

American Racing Pigeon Union, Inc. Annual Board Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2017 – Phoenix, AZ

The meeting was called to order 8:00 a.m. President Coletti welcomed board members and guests, and led flag salute and the moment of silence in remembrance of those who had passed.

Attending: Tom Coletti, Karen Clifton, Lee Kohli, John Hundrup, Freddie Rivera, John McSweeney, Bob McKenna, Alan Porter, Shannon Demler, Al Hassler, Joyce Stierlin, Deone Roberts, Ron Pairan.

Guest, Dr. Paul Miller, was introduced as one of the featured convention speakers.

A copy of the revised convention licensing agreement was handed out and the board was asked to review the agreement for approval November 15.

There were no public/non-board member comments.

Old Business:

MOTION was made to approve the December 2016 meeting minutes as posted on the AU website. Pairan/Hassler. Approved unanimously.

New Business:

OFFICER REPORTS

Officer reports were initiated by President Coletti. He commented it had been a rough year, both for the board and the office. We have managed through all that and we will discuss a variety of information in executive session. Tom reported that the zone realignment has been completed and the new zone name is the Pacific/Mountain Zone. Joyce Stierlin does a great job representing the area and this will be a successful expense reduction.

Shannon Demler mentioned a formal vote would need to be taken as per by-law 3.06 since members were notified and no opposition was received. Coletti responded that it is a matter of maintenance.

Coletti continued with his remarks stating that the board also previously discussed any officers or directors to be appointed must provide a petition with a minimum of 25 signatures of AU members supporting the appointment. This provides a cleaner vetting process for the President.

MOTION was made to approve zone realignment as proposed to the membership in the August *AU Update*. The Pacific and Mountain zones will be combined and renamed the Pacific/Mountain Zone. This reduces the number of zones to seven. Motion included approval of requiring appointees to provide petition with minimum of 25 signatures supporting appointment. Stierlin/Hassler. Approved unanimously.

Tom advised the board that this is his last convention as president and that the summer meeting will be his last meeting as president.

Executive Vice President Update (Jay Holder)

He was not able to attend.

Vice President Update (Ron Pairan)

Ron reported that the biggest percentage of his time during the last few months was spent on infractions, which will be covered later in the meeting. Pairan said we are down to two investigators at this point. He is seeking more.

Pairan shared that he also attended the Ohio-Penn Federation meeting, auction and show Saturday and was the judge. He said he does not know if there will be future Ohio-Penn events like this as the show was scant and not well attended.

Ron echoed President Coletti and indicated this is his last convention while serving on the board. He also indicated Lee Kohli's term is finished and hopes he would seek reelection. Joyce Stierlin, Pacific Mountain Zone Director, also interjected and said her term is up and she plans to run for reelection.

With regard to the infractions received, Tom Coletti said that many were referred to attorneys so as not to have any conflict of interest and to ensure fair and complete investigations were conducted.

Ron Pairan said Steve Pronai is a prosecuting attorney in Ohio and has handled one infraction. Ron indicated Steve would be willing to handle future investigations.

Joyce Stierlin asked what the qualifications are to become investigators and Shannon Demler, By-laws Chairman, was asked who Infractions Committee members are. Shannon said he will get with Pairan on how to handle infractions as laid out in bylaws. Shannon indicated it will involve Infractions Committee more if we use what is laid out in bylaws.

Pairan asked if six investigators and committee members are needed. Karen Clifton suggested more committee members that are not board members. Demler said the investigators should be non-board members.

Dr. Miller (guest) said he had a suggestion for an investigator. He recommended Eddie Martin, a retired policeman in New York. Dr. Miller said he is diligent and specific.

President Coletti said it would need to be an AU member and asked Karen to communicate with Eddie Martin.

President Ex-Officio Update (Freddie Rivera)

Freddie said that as President Ex-Officio, he helped with getting pigeon feed to AU members that were victims of the hurricane in Puerto Rico. Freddie said he has received calls from the office about stray birds and attempted to retrieve and assist where possible. Rivera went on to say that he works with the drug committee and fields judges' program inquiries. He reported that there are two new shows starting up now. Freddie will attend both. One is being held in Minnesota and the other in the Baltimore area.

