

**Minutes - ACPS Annual General Meeting - September 30, 2023**  
**UC Davis, California**

Linda called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. She thanked Lee and Region X for hosting the meeting. Sally thanked Lee for the QR code with all the awards winners listed.

Lee went over the housekeeping rules for those participating via Zoom and told the group that all the reports are available via the QR code.

Roll call of the Governors was made. A quorum was achieved.

**Attendees:**

	<b>At Large Governors</b>		<b>Regional Governors</b>
X	Catherine Blackmon	X	Linda Haines - I
	Kay Clements		Carol Kozlowski -II
	Stephanie Fenton-Hickey	X	Suzanne Phelps - III
	Cynthia Holbrook	X	Kim Gates - IV
	Deborah Howell		Bonnie Reid - V
	Lisa Rease		Lisa Etzel - VI
	Kate Denton		Laura Balding - VII
	Anne Wadlow Drogula	X	Susan McLaughlin - VIII
X	Sharon Jantzen	X	Tracy Garland - IX
	Becky Jordan	X	Lee Ramensky - X
X	Kathy Nebel		
	Annie Balotti-Paleen		
X	Fonda Eigel		
	Karen Laden		
X	Sally Oxnard	X	Joanie Webster, Member Emeritus
	Donna Power		Ashton Street USEF

Additional attendees: Marynell Eyles, Janet Gunn, Maureen Loughman-Able, Mimi Duffey, Cat Benson, Megan Gastel, Katherine Lucas, Victor Ramensky, Bonnie Kelly, Diana Cooley, Boots Plyler, Emily Robertson Charlene O'Neill, Chris Knox, Erin Benson

Via Zoom : Kim Gates, Kathy Sparks, Scott McGuffin, Janet Johnson, Bonnie Reid

**The minutes from the last meeting were approved: Cathy Blackmon moved / Marynell Eyles seconded.**

- **Consent Agenda :**
  - Report of the Membership Chair - Suzanne Phelps
  - Report of the President – Linda Haines
  - ICCPS- Scott McGuffin
  - Arbitration - Fonda Eigel
  - Bylaws – Scott McGuffin
  - Digital Library- Linda Haines
  - Finance and Report of the Treasurer - Cathy Blackmon
  - USEF Connemara Committee – Chris Knox
  - Nominating Committee - Cathy Blackmon
  - History Project - Anne Drogula
  - Succession Committee - Cathy Blackmon
  - Regional Chair Reports

The reports on the consent agenda do not require action today. Marynell will print the regional reports in the magazine.

**Consent agenda accepted. Fonda Eigel moved / Sally Oxnard seconded**

- Report of the Registrar – Marynell Eyles  
Marynell's report was included in the report packet. The stud book is a work in progress. Since the report was published, 2 imported stallions, 13 purebreds and 23 halfbreds have been added. There is a December 1 deadline for a USEF number and applications have been coming in. Marynell has been trying for a quick turnaround, but mail has been slow. The cost to register a pony with hoof wall, DNA, microchips and mailing is \$80. Non-members and late fees pay more, but we are near a break even number.

Lee asked about the new microchip that USEF is requiring. Marynell responded that the ACPS 15 digit microchip is FEI compliant. Marynell reported that some people have not inserted the microchips when received; they do need to be inserted prior to inspection. Marynell is researching the new bio-thermal chip that transmits the body temperature.

When Marynell issues the numbers for USEF the email of the owner and breeder is required. If you have a USEF number, it comes up, but the application form needs to add places for emails.

There is no hoof wall status on ponies from Canada, so they need to be retested when ACPS registration is sought. The Canadians are testing for hoof wall and their registration goes through their department of agriculture. We are retesting Canadian ponies on our dime.

**Linda asked that Marynell bring to the January meeting the question about raising registration fees.**

From Zoom: Should a proposal be made to increase registration fees? It will be under consideration in January.

Marynell was thanked for her work as registrar.

- Awards – Sally Oxnard, Karen Laden

The awards committee is very big. Two motions, one related to Mountain Games being included in the achievement awards and the other to two policies that were tweaked.

