

2010 Annual Board Meeting Minutes
Sunday, November 7, 2010, Oklahoma City, OK

Attendees: Freddie Rivera, Karen Clifton, Deone Roberts, Jim Greelis, Al Hassler, John McSweeney, Ron Pairan, Bill Desmarais, Bill Mitiu, Alan Porter, Steve Lawler, Herb Cartmell, Tom Coletti, Bill Barger, Jay Holder.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS - Lawler

President Lawler opened meeting 8:50 a.m.

Motion to accept minutes as published. Rivera/McSweeney. Passed.

Following the flag salute and silence, President Lawler thanked the board for the past four years. He stated he felt the board, committees, appointees and AU staff made good progress. The years were challenging and rewarding.

There is a lot of work left to do. The passing of Frank has been extremely difficult for him and he considered stepping down. President Lawler sees three items as priority. He would like to remain on the board for the next four years and help Freddie. The issues he sees are:

(1) Honorary lifetime memberships to surviving spouses of past board members. Consensus was immediate and unanimous.

(2) He asked each person at the table to write three things we have done well and three things that remain a "burr under the saddle" that cause the most concern. He mentioned the Historian position and the fact that several pigeoneers have been recorded. He can foresee an unmanned, interactive display in an exhibit hall.

Lawler would like to figure out a way to charter larger organizations, in a simple, non-threatening and easy method without tremendous amounts of paperwork. The perception is that AU is Big Brother. He would like to counteract that impression with personal communication and do paperwork/contact effort from the AU office.

He would like to see the AU consider changes. He stated we should lead by example and not worry about petty stuff. He would like to see a restructuring in the band arena, alien band registration dropped and acceptance of any internationally or nationally recognized band.

He requested the board consider these things for implementation in twelve months from now.

(3) Development of a loft certification award, which would be handled during zone meetings. Each time a director is out, he could do at least five loft visits with a standard packet to go with each outing. Anyone as an AU officer could sign off on it. Then it could be presented as an award, after certification, at the event.

TREASURER'S REPORT - McSweeney

We passed out the 2011 budget and discussed various aspects of it.

On discussion of dispersal of replacement disks, John indicated he doesn't know how we can control unauthorized dispersal of WinSpeed© replacement disks; possibly higher fees for non-members. We still have groups working to circumvent the AU. Coletti suggested that a web-based WinSpeed© is the solution.

Travel expense was reduced. The newsletter cost will go up. Rivera commented that the number of clubs wanting judges has increased so the cost for that may increase, therefore, we should not reduce the show program travel budget.

McSweeney continued with remarks that credit card fees are up. We have financial statements through September. Accounting and auditing is changing. The accounting firm offered to do a review as opposed to an audit. It is almost half the cost. On financial statements, we point out the classification of non-profit. We are running on a cash basis. Looking at accounting, it is accrual. The inventory needs to be marked at cost or market, whichever is lower.

ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING IS CHANGING:

Dillon & Associates, P.C., the CPA firm that audits and prepares annual reports and tax returns is reducing its workload and no longer auditing. They have offered to do a review and prepare annual reports and tax returns on a review basis. Their price will be about half of the price for audited statements.

John is doing a "detailed" review of transactions as compared to a "test" that auditors perform. Few of the bookkeeping procedures have change over the past many years. Bookkeeping entries are reviewed in 2010 to insure the following:

1. Accrual accounting rules are followed. This involves prepaid expenses, deferred income and unpaid liabilities.
2. Inventories are stated at the lower of cost or market.
3. Accounts receivable are recorded at their proper values.
4. Overall activities comply with the provisions of IRC 501 (c) (7).

VICE PRESIDENT – Rivera

Vice President Rivera reported that he had been vigorously promoting the sport and loft registration.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

RIGHT TO RACE – Clifton

Karen reported there are no new updates. It remains a good idea to include a race manifest on the trailer when transporting across state lines. PETA continues to be a force and they seem to be more aggressively countering racing pigeons.

LEADERSHIP/RETENTION - Lawler

The Washington model was successful. He reported they had a state old bird race and put together the western open and may expand to two races, three weeks apart. They release 360 degrees; therefore, membership is increased and they doubled the size of the state organization. Club, national and junior membership is up. It is something that is pretty simple to start up.