Treasurer Report (John McSweeney-Initial Budget Review)

John distributed the proposed budget. The budget reflected last year's proposed budget and that for 2018. He pointed out several budget items:

- 1) There is a decrease in band revenue income. However, the anticipated band revenue for 2018 should be the same as 2017 due to the shipping and currency exchange rate.
- 2) Projected dues income remains about the same as 2017.
- 3) The estimate for cost of diplomas may be reduced because we bought a large quantity last year to benefit from cost saving.
- 4) Not much is spent on promotion materials, such as t-shirts, as not many are sold.
- 5) Our software and video sales and income are down as most clubs already have WinSpeed© and we no longer sell videos, rather just the occasional DVD.
- 6) No salary increases will be given in 2018 and that our salary expense is actually down due to losing an employee.
- 7) Reviewed the FICA taxes listed on the proposed budget and explained that employees contribute to medical insurance.

Discussion regarding continuing the yearbook took place. Previously the board discussed only producing a digital version, however, it is agreed that we will continue to produce and print the publication. Therefore, the yearbook expense will remain in the budget.

John then discussed that not much is spent on ordinance support as members have not been approaching with problems.

Tom Coletti commented on the fact that only a small amount is listed for sport promotion expense. Tom went on to share that Lee Kohli has ideas to more fully utilize the website and social media. Tom said that he hopes the board will approve a budget to develop web based material for the AU.

Lee Kohli said we need somebody to develop our website to better engage new members. Lee shared that he has had great success with his business as a result of such enhancement to his website and use of social media.

John McSweeney reminded the board we can actually afford to apply the money as we choose as most AU funds are not in restricted accounts.

Coletti said he was looking for a motion to approve a line item budget of \$5000 for Lee Kohli to investigate web-based promotion. McSweeney said we can add the amount to the sport promotion line item.

MOTION was made to approve a budget of \$7500 for web-based promotion to be placed under the sport promotion category. Rivera/Pairan. Approved unanimously.

Freddie Rivera asked if the board is able to increase the budget for Judges' Panel expense and the board agreed that the Judges' Panel is not a program that is in demand.

Following the officer reports, President Coletti introduced a guest, who is also an AU member, Jerry Michielli.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

President's Agenda (Tom Coletti)

Item 1 on the pending list is to assist with mini or regional conventions.

Karen Clifton indicated she recently attended the CSRPO, which was hosted by the Bakersfield club. Karen said that as of November, there were no clubs offering to host the CSRPO convention in 2018. Karen asked Joyce Stierlin, Pacific Mountain Zone Director in CA if she thought the CSRPO would allow the AU to put their name on the CSRPO convention and assist with hosting the convention. Joyce said she would visit with CSRPO officers.

Al Hassler, Southeast Zone Director, mentioned that the Dixie Southern has the same problems finding clubs that will agree to host their annual convention. Al said he would talk to officers of the Dixie to see if they would like the AU's assistance and would want to partner with a convention.

Tom Coletti reminded the board that the reason he proposed the AU's partnership with some of the regional conventions is that not everyone has opportunity to attend an AU convention. He went on to say that some people are not able to travel as far and that attending a convention nearer them is ideal. Tom said that this allows AU members to enjoy a convention and the camaraderie of other convention attendees.

Coletti reiterated AU would handle only the convention portion and the local clubs would control the race event.

Item 2 on the President's Agenda is to create a traveling display or at least budget for a few additional display cases at the office. Tom suggested this remain in pending status as it is not urgent and there are some related concerns, such as security, which would need to be discussed.

Tom pointed out that Item 3 on the list is the development of eWinspeed©. Tom reminded the board that he expanded the committee and that Joyce Stierlin is working with the programmer and they are working on the rewrite of the NDB.

Until the item above (number 3) is completed, Item 4 (enable the membership database to reflect if a member belongs to more than one club) is also still pending.

Item 5 on the President's Agenda is to identify and utilize arbitrators to assist with member conflict resolution. President Coletti still thinks the issue of arbitrator is important. Tom said if we could get pigeon flyers to talk to pigeon flyers, we could settle a lot of issues. Tom also said that club procedures aren't always followed and having an arbitrator available to assist with local issues (not the national issues) would help.

Regarding Item 6 on his agenda to amend term of President Ex-Officio, Coletti is again asking for a motion and approval of limiting the Ex-Officio term to two years. During that two year term, the President Ex-Officio would have travel and voting privileges. After the term, he or she is President Ex-Officio in name only and is an honorary position with no voting or travel privileges

MOTION to limit the term of the President Ex-Officio to two years with voting and travel privileges. Kohli/McKenna. Approved unanimously.

Freddie Rivera asked if this was done to trim board expense. Tom Coletti said he wants the board to be lean and efficient.

