

**American Racing Pigeon Union, Inc.**  
**Mid-Year Board Meeting**  
**Providence, RI – July 21, 2012**

In attendance: John McSweeney, Bill Mitiu, Karen Clifton, Freddie Rivera, Toni Wiaderski, Jim Greelis, Al Hassler, Ron Pairan, Brad Hoggan, Mike Tobin, Alan Porter, Jay Holder, Steve Lawler, Tom Coletti, Bill Barger, Deone Roberts.

**PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS – Rivera**

President Rivera opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. Following the flag salute and moment of silence, President Rivera reiterated that he travels extensively to visit with members, and in those travels he received positive comments about service and bands. There are some issues that would be considered minor in the big picture. Local issues are ironing out. He received one infraction complaint which was referred on to the Infraction Committee.

No guests were present for non-board comments.

Minutes of the November 2011 Meeting were approved. Barger/Lawler. Unanimous.

President Rivera explained that Northeast Zone Director, Bill Desmarais, has stepped down, and there is a need for appointing replacements for that role, and the Veterans Affairs Committee Chair role. A new appointment is also needed for the Membership Committee Chair.

Pairan was appointed to take over the 4-H project from Herb Cartmell, or the Membership Committee Chairmanship. Toni Wiaderski was introduced as the new candidate for appointment as the NE Zone Director. Several candidates were approached. Toni accepted (the NE Zone Director, only). Toni has been in the AU 35 years; and held the President’s position in his club.

Motion to accept the appointment of Toni Wiaderski as the New NE Zone Director.  
Barger/Pairan. Passed.

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT – Mitiu**

Exec VP Mitiu shared that there are two state representatives that will be working on behalf of AU/Regulation Guidelines, in Chicago, that may serve as a model for other areas.

Mitiu stated that there is good membership support for the 2013 convention. It will be held at the Doubletree by the airport. Pricing and hospitality requirements are more reasonable. Planned speakers are Nikolaas Gyselbrecht, founder of PIPA; Joe Stonai, and Mark Evans. The youth race will be handled by Tom Kurz of The Feed Store. The local environment is improved.

**VICE PRESIDENT - Holder**

Holder has spent most of his time on committee work, awards and Winspeed©.

**PRESIDENT EX-OFFICIO - Lawler**

Lawler had the pleasure of attending a Thunderbirds/Sky Pilots event in March. Steve shared that he thought these kids are building the future and their parents have joined the AU. Herb Cartmell’s 4-H model is successful: 2011 Convention Youth Race 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place birds came from that group.

He ran two Western Opens that worked well: 72 lofts and 1000 pigeons. It is the only 360° Open in the U.S. Four trucks meet to release. Weather was the biggest interest with snow in Montana at the same time that other areas had warmer weather. Observing that type of release is amazing with four groups navigating.

He has been riding with the driver and so far there have been no transportation issues in California or Oregon or Nevada - it ebbs and flows depending on industry threats. Steve said he felt it is vital to have the race manifest with the hauler.

#### TREASURER – McSweeney

Because of his time spent at the AU office, McSweeney can attest that the AU office is extremely busy and that if we can reduce phone contact and increase email contact, it will be good. He explained the check writing process and expense approval of the office and how it is now more automated through QuickBooks and a dedicated printer. We are okay on cash. We have \$5800 uncollected receivables more than one year old and during a less busy time, it would be good to address it.

### **Committee Reports**

#### RIGHT TO RACE – Clifton & Lawler

Clifton shared that Greg Smith suggested that we get a copy of AU newsletters to everyone on the Hill to improve awareness of the organization and the hobby.

The board entered executive session to discuss industry threats. The Board interviewed the AU board members who appear in the video. These board members indicated generally that their quotes were taken out of context. After reviewing the very heavily edited video, the Board has concluded that the statements and intent of the board members had been distorted beyond recognition. The Board notes that the opponents of pigeon racing will use extreme and unfair means to smear our sport.

#### LEADERSHIP/RETENTION – Lawler

With current member turnover, retention is the greater issue. We need a task force to address this with intervention versus correction. He shared the suggestion that we try a thinner, monthly newsletter for one year as a test.

#### NATIONAL YOUTH/SCHOOL COORDINATOR – Pairan

One suggestion was that we present at the National Education Association, but the presenter must be a member and Pairan is not. He discussed this with Ronnie Shumaker, as a potential representative, and he will consider it.