NATIONAL YOUTH/SCHOOL COORDINATOR - Pairan

Ron expressed a preference that the Youth Project Booklet have a more prominent place on the web site. The AU office was directed to charge \$5 if a hard copy of the booklet is requested and information should be posted to the AU web site.

HISTORIAN – Greelis

Greelis pointed out the yearbook article about the formation of the AU. He has not had response from Jim Jenner for CD production of the pigeonier interviews. He will work on an audio version for the AU web site.

He planned to cover the pigeon memorial later in the fundraising portion of the meeting. He is still collecting materials for chronology.

He did a presentation at a local club. He shared that it takes longer than anticipated because of the questions.

For the centennial celebration's history display, he focused on Texas Center and the 1998 AU Convention.

He also judged a combine pigeon show.

Next year, he would like to interview more legends of the sport. Most of the budget for 2010 went to banners.

NATIONAL PUBLICATION – Lawler

To be more expansive, we need more income. We could do a presale for advertising and seek term ads. It is not a priority at this time.

Discussion included McSweeney reporting that he and Hoggan went to Gene Yoes for a proposal to include the Update in the Digest magazine. The suggested cost was 16 pages for \$6400; 20 pages for \$7000, not including graphic design. Considerations are whether we want to turn this over to another organization for mailing. Not all AU members subscribe to the Digest. We are currently running at a lower cost. We have the flexibility of contacting the printer to make changes at the last minute. The Digest requires 30 days prior to publication. These are factors to consider. It was the consensus that we continue to produce in house.

JUDGES PANEL – Rivera

Reported that the use of the panel has taken off. There is no response on sanctioned shows, which is reflected in the travel budget reduction. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of underwriting shows to get them started in use of Certified Judges, since we saved on the budget.

SPEAKERS BUREAU – Desmarais

Bill pointed out that if you do one duty, it is multi purpose. He received a call from Canada to speak. Desmarais became unable to go and Rivera went in his place and spoke for two hours and answered questions. They will go to a national show as well as race events. The Canadian President will get with Rivera to see how we formulate the show program and certify judges so they can do the same. This was the first positive interaction in a long time.

SCIENTIFIC TASK FORCE – Clifton

There have been no outbreaks. Hoggan will continue to work with avian vets regarding Circo Virus later and will report in July.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS – Cartmell

Most calls have been about club building as opposed to club problems. Club operation issues are resolved with a working Constitution and By-laws. Some important issues to look at in the running of the club:

1. Liability insurance and Liquor Liability insurance. (A good thing to print in the Update newsletter.)
2. The new 990-ETax form required for all clubs.
3. Protecting the checking account with two or more signatures.
4. Protecting the club by issuing W-1099 forms for large winnings.
5. All club members should participate on the goals of the club.
6. Review dissolution section of the Bylaws.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE – Cartmell

What Cartmell has accomplished in Washington serves as a model for others. He has been involved in the Lions Club, 4-H, Boy Scouts and the city of Woodinville. The meshing of these relationships has yielded new area club members – not just children, but also their parents. For the Sky Pilot youth group, the kids take the leadership roles and run the group. They have also created an Internet group through which group documents may be retained and information is shared. Ed Minvielle has graciously provided refurbished clocks. The group will start a “technology project” that will include running the clocks, assigning the bands, using WinSpeed© and uploading to the NDB. The kids have been responsible for building their own lofts. Herb has assisted with vaccinations. (These things can be replicated in other areas for membership growth. Much of Cartmell’s materials have been shared for some time in the School Information Packet.)

Additionally, their state show and seminar will include the groups’ own section. They will have their own cash prizes and awards. They will combine with the Bellingham group for a show.

COMPETITION STANDARDS – Coletti

Tom submitted 2 reports to the board that identified rules that need to be cleaned up and those race rules that come up most frequently for interpretation.

The list of areas that still need work are:

Basketing, knock-offs

Voting rights

Proof of ownership

Compliance statements – is this really working? He'd like board to rethink because of the bad perception.

Lawler requested the prioritization preference. Coletti suggested:

Schedules

Racing in general

Cartmell requested review of BARS before the board concludes for the day. BAR regarding 340.05 (inspection of crates after each use) and NW-118 regarding 4.03 will be addressed later.