Previously on the President's Agenda (listed as pending) was Item 7, which was the rewrite of the AU Convention Agreement. This has been done and the proposed new agreement was just distributed to the board.

Tom introduced Item 8 (to offer quarterly newsletters electronically only) as another attempt to reduce expenses.

Joyce Stierlin said it may be better to have something in the secretary packet or member card mailing to encourage members to sign up for the electronic version instead of the paper.

Lee Kohli said he believes we should gradually encourage members to receive electronic publications versus paper. Ron Pairan said that he still prefers paper and that he is familiar with club members that still do not have computers. Meeting guest, Dr. Miller, interjected that he still utilizes paper version of the yearbook to track birds.

The other guest in the room, Jerry Michielli, said he uses both hard copy and mobile applications.

Plains Zone Director, Alan Porter, said he uses paper version for stray birds but suggested streamlining the quarterly publications more.

Tom explained that Item 9 on the President's Agenda to fill all positions on the Infraction Committee with Zone diversity in mind, was still pending as of June 2017. Coletti explained that not only would 25 signatures be needed to recommend an investigator, diversity would allow us to hear from different areas of the country.

Lee Kohli asked how many man hours members are spent investigating rules and/or by-laws. Pairan said it requires hours of telephone contact and review of facts. Shannon Demler said it could be up to 100 hours depending on the case.

Kohli said potential investigators need to understand what they are getting into so they understand how to follow through. The board will collectively try to identify qualified AU members to assist with investigations.

President Coletti then reviewed completed items on the President's Agenda to remind the board what has been accomplished. These items include proper reporting at meetings; committee appointments; approval of travel expense policy;

appointment of two Zone Directors; reissue of Directors' manual; introduction of office staff through quarterly publications; hiring a public relations firm; creating an account for building expansion or replacement; revised release guidelines; review and/or revision of alternate By-laws for organizations; expansion of eWinspeed© Committee; approval of moving Utah to the Northwest Zone; revision of the AU Convention Agreement; requirement of petitions to support individual appointed to board or committees; and adjusting the Pacific Zone to include all of California, Nevada, Arizona and Hawaii, thus eliminating the Mountain Zone and related expense.

Coletti covered the list of withdrawn items that had less urgency or need. These items include use of a board consent calendar for non-controversial items; reinstatement of board secretary position as a member of the bylaws and infractions committees; relaxed race rules; video conferencing for summer board meetings; and offering the yearbook electronically.

Discussion of advertising fees continued and was more in depth. One suggestion from an AU member was to reduce the advertising prices; however, Coletti stated that just a few are interested in advertising and that would simply reduce cost for the few and reduce potential yearbook advertising revenue. The board agreed to continue to seek new revenue sources.

Leadership/Retention (Lee Kohli/Deone Roberts)

Deone Roberts reported the office decided to see what the members felt about what was needed to retain members. Karen Clifton asked that Deone initiate a focus group to discuss retention. The main topic to surface was that new flyers don't receive help they need to succeed and enjoy the sport. Those participating in the group indicated they did not care to go through print or emailed communications. Deone shared that none of the participants were aware of the "Homing Pigeon 101" on the AU's website that offers beginner information.

Deone said if members do not want to read, the challenge becomes selecting a method or methods that best assist beginners. One of the participants in the focus group expressed a desire for a list of members willing to assist beginners in each state.

Deone shared some of the efforts that resulted from the discussion among focus group participants. A post card was created and sent to former members inviting them to rejoin. Deone indicated that quite a few members had already returned the post card and reapplied to join the AU. A flyer was created to include with membership cards inviting new members to participate in the Help-A-Beginner program. Likewise, a flyer was created to encourage seasoned flyers to serve as mentors. These will also be included with membership packets as they are

distributed throughout the year.

Lee Kohli believes we need to re-define the focus group and with regard to diversity, spread contact throughout the U.S. for feedback. Lee said he thinks having several groups will help.

Jerry Michielli commented that there are chat rooms already in place that the AU might tap in to in order to get feedback, as well as provide assistance to new flyers.

Shannon Demler commented saying the working people are not the computer people.

John McSweeney said he has just a few actual racing members in his club, but the non-racing members want to be part of a group.

Northeast Zone Director, Bob McKenna, asked if we still have a Help-A-Beginner contact. Karen Clifton advised we have two Help-A-Beginner Program Coordinators. Karen explained that both maintain a database of potential mentors and as beginners apply, they are assigned a mentor.

McKenna commented that when he received the list of new members in his area, he contacted them to welcome them to the AU and they were grateful for contact. It was agreed that goes a long way to welcome members and help them connect with the AU.