Robin Fillman reached out to Micheal Busta about the adult scholarship. There is a winner of the Deb Busta scholarship which will be awarded tonight.

**A motion to add Mounted Games to to the ACPS Lifetime Achievement Awards and to edit awards policies P04 and P06 to include the Connemara Sport Horses and to remove Canadian national organizations and add USAWE to the sanctioning organizations. - Cathy Blackmon moved / Fonda Eigel seconded.**

(NOTE: Mounted Games will now need to be added to P04 and P05.).

Two new committee members are needed, one Breeding Awards leader and a new USDF contact person.

Maureen brought up a past issue: The McKenna trophy was not awarded 23 years ago to Shammer Sandman. He was horse of the year at Training level and in 2000 at Preliminary. The award went to a Connemara not even registered. The award was taken back when it was found that he wasn't registered. The award did not go to an event horse as it was supposed to, but to a dressage horse. Maureen thinks we need to rectify this in some way to sooth hard feelings. A nice letter to the owner and the breeder may be in order. **Maureen will follow up with Linda.**

Chris agreed that if there was a mix-up, recognition should be given. This ACPS has nothing to do with the McKenna award winner. It is a USEF trophy, but the ACPS tracked the points at that time. We can send a ribbon and a letter of apology to the breeder, owner and rider.

The ACPS partnered with the AHSA in the 50's. Now there are many awards available. The McKenna is one of 10 USEF outlier trophies. (ACPS has two of the 10).

Mimi had youngsters competing at championships for dressage in Pony Club at the modified division. There was good representation of Connemaras on the West coast. Sally said the ACPS has missed out on the Pony Club awards. The promotions committee was to take over the Pony Club ribbons. Cathy asked that Mimi contact the Awards Committee for high point Connemara ribbons. We have the ribbons to distribute if show management will accept them.

Lee asked for clarification if the ribbons are the same as the championship ribbons. **Sally will research.**

Sally needs recommendations for people to help with USDF and Breed awards. **Emily volunteered to take on the USDF Awards. Mimi to join the Awards Committee to work with the Pony Club awards.**

- Magazine - Marynell Eyles

The last issue sent was the Horse Show issue. Marynell thanked Emily for the Region X report. Only the Region IV show is left as it took place after publication deadline.

Marynell asked for ads for the Stallion issue. It is a good resource and reaches the targeted audience.

Episode II of the Hideaway story will appear in the Stallion issue. Linda had seen it in a brochure and obtained permission to reprint it. Marynell is also seeking vignettes on breeding programs; two hundred words max. It would be good to share what bloodlines people have. She also encouraged submittals to the Farm Directory.

Lee thanked Marynell for her work. Cathy announced the decision of the Executive Board to give Marynell an increase in her stipend from \$1500 to \$2000 for each magazine issue. The magazine is the best promotional material the ACPS has.

Maureen commented on the continuity Marynell has provided with the magazine.

(Housekeeping - Kathy Sparks, on Zoom, said closed caption can be enabled, but the microphone needs to be used.)

Marynell asked Sharon to put the magazines on the website as a resource for members. The magazine will be available to anyone. Janet asked if it was possible that members would drop their membership if the magazine was available without paying. Sharon commented that Region X had their program online, but got requests for printed. Suzanne commented that only 5 out of 500 members purchase just the magazine without buying a membership. Chris suggested putting up past years only and not the current year. Chris asked if back issues could be sent to Pony Club championships each year. Marynell agreed.

Lee noted that there may be a tool that required an email address to download a magazine issue, thus helping to drive membership. **Lee will look into the automated process for gathering those emails.**

Emily said the email is stored in a database for the webmaster to access. Annually a note could be sent to those emails. Janet noted a need to distinguish who is already a member. Replies may need to be tailored for members / non-members.

Kat suggested if emails could come to region chairs, they could engage those in their regions.

Marynell has magazines available for people to take to shows, etc. to distribute.

There is no question that the magazine is important to the ACPS and needs to be continued.