Freddie Rivera was sworn in as the President of AU. The following directors and committee members were sworn in or appointed:

Executive Vice President: Bill Mitiu

Vice President: Jay Holder

Judge Chairman: Bill Barger

Historian: Jim Greelis

Award Chairman: Jay Holder

SE Zone: Al Hassler

Plains Zone: Alan Porter

Infractions Chairman: Butch Woods

Speakers Bureau Chairman: Bill Desmarais

Publicity Writer: Beverly Brezinski

National Race Secretary: Tom Coletti

Mountain Zone: Brad Hoggan

Pacific Zone: Bill Barger

MOTION to approve all as presented. Lawler/Pairan. Passed.

NATIONAL OFFICE – Clifton

Year-end membership charts and reports were distributed. Our membership is even with the same time last year. We are hopeful to see a slight increase again at year-end.

Karen has continued working with our lobbyist monitoring legislation. Deone has been helpful with that as well. No changes to HB 669, AWA or NAIS.

Review of hawk research. Karen shared the strategy our lobbyist formulated. First, find an expert sympathetic to our cause and then take documentation from that individual(s) to other organizations (Audubon Society, etc.) to gain their support. At that time, we would need to develop an international coalition with individuals/organizations within the countries impacted by the International Migratory Bird Treaty. Finding the correct expert(s) has been a challenge in that it is very much a political issue. Karen indicated that Greg would address this in more detail at the general membership meeting. It was suggested that Bob Lynch may have contacts; possibly also Butch Shoop. Discussion ensued regarding Greg Smith's suggestions on how to deal with PETA (working with a charity and being mindful of public comments will benefit).

Dates are needed for the July 2011 meeting. Also, whether the meeting would be coupled with another state convention. After discussion, it was decided to meet in Orlando on July 16. Holder to coordinate with Clifton and provide hotel options.

SPORT DEVELOPMENT – Roberts

Deone provided a list of some of the items that would be listed in the Update newsletter. The list included press, events, youth activity, youth information requests and an update on donated clocks. Through the end of October 2010, over 1000 members joined the AU, which still yields an average of 100 new/month. Over 300 did not renew, so there is a slight net gain.

2010 Annual Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 8, 2010, Oklahoma City, OK

Attendees: Freddie Rivera, Karen Clifton, Deone Roberts, Jim Greelis, Al Hassler, John McSweeney, Ron Pairan, Robert Tomlinson, Bill Desmarais, Bill Mitiu, Alan Porter, Brad Hoggan, Steve Lawler, Herb Cartmell, Tom Coletti, Bill Barger, Jay Holder.

President Rivera called the meeting to order 8:00 a.m. Items remaining from the previous day's agenda were reviewed.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT & FINANCE – Tomlinson

Tomlinson listed various promotion activities in which he had participated. He also reviewed the information on the memorial pickets now being offered to people.

Hoggan mentioned that he spoke with Dr. Johnson. Once Dr. Johnson is finished with current projects, he should be able to meet with him for the circo virus vaccine, possibly the first part of next year. Then we will know what the budget would be and what would be feasible. There is a potential for a grant to study how pigeons know to fly home.

Tomlinson presented a crocheted flag for the NLA auction.

MOTION to send creators of flag a formal thank you note, with names to be provided by Tomlinson. Desmarais/Lawler. Passed.

Porter would like to see the board mid year meeting held in conjunction with other big club areas, in order to meet and network with members. He will have a dialog with clubs in his area.

MOTION to hold 2011 mid year meeting in Orlando, FL, tentatively around July 16. Barger/Lawler. Passed.

NORTHWEST ZONE – Coletti

Tom reported that all is quiet. Colorado clubs continue to look to the AU to resolve money race issues and non-payment of auction birds, for which AU has no jurisdiction. The poxing issue has been resolved. He did two shows; one in Oregon and one in Utah, each including a zone meeting. The AU Western Open race is taking hold. Coletti continues to fly without a club because his area club does not follow AU race rules. Travel has not been economical. As a result of a recent zone meeting, a roller club joined.

PACIFIC ZONE – Barger

Barger indicated that all is quiet is in his zone.