Deone Roberts said previously the office did send out welcome letters to new members on behalf of Zone Directors, but there was little follow up.

Clifton reminded the board that all members receive a welcome letter and membership packet. Shannon Demler expressed he believed sending out an email or letter is a good practice and agreed it welcomed members.

Lee Kohli suggested perhaps we need more Help-A-Beginner regional representation. Lee said using the new member list to communicate events and information would be helpful and also encourage new members to attend or participate in local activity.

Roberts said one suggestion is to offer immediate reward for a member that brings in a new member.

Dr. Miller said that participation as children is what brings them back to the hobby. He added that getting kids involved is key and that they will enjoy the hobby early and return to the sport after education, family and career goals are met.

John McSweeney shared that he was aware of someone that found a bird and had a positive experience. John said as a result, that person became involved so working with the public in a timely and positive manner is also a form of promotion.

Dr. Miller agreed and said some finders want to keep visiting pigeons as pets.

Roberts continued saying another possibility to promote and retain is to increase advertisement, such as with Backyard Poultry and the Digest.

It was agreed that sending an email to new members from Zone Directors was a good idea and that the office should include them in the e-monthly newsletters.

Right to Race (Lee Kohli/Karen Clifton)

Karen Clifton reported on the Victorian Pigeon Virus as a threat for racing pigeons. A vaccine will hopefully be available in March. It is a fast spreading virus and has spread quickly through Europe due to lack of restriction on the birds crossing country lines and importation.

Dr. Miller interjected saying he does not believe it will be a problem as Dr. Colin Walker seems to be on top of it.

Al Hassler asked about a PMV update.

Dr. Miller said the USDA declared the vaccine formerly available as a threat because of molecular gene sequencing. He recommends Lasorda Strain B as a source of protection against PMV. Dr. Miller has used that on flocks and has had good results. Dr. Miller also said he feels a vaccine would be available by the end of the year.

Lee Kohli added that in his area, pigeons are removed from the existing local animal ordinance and a separate one will be created for pigeons. Lee said there is always concern that members' right to race are affected by ordinances.

National Youth/School Coordinator (Ron Pairan)

Pairan said that the homeschool convention he attended in Cincinnati had great response for two years; however, no projects have developed, or new memberships. Ron noted the same thing has happened with 4-H and said that youth tend to show more rabbits and chickens than pigeons.

Pairan said his club promotes at the Lancaster Festival in Ohio. Ron put ads in the paper but has not gained new members as a result.

Lee Kohli inserted that he tried to get public announcements and articles in local press and there was no response. Lee said he spoke with Jim Jenner about generating interest in the sport; however Jim proposes selling his dvd's, books, etc., which Lee said does not help us with hands-on projects with youth. Sale of merchandise does not encourage local pigeon fanciers to initiate youth groups or mentor other new members.

Pairan shared that Tim Tessier has done well with numbers. Tessier believes if you get the kids in, the parents are more likely to follow. Tim has had a youth project, NW Junior Flyers, for a number of years and it appears to be successful and the youth remain involved.

President Coletti reminded the group that the challenge is all the activities competing for youth attention. Tom said he thinks the 40-50 year old group seems a more likely group of potential participants in the sport. He continued saying that, in his opinion, the real problem is the cost of the clock, equipment and so on. He said Kohli will hopefully have some new web-based promotion tools that will help attract members.

Judge's Panel (Rivera)

Committee Chairman, Freddie Rivera, reported he believes the judging and show activity has increased. Freddie said there was not much activity for a few years, but he is now receiving more requests for judges at shows.

Freddie said the host coordinating the 2018 convention in Chicago does not want a show in conjunction with the convention.

With regard to cost, President Coletti explained that the original concept of regional judging is very important. The program was set up so that judges from within a certain region would judge local shows within that region. This keeps the travel cost down and keeps judges sharp.

Constitution & By-Laws (Shannon Demler)

Demler would like to impose time frames in the AU by-laws to resolve club by-laws disputes and to avoid resolution taking too long. Shannon said he would also like to eliminate individuals not actually involved in a complaint, but he continues to contact them and utilize resources.

Coletti asked how it would be possible to expedite the process of researching and resolving complaints that are a result of not properly following organization by-laws.

Demler said imposing time frames may be the solution and that he would work on additions for the AU by-laws for the board to review and present proposed amendments to the board during the 2018 mid-year meeting.