Lawler pointed out also that Tim Tessier's Loaner Loft Program is bringing in more kids and they usually build their own loft within one year.

#### HISTORIAN – Greelis

Greelis interviewed Hispanic sport legends in Spring Hill this past March, including Bennie Rodriguez, his son Chris, Juan Placeta and Manny Rodriguez. He sent copies to committee individuals to screen content and they are now ready to publicize.

Greelis shared that Herb Cartmell is still in contact with Elwin Anderson's family and they shipped his memorabilia, mostly magazines, to Greelis. He inventoried the items on disc and will forward information to the AU office.

Also, Frank Greenhall's items will be shipped to World of Wings for display.

A researcher for the television series, Museum Secrets (broadcast on History Channel, National Geographic, BBC World and others) contacted Greelis for historical background and he will be working with him.

#### JUDGES PANEL – Barger

He added one judge. We are full in the West and Central and we have an opening in the East. He believes we should drop the Certified Show as we currently have only one interested location. Motion was made to drop the certified show program and maintain the judges program. Pairan/Lawler. Unanimous.

#### CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS – Coletti

The few calls that came in involved creation of a new California combine that will operate during the young bird series, to accommodate race stations. In old birds, they will rejoin the original combine.

Additionally, the original combine has new leadership who will need to deal some with their restrictive and demanding by-laws and as a result more issues are expected as the racing ensues.

In an unrelated issue, a Wisconsin club split into two groups, with both claiming to be the true club. Both organizations demanded to be the one organization recognized by the AU. They sued each other and the judge found in favor of the club that brought in the club Constitution and By-laws and demonstrated they follow them. There is more to the situation that demonstrates the importance of having and keeping the organization Constitution and By-laws handy.

#### COMPETITION STANDARDS/INITIAL REVIEW – Coletti

A sampling of issues that came about included: holding office without being an AU member, holding an office in more than one organization, combine awards without competing in combine, retroactive diplomas, non-flyer voting, banning specified pads or clocks, dead time, refusal to give diplomas, equipment ownership with club split, basketing and clocking in differing time zones, broken clock seals, and shipping limits.

#### REVIEW OF PENDING ASSIGNMENTS/PROJECTS

- a. Circo vaccine development: A minimum cost of \$100,000 still provides no guarantee. It was decided that the AU would not invest in testing and vaccine development.

#### NATIONAL OFFICE - Clifton

Charts with membership totals, by zone, were distributed, as well as a list of clubs that have not renewed. Directors need to contact the clubs within their zone to ask if the club has disbanded or if the secretary just hasn't sent in membership yet.

Karen asked the board for their input on increasing credit card fees. With more members using credit cards to pay, our fees have increased significantly. The board will discuss whether or not a convenience fee is necessary during discussion pertaining to the budget at the annual meetings.

Policy regarding membership outside the US was discussed. Category E allows members from within North America. Non-competing (Sponsor) members are from countries beyond.

The board agreed to travel for annual board meetings on November 11. Meetings will be held on November 12, 13 and 14. Return travel on November 18.

#### SPORT DEVELOPMENT – Roberts

Roberts reported that members are successful in obtaining press coverage and in creating or participating in promotion events. The latest list will appear in the August Update newsletter. Pink bands are making a good showing in promotion.

#### ZONE DIRECTOR REPORTS

##### Northwest Zone - Coletti

Since the Arizona meeting, he traveled to Oregon and Washington doing Zone Meetings and judging shows. These are the two States that take advantage of having AU come to their area to support and speak about the sport and events that affect them. Occasionally he hears from Colorado, usually with ordinance problems. The problems seem to go away when they follow his advice to get the neighborhood behind them with signatures and appeal to their local City Councils.

Currently our sport is experiencing blight caused by an animal rights group. There are many members that feel that we should be on the attack. They want us to report the Soar No More Group to the animal rights group. Tom agrees with most of the arguments presented by the membership about Soar No More.

The members that were at the zone meetings felt better knowing the AU is responding, however, they feel a less passive approach would be better. Tom explained that behind the scenes the AU is doing a pretty good job monitoring the situation. Tom reminded members it is important to look in the mirror and assure ourselves we are presenting our sport in the best light to the public.