SOUTHWEST ZONE – McSweeney

John attended the Texas Center Convention after the mid-year meeting. The theme was Centennial Celebration of the AU. McSweeney reported that he made a brief presentation about the AU convention. The next day folks were bussed to Denton for a one-loft race unrelated to the TC convention. The following day was the convention race. Local newspaper and television covered the race and convention.

He spoke with a North Dallas Club member familiar with real time racing on the Internet. It has its place in pigeon racing and is available commercially. One member likes it and all but one in his club has computer facilities where it can be done. This club has members dispersed geographically.

A member of the Denton club does NOT like it. They prefer to get together at bang out. They live in close proximity to each other.

An accident with a Louisiana combine trailer prompted reminders to utilize a race manifest on shipping trailers.

He reported continued bird retrieval activities.

He also assisted a new flyer in Dallas in organizing and managing a club.

PLAINS ZONE – Mitiu and Porter

Mitiu & Porter reported that the Midwest Homing Pigeon Association is a strong organization that rotates states and has high AU interaction. They may be a good connection for a mid year meeting.

Mitiu shared that a small city ordinance challenge was dismissed. A favorable ordinance can possibly be established later. He also attended a zone meeting in Omaha.

LAKES ZONE – Ron Pairan

One zone member, Gary Potts, suggested a link with Race For The Cure with pink leg bands. The first availability for choice would be 2012. Possibly they could be sold for a special amount, as a special section of bands. Information can be made available in the January newsletter and secretary packets. The office is charged with the task of using the logo and phrase “race for the cure” and what cooperative effort may be established.

Desmarais pointed out that partnering with groups such as City of Hope and the American Cancer Society offers positive public awareness and we are able to support very worthy organizations. Directors discussed clubs holding special races and making donations to local groups, such as Hospice. Area businesses could sponsor birds.

MOTION to make 2012 stock bands pink, in recognition of support of efforts toward battling cancer. Desmarais/Barger. Passed. It was suggested that we do not pursue a specific logo due to copyright issues.

SOUTHEAST ZONE – Holder & Hassler

Jay shared an update regarding the Mid-Florida Sky Pilots that Guy Johnson coordinated. They are flying with the Mid Florida Combine. Both kids and parents have a good time. Two are looking into personal lofts.

Holder also judged a small show-pigeon fanciers group. The Orlando Club is still growing with current count at 16 members. There will be an auction awards meeting in January. Hoggan will be the featured speaker. He will judge the Jacksonville show. He reported also assisting strays on oil rigs and he helped on a bad sale of a bird. Head of Dixie Southern, Mike Anica, passed away. Many board members knew him or knew of him. The GHC recently dealt with a PETA issue and a difficult member. Also, recently, a lifetime member, Diane Parker from Space Coast RPC, was convicted of murder and is serving time.

Hassler introduced himself. He started in Omaha; has served as Race Secretary in most clubs. He retired from CSX and is now racing with GHC. He attended a variety of conventions and always had the desire to serve. Now he is retired and is able. He plans to pursue zone contacts, also Old German Owl Club and Central Florida Fancy Club. He is open for any committees.

MOUNTAIN ZONE – Hoggan

Brad shared that we are still receiving Mojave complaints and there has been an AU judge complaint. Member Jim Richesin would like to see a service award made available – a certificate members can apply for from AU and give to members.

Discussion included the idea that it would be good for directors to nominate members.

Hoggan continued his report stating that most problems in his zone center around Bay Cities Combine. He judged a show in Florida and will go with Coletti to Washington to judge.

NORTHEAST ZONE – Desmarais

Reported details of an IF representative attempting to sway AU members to the IF. AU member, Dave Gage, gave counterpoint showing what the AU offers. Additionally, 2009 convention participants received money for their part in the convention, which helped reinforce positive information of AU position in New England area.

Desmarais' grandson, E.J., worked with a nationally syndicated childrens' education program "FETCH with Ruff Redmun." He has featured his birds in school presentation as well. Both Paula and Bill have released for numerous ceremonies/tributes that have been covered by news media. They have assisted new flyers with information and birds. Because of highly unusual emails he has received, Desmarais offered the possibility that PETA is on a fishing expedition to see how much fanciers care about their birds. And finally, the NE RPC SPORT PROMO. ASSN. is moving forward with promotion and protection with area PR and political network.