Competition Standards (John Hundrup)

John Hundrup said most issues he has been dealing with involved shipping limits, flying multiple teams in club-only and multiple-club races, race schedule changes and requirements, and partnership requirements.

John continues to field calls regarding voting rights, flying multiple teams from the same loft, allowing trainers on same trailer as race birds, and voting requirements for race series.

He said he has taken several calls on National Database (NDB) problems. John said he can usually assist with those, however, will defer to Joyce and Tom as needed.

Other problems John said he has had to rule on are shipping and racing with pox, Polish bands used in Winspeed©, basketing with a member's own birds rather than mixing, racing someone else's bird in someone else's loft, disqualification because of damaged band, and entering young bird in old bird races (early hatch birds).

Veterans Committee (Al Hassler/Karen Clifton)

Clifton reminded the board of AU member, T. Berekof's work in Tennessee with regard to introducing pigeons to veterans. Initially there was great interest of the local service providers and the hope was they would include suggesting to vets that caring for pigeons is a method of stress relief. That interest has diminished.

Karen attempted to generate the same interest in the sport by reaching out to state of Oklahoma Veterans care and service providers; however, there has been no response. Karen said that there may be some local groups or individuals that would see a benefit for veterans keeping and caring for pigeons, however, it has proven difficult to get regional or national partnership. Karen said we will have to continue working the local level. Karen concluded by adding that we will continue to encourage members to reach out to veterans and conduct releases. To help with this, a new Veterans flyer was created and distributed to board members and has been made available to members via the eUpdate.

Drug Test Committee (Freddie Rivera/Tom Coletti/JohnHundrup)

John Hundrup reported that after much research Diclofenac was added to the list of drugs that have been banned, effective 6/17 and is listed under AU Policy 400

(Administration of Prohibited Substances to Racing Pigeons). The research points to the drug being harmful to the birds and should not be used.

Tom Coletti shared that he referred a case to Hundrup where a bird was disqualified because of use of Diclofenac. Coletti checked with John Vance for research information and Vance indicated that he found the substance is incredibly harmful to pigeons. This was addressed at the summer meeting which resulted in the amended policy 400.

National Office Update/Membership Review (Karen Clifton)

Year-end membership totals are very near where we were last year at this time, however, net result is a slight decrease.

Karen reported that for several years, we have had numerous clubs that have been hanging on with two or three members. Karen explained that the office continues to send secretary packets to those clubs. Several of those clubs have now advised they have completely disbanded. Karen said that calling on these clubs, we have determined that some members have joined other clubs or joined the AU as individual members.

Karen mentioned that the Pacific and Mountain zones need to be combined in our office database. Karen reported that changing club and member affiliation from one zone to another is a programming function. This change will require programming effort and we will not pull Alan off his current tasks that are more urgent. Karen said that as soon as practical we will get the change made in the office database.

Karen shared that the 2018 convention will be held in Chicago. Clifton reminded the board of communicating with Greg Smith about a new convention agreement. This was distributed earlier in the meeting. She explained that the revised agreement is clearer in terms of the convention host club or combine being responsible financially regardless of the AU's name being attached. Karen said the new agreement gives the host license to use our name on the race, though they are responsible for proper payout. She said the new agreement also requires obtaining a bond.

Greg suggested convention hosts seek a surety bond. Karen reported that Greg felt another option is to use a CPA that is bonded. Karen said that Andy Waclaw, 2018 convention chairman, will be here during the convention and will provide an update during the Saturday general membership meeting.

Clifton said two race secretaries had contacted the office recently that have asked about our policy about Winspeed© availability. Both said they had a member

within their club that wanted to use the club disk to download on their computer to view data. Karen explained that both secretaries felt that members can view results on the NDB and they should not need Winspeed© to view results and were fearful that they would manipulate data. Both secretaries also reported that the members asking for the software said that if the secretaries didn't make it available, the secretary may be manipulating data.

Meeting guest, Jerry Michielli, said he feels more members should have access to the reports or he would need to do a lot of printing. However, most agreed that members should go to the NDB to view results.

National Race Secretary, John Hundrup, said that once members had the data, as long as they had Winspeed©, they could upload to NDB and the data would be revised. Therefore it is too easy to manipulate data.

Karen said another secretary that was the chair of his club loft certification committee called and said our criteria in the loft certification is too liberal. Karen reviewed the existing criteria in the certification application. It currently reads as follows:

The number of birds in the loft will fluctuate with each season; however, the number kept should not be excessive. During the breeding and racing season, it is understood that the number of birds may be increased, temporarily.