##### Plains - Porter

He had a few inquiries and requests since last December. As mentioned in the AU Update, he participated in a Zone meeting in Missouri in March that was part of a show and auction and charity benefit for cancer called a 'Flight for the Fight'. This turned out to be an interesting and well attended event in Nevada, MO. He and Deone also did a loft inspection at the event. He believes the AU has been asked to participate in the Midwest Annual convention in Rochester MN in October. Part of the business meeting of that organization has, in the past, been hosting a Zone meeting or just having AU updates from Karen and the Zone Director at these business meetings in the convention.

He had what he thought was going to be a big problem with the Heartland Federation in MN. There are some questions as to how the organization is structured, set-up and run. No one in the organization was willing to follow up with a formal complaint and feared reprisals from the controlling body.

He had a call from a new AU member regarding the use of NPA seamless bands. He was told he could fly with them in old birds and then was disqualified when he won and was told they were not legal to race with. The AU rules say an appropriate seamless band for pigeon is legal. The

rule specifies that IF, CU and Mexico bands are recognized but NPA bands are not legal. As a result of this problem, he plans to contact the new members he gets in his zone to connect personally and let them know a few things the AU may help them with as they start out, such as about the mentoring program and other AU website benefits to review. Alan said he believed the sport of racing our pigeons should be fun for our new members if we want to keep them.

Alan heard there have been some major cheating problems in an area of his zone, but nothing formal has been sent in yet.

Finally, in closing, he said he sees a potential concern that we get suckered into situations and try to be the policeman of our sport. How can we do this without losing members? Should we care? Don't we need to be strong to make the sport strong? Is this part of our 20/20 Vision we continue to work on and add to? He would like to take a little time to talk about these tough issues and choices we will encounter down the road so we can be better prepared to address them appropriately.

He recalled the board talking about having help in the zone for the directors to stay current and on top of things. He wanted to hear from other how they have set it up and its progress. He believes in training and mentoring for the new zone directors and a work plan to follow/refer to. The board was reminded that was a suggestion made by a former board member, however, not acted on.

Finally, he asked how much information should be in the zone director reports; are they ever sent out, published or available upon request? The current policy is that the zone directors submit a written report 30 days prior to the meetings. This helps with recording minutes but also would be printed in the *Updates* so members may be made aware of what their directors are doing on their behalf.

President Rivera reminded the board that individual reports need to be written and submitted 30 days prior to the Mid-Year and Annual meetings. He also reminded the board that all Board Action Requests must be submitted 30 days prior to meetings or they would be tabled until the next meeting.

#### SOUTHWEST – McSweeney

There were no problems to report. The last Texas Center Convention registered approximately 100 people.

#### LAKES – Pairan

The zone was uneventful in the winter. He was aware of only one old bird show in Central and Southern Ohio, which is sponsored by his club. He believes pigeon flyers are missing an opportunity to get together and socialize in a relaxed atmosphere.

Pairan and his club attended the local 4-H day in Lancaster, Ohio again. The event is for 4-H members who haven't made up their minds about what to take for their project. The highlight was a release of his white birds at the end of the day. His club also gave away a few homers and fancy pigeons for kids to use as their projects.

In April, he and Terry Lynn released pigeons at the Olivedale senior center in Lancaster for the dedication of an oak tree to replace one that was over two hundred years old and had to be cut down. The event was attended by the mayor and recorded in the local newspaper.

In May, he attended a race release organized by Ed Verkleeren at the C. Harper Auto Dealership in Belle Vernon, PA. Birds were on display for the public to view, and literature from both the IF and AU was available. C. Harper Auto Dealership provided cash prizes to the winning lofts. This was a follow up to the release that Ed organized last year from the Tridelphia Cabela's in WV. Finally, he and his club released birds at a Memorial Day program at Floral Hills Memory Garden. The event is always very well attended and features speakers, a military flyover and two skydivers.

At this point of reports, Coletti clarified bylaws regarding Caribbean membership.

Motion was made to amend AU Constitution 2.05 to read "2.05 Class E Members. "Class E members" are those who reside outside the North American continent, except for Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Caribbean Islands shall be included in allowed competitive membership." Lawler/Pairan. Passed.

#### SOUTHEAST – Hassler

The zone has a new Latino club, the Springhill Sunshine Club. He was encouraged about the election participation. He will handle 2013 convention birds and the 2013 Greenhall Memorial Race. John Botello will handle Classic birds.

#### MOUNTAIN – Hoggan

He judged and spoke at five shows; picked up stray birds; helped with an ordinance situation and manned a county fair booth.

#### NORTHEAST – Wiaderski (newly appointed)

Toni introduced himself and gave a brief background and will be able to report zone details at the next board meeting.