Bill requested the AU send a certificate of appreciation to David Gage and Mike Sherwood for their support of the AU and assistance to local members. The office was directed by President Rivera to send certificates to David and Mike.

Desmarais also presented "Reach Out to Veterans" explaining that vets need and want something to do. Bill believes the AU should form a committee and that committee would be charged with working at the national level to identify groups that AU clubs could support/partner with through charity races, auctions, etc. President Rivera appointed Bill as chair of the Veterans Affair Committee. Greelis, Hassler, Mitiu and Cartmell also to serve on the committee.

AWARDS COMMITTEE – Holder

Jay covered national awards implementing past BARs: Ace Pigeon (100 birds and less, and two more divisions) probably effective 2011. He stated they are looking into having the NDB generate the Awards Booklet rather than go through manual cut and paste. Awards, Competition Standards and the AU office are working toward AKC style champion registration with potential income. Registered Champion and Elite Registered Champion are coming in steadily in anticipation of them discontinuing. Champion Loft and President's Cup use standard points. These are still being evaluated. We study each season to see problems and make adjustments.

MOTION to drop breeder's award. Barger/Hoggan. Discussion and call for question. Defeated with 5 in favor and 6 opposed. Award remains.

Coletti still had issue with a few items:

Giving AU awards on sanctioned races.

Not flying AU races and qualifying for breeder.

Discussion was that there was no way to sanction a one-loft race, a GHC race, etc., so that eliminates the possibility.

REVIEW OF TABLED BOARD ACTION REQUESTS

MTN-045, Provide second option during EBSS clock transfer into WinSpeed©. (Transfer by loft & by owner). Hoggan/Pairan. Passed.

LAKES-027, Change the Sportsman button to Juniors and create a duplicate database for junior members. This was already approved and appears in the yearbook.

SE-030, Slightly alter the formula for AU National Champion Loft & AU President's Cup Awards to a minimum bird entry Divider of 5. This better reflects the intent of "derby" races. A few clubs have begun to schedule several one & two bird derby races in an attempt to achieve high loft scores for the winners. This alters the award results. Holder/Lawler. Passed.

REVIEW OF NEW BOARD ACTION REQUESTS

PAC-041, Clarify Loft Certification Policy. The policy isn't consistent. Either it is a pass/fail or a no pass/no fail. Suggest removing "Dirt floors create a damp environment and are not acceptable. Birds should not be allowed direct contact with the soil. Barger/Lawler. Passed.

PAC-042, Put a one year moratorium on any further changes to WinSpeed© other than changing Sportsman to Junior, until new language is in place. Barger/Mituu. Passed.

PAC-043, Clarify Rule 7.27 for enforcement purposes. Holder/McSweeney. Passed.

PAC-044, Clarify verbiage in By-law 2.08 regarding family memberships. Holder/Hassler. Passed.

NW-118, Clarify General Partnerships and Family and Junior participation (4.03). Coletti/Lawler. Passed.

SE-031, Provide ownership cards with the bands. Holder/Coletti. Failed.

PAC-045, Require all racing pigeon organizations competing for AU awards to be chartered by the AU. Barger/Coletti. Withdrawn.

McSweeney stated he would respond to the Racing Pigeon Digest quote.

**2010 Annual Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 9, 2010, Oklahoma City, OK**

Attendees: Rivera, Clifton, Roberts, Greelis, Hassler, Tobin, McSweeney, Pairan, Tomlinson, Desmarais, Mitu, Porter, Cartmell, Barger, Coletti, Holder, Lawler.

Guests: Lance Hoggan, Jerry Michielli

WINSPEED©/NDB/PROGRAMMING - Tobin

Tobin presented a priority list for WinSpeed© and NDB and a list of WinSpeed© updates. He then covered an overview of real time clocking systems and issues.

PRESENTATION REGARDING REAL TIME CLOCKING – Lance Hoggan

Lance presented Logan Webdesign web site database for real time clocking, offering suggestions for phasing into web-based function. He spoke to the advantage of one location versus three. It runs on all browsers and can run on line and desktop to satisfy everyone. It can be accessed anywhere with no virus or crashing and is a solution to the challenge of different printers, since conversion is to PDF prior to print. Lance went on to share that there is a module for wireless that creates auto upload when a network is detected, so the issue of internet access no longer exists. Package updates are on line. It eventually offers additional revenue.