Karen said the club secretary that called regarding the loft certification criteria said he felt that it should be one bird per two cubic feet. Clifton told him the model ordinance, which was written by attorneys that were pigeon flyers, indicates one cubic foot per adult bird was adequate. He suggested that we change the certification checklist to read the chair of the certification committee has the right to increase the required space per bird.

Karen said that the attorneys that wrote the model ordinance most likely used one cubic foot as a recommendation because a fancier may have to negotiate terms with a city council if faced with an ordinance problem.

The board agreed to leave it at one cubic foot in the certification application criteria.

Dr. Miller said a flat number is only telling you half the story; the broiler standard is 84 square inches. If birds are out during the day, they don't need that much space to sit.

Clifton continued that the other information she wished to share, regarding the 2016 convention, would be shared in executive session.

Clifton proposed meeting in Salt Lake City for the June meeting next year. The recommended travel dates would be 6/8 and meeting on 6/9 & 10 and return travel on 6/11. All agreed.

Sport Development (Deone Roberts)

Roberts provided a printed report of events members have done to promote the sport. Deone reported that members in Minnesota, Illinois and Texas appeared in newspaper articles. She said promotion events were conducted in California, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin. As a result of one television appearance, a new veterans flyer was created that can be utilized by anyone. This information will appear in the January Update newsletter with more detail.

Deone explained that with member feedback discussed previously, a list of donated items to provide to beginners is maintained and shared with members through the eUpdate electronic newsletter.

Roberts shared that a new Flying Clovers 4-H Racing Pigeon Club was started by a gentleman in Michigan, which illustrates there is still youth interest, especially when tied to an organization such as 4-H. Deone will continue to work with this and other existing groups as well as encourage members to start new 4-H racing pigeon groups.

ZONE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Northwest Zone (John Hundrup)

John said that the NW zone has been quiet since June. In June, he attended the Texas Center Convention in Houston, TX. He said it was a very nice convention with multiple races and seminars being held each day.

President Coletti said that Shannon Demler, AU By-laws Chairman will represent the AU at the next Texas Center Convention.

Also in July, John said he attended the annual picnic, seminar, auction and zone meeting in Gresham, OR, that was hosted by the Mount St. Helens Combine. Dave Shewmaker and Tom Coletti spoke to 50-60 members attending.

John reported that the weekend of July 29th, he went to his local CAMP club's hosted young bird show and picnic to get flyers together for a fun gathering since

that is a quiet time of the year. John said the event includes flyers from Parma, Idaho, Vancouver, Washington, central Washington and Spokane. Normally 20-30 people attend.

John attended a zone meeting held in conjunction with the Oregon State convention and race in Redmond, OR, the weekend of September 2 and 3. He said this year's race was postponed to October because of fire and smoke. Don Chapin did a seminar on the Top Pigeon clock and live clocking program he is promoting.

Last, John said that rain and weather delays, along with the wildfire issue affected the ability to carry out a typical young bird race season.

Southeast Zone (Al Hassler)

Tom Coletti said Louis Rodriguez contacted the AU to assist members in Puerto Rico that were impacted by the hurricane. Coletti contacted Al Hassler and Al put a lot of work into making arrangements for AU members to receive what has resulted in 80 bags of feed at \$14 per bag and shipping at \$1300. Benny Delgado is the AU member Al Hassler is coordinating with and Al said that Benny will receive and distribute the feed to AU members.

Hassler shared that he approached Pure Grain, Lizzie Mae and Baden. Lizzie Mae stepped up and he worked with Rob Martin. Al said Rob ultimately reduced the cost of feed from \$25 bag of feed down to \$14 and that the estimate was \$1305 to ship from Ohio to Puerto Rico. Al said the feed will be shipped to AU member, Christopher Rodrigues' sister-in-law and that it will take approximately 10 days once all the paperwork is complete, shipment prepared and shipped. According to Al, Benny has lined up AU members to receive feed. Al said the AU members in Puerto Rico will get a truck and move the feed to storage. AU members will distribute to AU ID'd members.

Hassler said the Mid-Florida Combine will host the Dixie Southern Convention for 2017, 2018 will be in hosted in Georgia and the convention will be held in New Orleans in 2019.

Southwest Zone (John McSweeney)

In addition to working with the office on the accounting throughout the year, John said he also attended the Texas Center Convention. John reported that he has handled the usual stray bird calls. John said that children had found a couple of the lost birds he retrieved. John was contacted by another finder and so, in turn, contacted the owner. When John contacted the owner, an improper response was given so John handled retrieving the bird from the finder to avoid negative perception.

