will work together to figure out how to manage those changes.

The meeting was concluded with the invitation, again, to Kentucky for the 2022 Annual Meeting.

A special tribute was bestowed upon longtime Secretary, Marynell Eyles, with “Admiration, Appreciation, and Affection” from the ACPS Board. The idea was hatched at the Annual meeting in Richmond, VA,

where part of the Silent Auction was a needlepoint canvas with Sir Foxworthy, a Jack Russell Terrier in a MFH jacket. The ACPS Board Members had heard of Marynell's loss of a very beloved JRT, Ragdoll, who was near and dear to her heart. And they also recognized her interest in a long-time participation in foxhunting in Virginia. Fonda Eigel stepped forward quietly, the tribute says, to accept the responsibility for accomplishing this needlepoint challenge, and the result of her many hours of needlework are sensational.

To say Marynell Eyles was gobsmacked would be putting it too lightly. Her very sincere thank you will be published in the magazine, and sent to each of the Board members.

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m., and the Awards session of the ZOOM conference would begin at 2 p.m.

The first award presented was the Crestwood Award and it went to Maureen Loughman Abel.

The Broodmare Award went to Pam Liddell for her mare, Kynynmont's Arianna (*Canal Laurinston x Hideaway's Smitheranne)

The Tooreen Laddie Award went to Vanessa Morgan for her stallion, Balmullo's Beacon (Aladdin x Tullymor's April Fool)

The Camlin Award went to Gibby Jasper for her Prairie Delaney (Blue Ridge Jefferson x Dawn's Mary Kate)

The Tre Awain Halfbred Award went to Meg Pelligrini for her Ganymede (halfbred by Ballywhin An Luan)

The Connemara of the Year went to Cathy Blackmon's Hideaway's Special Delivery (Greystone Dallen McMor x Hideaway's Celebration.

Youth Scholarship Awards – the \$500 scholarship went to 10 year old Aidam Beaubien and his Minnie Mouse. Aiden was present and shared his admiration for his pony.

The \$200 scholarship went to Rose Vinson who owns and rides Denver's Nora Foley.

Another scholarship recipient present was Skylan Nelson who rides Elderglen's Eriel. Skylan also shared her love for Connemaras via the Zoom meeting.

There were 10 applicants in 2021, from 8 states. Our Junior membership continues to make us proud.

Respectfully submitted (for one last time!)

Marynell Eyles