PRESENTATION REGARDING WINSPEED© - Jerry Michielli

Jerry offered suggestions to bring WinSpeed© up to today's technology and web based. His information included explanation of a data transfer box that translates all clocks; races are still figured through a regular clock. A WinSpeed© website, similar to Facebook, would allow each club to have their own page. Members would see only their club activity rather than a confusing combination of all on one page. A separate program would provide items such as pedigree, diploma; however, the program he offers has the capability already. He states he is not a programmer, but understands schematics. He hires programmers and desires to be project supervisor for this development.

Discussion followed presentations. Comments leaned to the desire to hire a company rather than a project manager; however, they need more information to better understand whether it is time to go to web based racing. Looking to end result should determine first steps. They determined they need time to plot a course.

MOTION to pursue web based WinSpeed©. Coletti/McSweeney. Passed. Holder will head the committee to include Tobin and Coletti. They will prepare a preliminary report. Mitu notes that expense needs to be addressed as well.

PAC-045, Discussion that an AU convention race is a sanction race, meaning that all handlers must be AU members and they must follow all AU race rules. Withdrawn.

McSweeney went through the 2009 AU Convention Report provided by Bill Desmarais, and Desmarais provided the designated funds to Clifton.

MOTION to accept the Frank Greenhall memorabilia collection from the NE RPC Sportsman Association to hold it in Oklahoma City. Pairan/Lawler. Passed.

MOTION to explore and set up paperwork to establish a 501-C for the AU. McSweeney/Barger. Passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Barger/McSweeney to accept infraction committee recommendations on KS infractions. On CA infraction, board approved recommendations #2 and #3 and to remand back to committee for further additional information. Unanimous.

Exec session budget review – approved unanimous.

John McSweeney presented final accounting and documentation of convention expense and review from the 2009 convention held in the Fall River area. John noted the accounting was incredibly detailed and every expense was well accounted. The NE RPC issued a check to the AU for \$4000 and for an additional \$1000 to support programs and projects.

MOTION to adjourn. Hassler/Barger. Meeting was adjourned 3:00 pm.

2010 Annual General Membership Meeting Saturday, November 13, 2010, Oklahoma City, OK

Clifton welcomed members to the 100th annual general membership meeting and thanked them for attending the centennial convention and meeting.

Board and committee members were introduced. Steve Lawler was awarded a plaque in appreciation of his service as AU President. Robert Tomlinson was also awarded a plaque to honor his service as Executive Vice President and chair of the finance committee.

President Rivera also welcomed the members and asked for a motion to approve minutes from the 2009 General Membership meeting, which were posted on the website. Cartmell/Tomlinson. Unanimous.

President Rivera explained the board had successful meetings earlier in the week and are looking at ways to provide greater membership services, to include the possibility of web-based WinSpeed© and real time clocking. He shared that we had two new directors appointed to fill vacant terms and welcomed Alan Porter, Plains Zone Director, and Al Hassler, SE Zone Director.

He then introduced Bill Barger who discussed the Judges/Show program. Bill encouraged members to participate and call on the AU for certified judges, it is a cost sharing program, and suggested those interested consider distance for a judge to travel in order to minimize expenses.

Freddie then acknowledged Bill Desmarais, NE Zone Director and Chair of Veterans Affairs committee. Bill explained that the AU feels it is important that clubs work with local veterans groups for a number of reasons. One, vets truly need things to do and the hobby can be very calming and enjoyable for them. Another reason is the public awareness and support that can be gained. Bill will provide updates and will be working with local and national groups and hopes to get clubs around the country involved with their local vet groups.

Jay Holder, Awards Chairman, was introduced and shared that the awards continue to be worked on and that the AU is attempting to make them easier to access. His work is tied closely to that of Mike Tobin with the NDB and WinSpeed©.

Rivera then introduced Deone Roberts, AU Sport Development Manager. Deone shared our membership is even and we are hoping to see a slight increase by year-end. She went on to share that she is prepared to assist with events and materials for promotion events. Three examples of successful promotion were given.

Guy Johnson from Deland, Florida shared that he got the information from our website, began submitting grant requests and solicited clocks. The AU supported those efforts financially. His club is the Mid-Florida Sky Pilots and they have grown to 16 members in the year. They have several parents that are involved as well.