John explained that the Texas Center Convention is a series of one loft races. John shared that longtime Texas Center Secretary, Ray Cothran, retired and now Ray Taylor from the Austin area has taken over. McSweeney said that the Denton club will host the winter meeting and will hold the 2018 convention, which is always in mid-July.

Plains Zone (Alan Porter)

Alan said his zone has also been quiet. Alan reported that the Midwest Convention was held in Minnesota and that the race birds were held for two days because of weather.

Alan told the board that the Royal Club has expanded their annual event and included a seminar and auction.

Alan said that the Omaha group also has a big Young Bird show and it is handled like a mini convention. Alan explained that the Grain Belt Classic has grown every year.

Northeast Zone (Robert McKenna)

Robert said he went to the Northwest Junior show. He indicated they don't have electronic clocks, they ship on Saturday and race on Sunday and report the following week. McKenna said they're looking for the blue plastic Benzing clock.

Robert went on to say that Carolyn Kraft, the daughter of Bob Kraft (owner of New England Patriots) wanted to promote with a bird release and picnic at a local park. McKenna assisted with that and said that one person in his club donated a crate of birds for the release. Carolyn wants lofts at her houses in Massachusetts and in Vermont and she wants a release at Gillette Stadium during a Patriots game. Bob said it won't work out this year, but the Patriots game may be on Sunday next year which he thinks is Veterans Day. Robert suggested that they might salute the military and veterans as part of this effort.

Robert said that former NE Zone Director, Bill Desmarais, influenced this years ago by doing releases for her. McKenna plans to write up a story on this.

McKenna reported that two groups in New England are interested in hosting a convention. Clifton will get the convention agreement and related information to McKenna for those clubs.

Robert told the board that Canada now has two magazines. One is on line and is international. There are advertisers and stories from all over the world <https://www.thecanadianpigeoninternational.com/>. It is a 139-180 page magazine.

Robert said that the on-line magazine publishers had contacted him about the AU advertising with them.

McKenna closed by announcing that the Boston Concourse will be hosting an auction of a small trailer.

Pacific/Mountain Zone (Joyce Stierlin)

Joyce shared that she has noticed in California that clubs are breaking up and reforming. She said she attended the California State (CSRPO) convention, it was well attended and the show attendance was up. Joyce said people are asking for more awards and recognition.

Joyce reported on an ordinance issue in Roseville where a member has been flying for over a year. The neighbor filed a complaint. The AU has provided ordinance packets and guidance to the member. She said that former CSRPO President, Frank Meder, stepped in and is also trying to help the member as he meets with elected officials.

Lee Kohli said in his area, the city tried to use an ordinance which would limit residents to 6 birds. He has managed so far to get one bird per square foot in the loft.

With regard to Winspeed© support, Joyce said she had fielded 250 calls. She went on to say that since July, calls are basically about Windows 10 installation. The “send” option within the program now does not work. The user must use the “send later” option.

Joyce stated that the NDB is faster and now a clock appears to show the upload progress. Many of the calls Joyce receives are about clocking interfaces. Joyce said the issue with members being “redlined” (results not showing in the NDB) has decreased a lot. Joyce continued by sharing that the main cause for a member’s results not appearing in the NDB is because the race secretary has entered different spelling of the member’s name than what is in the AU office database.

Joyce said that printing in Word Pad has also been an issue and concluded by saying that approximately 1/5 of the calls she receives pertain to true Winspeed© features.

Lakes Zone (Lee Kohli)

Lee said there has been a lot of boiling and bickering within a few clubs in his zone, which has resulted in numerous phone calls. Lee said he has worked on behalf of members and tried to assist the infraction committee where possible and appropriate.

Lee reminded the board that he has been writing articles to feature the strong points of the AU and to highlight the talent of the board and staff, as well as the numerous projects the AU undertakes on behalf of members. Lee said the next article he will write will pertain to Al Hassler and his efforts on behalf of the AU to get assistance to the Puerto Rico members impacted by the hurricane.

Kohli shared with the board that there is a member in Ohio who has recently been confronted with an ordinance problem. The city is trying to eliminate the member's right to keep and care for birds. Lee reported that he had been in communication with an attorney and assisted in securing the attorney's services. Lee said that the member and fellow members are appreciative of the AU's financial assistance to the member's attorney.

Infractions Review/Executive Session

MOTION to accept recommendation of the Infraction Committee as relates to reviewed infractions, as well as the Drug Committee recommendations.