- Internet - Sharon Jantzen

Janet Gunn did a deep dive into the forms folders and made some suggestions for membership and registration. The forms are difficult to find and there are things that need to be changed in the forms. There are various formats - Word and PDF. The forms will be put into a uniform format, sense made of document numbers and overall organization. **Janet has offered to take charge of the forms.**

Amy Plavin has taken over the Stallion Directory. With the Stallion Auction, the format on the website changed. Amy took over the Directory and cleaned it up, removing deceased stallions.

The ACPS classifieds are free. Janet Johnson is reaching out to people that have Connemaras for sale. When the ad is up for three months, she checks sold status.

Amy is updating photos on the website.

The Digital Library is in the works. Linda is working on that. We can use more book donations and financial support for digitizing. It cost less than \$30.00 for the most recent Pat Lyne book to be digitized.

Sharon needs help with the news items. Right now there are four buckets of news, one of which is Regional News. Someone is needed to manage and streamline the news on the website and make sure it is up-to-date. We need current news. Cheryl (webmaster) has a form to submit news.

Linda suggested that there may be people interested in certain disciplines who can contribute news of that discipline. Sally asked whether permission from the photographer is needed to use a photo on the website. Sharon said that is the best way. People should send a permission slip that says they have permission to use the photo commercially. Sometimes when you buy the photo online it will specify either one time / personal use, or that you own it and can use it in any way. **Sally should ask each person submitting an awards photo to submit permission from the photographer.**

Boots noted that a Google search for ACPS brings up schools, etc. **Sharon said needs to address this with the webmaster.**

The group discussed whether Regional Chair reports should be loaded to the website. Sally said we should ask the region chairs for their permission before posting. Members expressed concerns that reports contain information that is not necessarily for public consumption.

Joanie noted that it is not easy to find on the website the form to donate to the Susan McConnell Foundation and Lee said serious navigation is needed to find Awards forms and the Bylaws. Currently, you can do a search from the Google docs forms page on the website and Sharon noted that forms were being reworked and organized.

**After some discussion, it was decided that the name "Forms" be changed to "Documents and Forms."**

Ann Drogula took over the history committee. She has sent Sharon information. It could go in a history bucket with the old issues of the magazines.

Kathy Sparks suggested the Breed standard be on the homepage. Marynell agreed that since we are a breed society, the breed standard should be front and center. Currently from the homepage, one navigates to "Learn More" and then the breed standard. Charlene thought history of the breed should proceed the standard as the history speaks to the emotions. It was also noted that the wording of the official breed standard is different than what is on the website.

Fonda asked if we have a website review committee and what the protocol is for reviewing the website, submitting issues and getting information to Sharon in a useful way.

**Linda asked for people to serve on an ad hoc Editorial Committee. Emily, Lee, Janet, Amy Plavin will form the committee.**

Sharon currently receives emails blasts from the Regions with non-essential info for the website. Region Chairs need to send press release format info to Sharon along with where it should be on the website. **Sally will communicate with Sharon about what is needed from Region Chairs and she will communicate with them.**

Question from Zoom - Do members who are outside the US with a pony registered outside the US, still get free classifieds if they are ACPS members? The answer is yes.

Currently questions and requests come into the website. Chris Knox suggested delegating some of the requests. This can be taken to the new committee Editorial Committee.

It was noted that we employ a professional webmaster. Sharon is the liaison between ACPS and the webmaster, letting her know what should go on the website.

- Inspections - Kathy Sparks

Lee read Kathy's Zoom comments. Inspections history can be in history section of the website to consolidate articles.

Tentatively, there are Region III July and Region VII June inspections. Owners were asked to put in microchips as they are scanned during inspections.

There followed a lengthy discussion on the inspection of Connemara Halfbreds and Sport Horses as the question of inspections of Halfbred and Sport Horses has come up numerous times.

- Maureen suggested as Connemara Sport Horse are a part bred registry an ad hoc committee is needed to see how we can improve it. Maureen thinks there should be a minimum height for Sport Horses as they are "horses." The only different between the Part Bred and Sport Horse registry is the name.
- Chris agreed with suggestion to have an ad hoc committee to look at nomenclature, etc. Linda requested that interested members contact her so she can designate an ad hoc committee
- Marynell noted that inspections for Sport Horses are already available. When Donna Miller and Megan Lichty established the Sport Horse registry, they set it up that the Oldenburg Society will accept them in inspections and a certificate will be awarded by the Oldenburg Society. There are other groups doing halfbred inspections as Marynell receives the certificates when they are registered with ACPS. There are a lot of dual inspected ponies.