Another example was that of Bill Halter. Bill is from Iowa and was in attendance and shared that the youth in his group, Iowa Loft Stormers, has grown to approximately 20. The AU also provided financial and other resources. Bill explained that his program members also work to give back to the community holding charity races. He is truly enjoying the program and working with the youth and their parents.

Jerry & Evelyn Guilmette from Washington were not able to attend, but Deone shared information about their project, Thunderbirds, was modeled after Herb Cartmell's Sky Pilot 4H group in Washington. With resources and funds from the AU, their club has grown to approximately 15 members within this year.

These projects are all a result of members sincerely wanting to expand and share their hobby with others and with youth. All three of these program coordinators sought the promotion, school and 4H materials offered by the AU.

Freddie asked that John McSweeney provide an update on the financial status of the AU. John reported that the office has controls in place and he is confident in our CPA. John works closely with the office and reviews expenses, payments, monthly bookkeeping and

taxes. The AU is solid financially and funds have been placed in a restricted account and may only be utilized with a board resolution.

Following McSweeney's report, Freddie introduced our lobbyist, Greg Smith. Greg provided a recap of his activity on our behalf since 2003. Those things include crafting and posting comments to the Federal Register regarding the Animal Welfare Act, efforts to retain shipping privileges through the United States Postal Service, monitoring legislation pertaining to animal identification, import/export issues and local ordinances. He also prepared materials to assist members with lobbying efforts at the local level. Those materials have been available to members for many years.

Most recently, Smith has worked on a strategy to ease the hawk problem for AU members. His initial thought was to find the appropriate experts that would provide scientific data regarding the loss of many other birds due to birds of prey. He would see us then attempting to form an international coalition in order to work with other animal hobbyist groups that are under the International Migratory Bird Treaty. He pointed out that politically it is difficult to find expert(s) that will provide that information.

Greg also pointed out that hawks are on the protected list not the endangered list. In his research, he has learned that it is legal to herd or scare birds of prey away from an individual's birds. The information previously received by the AU indicates that it is illegal to harass or harm them, so he will pursue a more clear definition. However, AU policy does not condone mistreatment or harm to any birds of prey.

Greg shared that he has been monitoring PETA's website as a result of their legal team sending letters to various city and county officials in three different states. Each letter contained much of the same verbiage. It is believed that PETA is more focused on us as a result of publicity surrounding Animal Planet's program featuring Mike Tyson.

Smith did say he believed there would be a tremendous amount of publicity in that many people who are not familiar with the sport, will now become familiar, which is good. However, he cautioned that it is now imperative that as members respond to ordinance issues, lost bird calls, PETA confrontations, etc., our main tool is our members providing a positive image to the public.

He shared with members that the board had discussed forming a Reach Out to Veterans effort. As Veterans are always interested in finding a new hobby and finding a sense of belonging, it may be that they would be a new group of individuals to recruit to membership. Equally as important, pigeon fanciers and veterans have much in common in that the birds have assisted during military conflict.

Greg announced that Bill Desmarais was appointed to chair the committee. Bill had shared with the board that doing ceremonial releases, supporting local veterans groups with parades, releases, fundraisers, etc. would not only go far to increase membership, but also gain an amazing awareness of the sport. In turn, these groups will be very

supportive when local fanciers that have supported them have ordinance issues or even confronted by PETA.

When Smith met with the AU board prior to the membership meeting, identifying one individual within a club to be the voice of the club was discussed. It was suggested that we might have training for these individuals at zone meetings and other functions in order to provide our members as much assistance at the local level to maintain the positive perception we want.

Greg thanked Dr. Braden who was instrumental in getting him on as the AU lobbyist. He indicated he was very intrigued with the sport and now finds himself very committed to assisting the organization.

Following Greg's presentation, newly elected Executive Vice President, Bill Mitiu, shared with members that to show our support of cancer awareness, our 2012 stock bands would be pink. He shared that several members host special races and auctions for various cancer groups (Komen Race for the Cure, American Cancer Society, etc.) and have asked that the AU also lend support. Our hope is that more members would work with these groups in their local areas.

Freddie offered to field any questions from members. No questions were posed.

Braden/Tomlinson to adjourn. Meeting concluded/adjourned at 10:45 a.m.