#### WINSPEED©/NDB PROGRAMMING – Tobin/Holder/Coletti

Mike recapped activity since the last board meeting. He reminded the board that they had been working to convert WinSpeed© in order to be compatible with Windows 8, however, after trial and error, it appears we have at least three more years. Discussion ensued regarding changing direction (see below). Mike has also been working on a security change to 'PHP' code in the NDB and noted that some operations are too slow when computing President's Cup and Hall of Fame awards. He has also been dealing with tied birds again noting that only birds from the same loft can tie. Mike said a tie could be broken by adding .1 second on the Clock Bird screen (11:20:31.1), which was discussed.

Committee Chairman, Jay Holder, indicated that committee members and programmers experienced frustration due to distance, communication and misunderstandings. The first test version of the new PC version was tested in May with many issues found with the basic screens. The second release was tested in July after which Committee Chair Holder suspended the project until the board could determine how to proceed. We still have approximately three years to operate WinSpeed© on Windows 8. The board elected to discontinue development of the new PC version of Winspeed© and proceed directly to the development of eWinSpeed©, which is the web based version. The committee recommends change in programmers to alleviate previous challenges.

Motion to accept discontinuation of development of the new PC version of Winspeed© and proceed directly to the development of eWinSpeed©, which is the web based version. Lawler/Hoggan. Passed.

Motion to contract with programmer, Elizabeth Brandes, adhering to the same allocation of funds. Barger/Coletti. Passed.

#### AWARDS – Holder

The Champion Loft award criteria needs fine tuning. The committee suggests Jay Holder work with Mike Tobin to do test work on Champion Loft. He requested approval from the board. Motion to table until November. Barger/McSweeney. Passed.

#### INFRACTION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Board went into executive session to review the infraction. Upon exiting executive session, the board voted to approve an edited version of the committee's recommendations. Notice to parties involved will be sent per AU by-laws.

Adjourn.

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President's welcome. There were no non-BOD comments.

COMPETITION STANDARDS FINAL REVIEW - Coletti  
Covered the day before.

REVIEW OF NEW BOARD ACTION REQUESTS

SW-037        Require groups hosting AU conventions to absorb costs for meals, etc., for any youth in attendance. Mitiu/Hassler to approve as follows:

“Require groups hosting AU convention to absorb costs for meals, etc., for any youth 12 years old and under, that attend AU conventions.” Passed unanimously.

Plains-042    Award national database awards by the percentages outlined under AU race rule 1.06, with the minimum of 10 diplomas for any award. Tabled until November; Holder and committee to work on automation.

NW-135        Allow organizations the option to require all members to purchase AU bands only. Coletti/Holder. Passed: 2 opposed, 8 favored.

NW-136        All birds to be added to a loft's bird entry list at any time during a race series at the discretion of the Race Secretary. Coletti/Pairan. Passed.

NW-137        Allow AU organizations to poll by vote its individual racing membership on the issuance of AU diplomas. Coletti/McSweeney. Passed.

NW-138        Add a statement in the Race Rules, Policies and Practices and other locations as appropriate, that Proxy voting is not allowed in the AU. Coletti/Lawler. Passed.

NW-139        Reorganization of 4.03 with better definitions and explanations for those chartered organizations allowing any kind of partnership including multiple lofts from one postal location, shipping limits and voting rights. Change in title. Withdrawn.

NW-140        Remove/add verbiage in 5.10 Average Speed to address a loop-hole in the rule. Coletti/Holder. Passed.

Late BAR

LAKES-030    With approval of clubs and combines, flyers with measurements of less than 75 miles would be eligible for local awards. The National Database would be programmed to automatically expunge any flyer measuring less than 75 miles as well as that flyer's bird entry. Tabled until November.



## CONVENTION UPDATE

### 2012 Convention – Barger

They have 2400 birds. Badges will be required to attend any and all functions. There will be three shipping stations. Shipping will be Thursday night, 330 miles, out of Stockton. The Youth Race will release Friday morning, 170 miles, out of Tulare.

Reviewing, Holder will cover the WinSpeed© update, Pairan will take over 4-H. Hassler will chair Veterans Affairs committee with assistance from Jim Greelis) and Greelis will get a copy of the presentation DVD for use as a tool to the office for duplication. Greelis will develop an outline for members to use when presenting to vet groups.

Motion to adjourn. Mitiu/Lawler. Passed. Meeting was adjourned 11:30 a.m.