- Zoom comments: Purebreds are inspected with type in mind. The other registries would have a different focus. Conformation and movement inspection would be the same at different inspections.
- Marynell asked how to have a good standard for a Halfbred when they go from a Shetland cross to a Percheron cross.
- Lee said the Irish Draft registry looks for type related to percentage in the bloodline. We could spread out our inspection costs over more horses if we include Halfbreds.
- Cathy noted that if inspectors are already trained in identifying Connemara type, they can identify the Connemara traits in a halfbred.
- Kathy Lucas expressed that we are a Connemara pony society and should focus on purebred Connemaras.
- Chris said that we are the “well” so Halfbred and part bred breeders can go back to the well and get the desired traits. Our charter is to protect the breed. There are other places the half / part bred can be inspected. It is not our mission.
- Lee thought we alienate people by being exclusive, not inclusive.
- Joanie noted we have a three - tier society and all three are important. We want to claim the Halfbred stars. We have alienated people because we don't pay attention to Halfbreds.
- Cat supports Halfbred inspections as they will produce the Connemara Sport Horses.
- Linda noted that the Inspections Committee needs to be part of this discussion.
- Chris thought an ad hoc committee could work through the issues. The committee needs to determine if our current inspection program can handle additional inspections and give pros and cons to the ACPS board.
- Lee thanked the group for the opportunity to discuss the issue and suggested running an experiment with half / part bred at a single inspection.
- Joanie thought an ad hoc committee should be formed immediately.

**Linda wants Inspections represented along with varied group that are invested in the issue. The ad hoc committee can meet over Zoom. Tell Linda if you would like to be on the ad hoc committee to look at Half Bred and Sport Horse inspections.**

**Linda suggested an article for the magazine about current inspection opportunities for half and part bred.**

- Region Chair Liaison – Sally Oxnard

Region Chairs need to know how they increase membership, get members involved, how they can get responses to email request to their regions. It would be good to put together a job description for Region Chairs, to include coordinating a newsletter, region shows, communications. There is currently a Region Chair Facebook page that Sally uses for communications.

Lee noted that Sally does a great job and gives good nudges. Lee asked for a Facebook page that is a closed group. It was noted that there is a Region Facebook page, but it needs to be used more.

Linda asked how the Regions share newsletters. She would like to get them. **Sally to ask the Region Chairs to send their newsletters to Linda and to fellow region chairs.**

Emily questioned if we currently ask non-renewing members why they didn't rejoin as this information could be valuable. Suzanne responded that the names of non-renewing members are supplied to the Region Chairs. Region I calls each person and contacts any new transfers.

Linda - appreciate your Region chairs.

#### ***Ad Hoc Committees and other Reports***

- Insurance - Becky Jordan

Linda noted that Becky wrote a great insurance report. Contact Becky if you have questions.

- Breeding Committee - Caroline Nesbitt and Lisa Martin-Gerdes co-chairs

The Breeding Committee is in a lull; no new information from them.

- Genetics – Melanoma report – Maureen Loughman-Abel (UC Davis Presentation covers this report on 9/29/2023)

The group heard a fabulous presentation from Dr. Carrie Finno and Dr. Alain Theon yesterday. Linda thanked Maureen and Joanie for their significant roles in getting the Melanoma research supported both by finding the ponies to participate and inspiring ACPS members and our Susan McConnell Foundation for the ACPS to financially support it. She also thanked Victor for the gathering last night. Lee said Bonnie Reid helped her immensely along with her local committee. Lee thanked the group for participating in the meeting.

#### ***New Business***

- Hardship

A severe abuse situation occurred and some ponies that went to rescue were not registered. There is a court case ongoing. We have a person who has volunteered to pay for the registration of the ponies and another person that claims to have hair for DNA. The question is whether we, as ACPS, can give the new owners a break on the cost of registering the ponies.



