

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Robert McKenna, AU President
August 2023



Greetings! I hope those of you who have finished flying old birds had a successful season. As a reminder, race results calculated using the old WinSpeed© are not being uploaded to the national database and are not eligible for any national awards. Results must be entered using EWINSPEED® in order to be eligible for national awards. February 1, 2024 is the deadline to enter old and young bird results into EWINSPEED® for consideration for any national awards. If you have any questions regarding EWINSPEED®, contact Joyce Sterlin.

It's mind-boggling to think of how technology has changed our sport. When I started in the sport, we were still using rubber countermarks and hand-crank clocks. I had to request my measurements from a company and wait for them to be mailed to me. Now I can get measurements for a loft in seconds, my birds scan themselves in, and I can track my club races on the internet. Technology is evolving faster and faster and we need to adapt in order to keep our sport vibrant.

I just got back from the AU Mid-Year Board meetings. We've had a couple of Zoom meetings (one more way that technology has changed our world), but this was the first time that the board has got together in person since the election. Board meetings always follow the same pattern: Introduce the guest members, give each a chance to speak, salute the flag, then move on to the written agenda for the meeting. At the meeting on Saturday, July 8, we had about 10 guest members, and 2 at the meeting on Sunday, July 9. In the six plus years I've been on the board, there's always been at least one guest member, and I've seen up to 8 in past meetings.

AU Board meetings have always been open to all AU members, and clearly having at least some of the meetings on-line may make it easier to attend. However, the tradeoff is that it's more difficult to ensure that everyone gets their full opportunity to speak and hear what is being said. The connections are sometimes poor and you miss what someone said. People talk over people. At the live meeting we had much discussion on each Board Action Request (BAR), or subject. Most people would raise their hand, wait until they were called on and then voice their opinion and ideas. There were Bar's that passed, failed or were tabled. But working together things got done.

In the upcoming minutes that will be posted to the AU Website, you will be able see all of the activity from the meeting. A couple of highlights:

There was a BAR that passed to have on-line meetings so it's easier for members to attend. Moving forward, we will have a mix of online and live meetings, although there are still some issues to work out with the online meetings such as ensuring only AU members attend and determining the best way to allow participation while still having orderly meetings that end on time. There are also related costs. There will be a Zoom meeting in September. Check this update for details.

There was a BAR that failed to change the way we vote in the future. It would have allowed a way to vote via first-class mail and/or by electronic vote. Having even a portion of the membership vote electronically would save the AU thousands of dollars. In the end, the vote was 5-5. However, as this BAR included a change to the constitution, a 2/3 majority (7 board members) would have been required for the BAR to pass. Therefore, voting for the next election will be 100% by first-class mail-in ballots. We still need to work on who will provide the ballots and how they will be provided. An outside company such as the one used in the last election charges around \$25,000.

Now is the time to think about going to the AU Convention in Houston, TX. The deadline for discounted rooms and registration is Oct. 10th. Start now, don't be late. The hosts (Gulfcoast Homing Pigeon Association of Houston, TX, members of the Texas Center) have run multiple Texas Center Conventions in the past so I'm sure they'll put on an excellent convention. They will also have special activities for your spouse (such as a visit to the Downtown Aquarium, a quilt show, a visit to an art studio, and a Bunco tournament) so make it a family trip. November is a great time to visit Houston. The average November temperature in Houston is 60-70 degrees. If you live in a cold and snowy state this will make a great getaway.

For those of you training your new future champions or just starting your 2023 young bird season, I wish you the best of luck this year. Clock them fast and early.

Always remember, we are better together!