Marynell reported that this is a long, ongoing case. She was emailed from someone that has one of the mares and wants to breed it if she can get it registered. The brother of the man jailed for abuse says he has hair from the ponies. The woman with the mare wants to pay for the registration of the mare's dam and the sire, too. Marynell wants some direction. If the brother can produce the hair, can we give this woman a break on the price of registration?

If the sire and dam can be registered it opens up registration for the offspring. It does break the rule that sires must be registered before bred. We have a Hardship Procedure. This case should follow that. Marynell will refer the individuals involved to Fonda and the Hardship Procedure. Marynell can continue to be helpful in getting the information they need.

Fonda reminded us we cannot guarantee up front that we will do anything. They are asking for a hardship exception to this. It is up to the woman to get the hair for the stallion. They need to pay for everything up front. If the stallion is not recognizable, we can refund money. If it is proven purebred, it goes through arbitration and the arbitration fee must be paid. Then it goes before the Executive Board who decides if it is a hardship case and decides on any deduction in the registration fees.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12:05 PM.

The meeting reconvened at 1:17 PM

- Election of New BOG Members - Nominating Committee

The slate passed. Cathy Blackmon and Kay Clements came back on the board. Janet Gunn, Lee Remensky, Tracy Rottieger and Linda Trimper were elected for their first term.

- New Ad Hoc Committee ACPS Education Committee

We have a new committee that oversees education, including online learning.

- Stallion Auction 2024

Fonda reported that 23 stallion owners have offered services. She will work with Marynell on an ad for the magazine. It is not too late to offer your stallion's services. The funds in the past have been donated to the Susan McConnell Foundation. The 2024 funds will be used in part to support the foundation and in part to pay for advertising promotion of the auction.

The platform for the auction is Barnlog.com. This year the breeder will be acknowledged on the page. Click on the Connemara auction and register, then provide your credit card information. If you are the highest bidder, your credit card is charged. Read the provisions carefully. There is sometimes a booking fee in addition to the stud fee. The breeding is normally good for that breeding year. It is stated on Barnlog if it is live cover, frozen or fresh cooled.

Fonda asked to be told of available stallions so she can contact the owners.

Once we know who the stallions are we can use social media. We can use help with social media, print or digital ads. Members can help promote the auction, especially outside the ACPS. The advertising also helps the stallion owners that have donated.

- Promotion needs

In January the board made a list of promotion activities. Promotions runs across a number of committees. The Stallion Auction and the magazine are promotions. Horse Illustrated had an article on Connemaras in June. There have been a couple new Connemara books published. Linda asked that everyone work on promoting the Connemara.

USEF will be doing interviews with professionals that got their start on a Connemara.

USEF would like a list of competitions from us that highlight the Connemara.

- AECs
- Upperville Horse Show
- USDF / RACC (10 competitions)
- Pony Finals
- Driving - Chris is researching a competition

USEF has been very good to us this year as we signed a new affiliate contract with them.

USEF created a video shot at Fonda's farm with Sarah Thrasher McCrae presenting. Tracy was instrumental in interfacing with USEF for the production. It will be on the USEF homepage. USEF has a learning center where people can learn about the different breeds.

- ACPS Zoom subscription

This meeting used Lee's Zoom account. **The Executive Board has decided that ACPS should purchase a Zoom account. Cathy Blackmon will follow up on the purchase and distribute the information.**

- Annual meeting 2024
  - Zoom option
  - In person, one meeting or two
  - In person? Where for 2024?

Region IV in the Southeast has offered to host us in Florida for 2024. Maureen suggested it be at the end of October if in Florida to avoid hurricane season. Let us know if any important competitions are happening at the end of October.

The USEF meeting is in Louisville January 12 - 14. The ACPS board typically meets at this meeting. It can be a hybrid meeting. Showing up in person gives us status with USEF that we have worked hard to establish.

A discussion followed about in-person vs zoom meetings and the number of in-person meetings per year.

Lee said that RTE has a video about Connemaras that played last week; it will be shown at the Awards Banquet following this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:13 PM. Cathy Blackmon moved / Fonda seconded