Kohli/Rivera. Unanimous.

MOTION-Hassler/Rivera to adjourn. Unanimous.

American Racing Pigeon Union, Inc. Annual Board Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2017 – Phoenix, AZ

Attending: Tom Coletti, Karen Clifton, Lee Kohli, John Hundrup, Freddie Rivera, John McSweeney, Bob McKenna, Alan Porter, Shannon Demler, Al Hassler, Joyce Stierlin, Deone Roberts, Ron Pairan.

Coletti opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. and welcomed guest, Jerry Michielli.

WinSpeed©©/eWinspeed©/NDB/Programing (Tom Coletti/Joyce Stierlin/John Hundrup)

Tom reported that completion of development of eWinspeed© is on hold until NDB rewrite is final, has been tested and data is imported.

With regard to the NDB rewrite, Joyce Stierlin reported that work began in July with the following goals in mind:

- Retain all current functionality.
- Create a separate test/development site for checkout of the new NDB by selected AU members (John Hundrup, Joyce Stierlin, and GHC) to test and approve prior to production rollout.
- Resolve upload timeouts by simply putting the data into a temporary location and not doing award calculations during uploads. It uses a background process transparent to the end user to store data in the NDB and perform award calculations for Ace Pigeon, Champion Loft and Hall of Fame. Hall of Fame is not final yet.

Note: This is currently in production to resolve the timeouts. However some race secretaries check the NDB Awards immediately, not allowing time for the calculation process to complete. They resubmit their upload. This causes multiple simultaneous upload processes and awards calculations, resulting in clashes when they're trying to delete and add the same record. Resulting timeouts make the race secretary think they need to resubmit the upload again.

- Store all data in a single database instead of each season's data stored in a separate database. This will facilitate Hall of Fame calculations that span multiple seasons. It will also make closing out a season's uploads more transparent and allow the NDB administrator (national race secretary) to close the season on or after the cutoff date without programmer intervention.
- Work with AU award committee to review Ace Pigeon, Champion Loft and Hall of Fame award criteria and develop algorithms to properly calculate and output the results. Hall of Fame will need the most work as it is currently broken.

- Modernize the User Interface for ease of navigation (e.g. use of “BACK” button is confusing).
- Replace outputting race results to the screen in text format (where users can copy them and alter prior to distribution) with protected, unchangeable PDF’s that can be shared or printed easily.

Joyce then reviewed the current status:

- A test/development site has been created but is fully accessible only to the contract programmers. Our AU team can look, but not update, so cannot test the redesigned NDB yet.
- The old PHP (programming language) code that performs functions has been streamlined and upgraded to a current version of PHP for better use of the language and better debugging options.
- Historical data back to 2010 Old Bird season is being loaded to the test/development site.
- Some of the screens have been created to test the resizing code that relays itself out according to the user’s screen (e.g. cell phone, tablet, PC, etc.).
- The project is at least 2 months behind. The development firm is located in Florida and Hurricane Irma (in early September) impacted them significantly. All their projects got behind and they are struggling to catch up. Additionally, the lead programmer has had to deal with several family emergencies causing delays.

Joyce did say that Alan reports that most of the database is done, about half the web design is done, but the person tasked with PHP development is way behind so Alan is pushing for more progress and looking for a possible replacement.

Additional comment from John Hundrup was that the results can be converted to pdf so that they cannot be manipulated.

Joyce said that there was an Ace Pigeon issue in October where birds were not showing up in the NDB, however, Alan fixed that.

President Coletti added that two programmers are waiting to work on eWinspeed©. Coletti continued that with Alan’s current experience, we may want to combine the programmers from Oregon and Wisconsin and allow Alan to lead the project. Tom said utilizing their varied and combined experience would take care of the different aspects of the program creation, covering the back end, front end, and hardware. Coletti urged the board to think about that idea, as the board will probably need to make a decision by 2018 mid-year board meeting.

Joyce concluded advising that eWinspeed© is on hold because of separate databases functioning manually rather than all merged and tied to the office database. Alan is pulling all of those together as one.

Final Budget Review/Approval (John McSweeney)

McSweeney said there was one more change made to the budget that was originally overlooked. John said that with one less employee, our payroll expense goes down approximately \$10,000.00 and that associated Social Security tax is reduced by \$700.00. Therefore the contingency reserves went up from \$33,527 to \$40,262 for 2018.

MOTION was made to approve the projected budget provided by Treasurer McSweeney. McSweeney/Rivera. Approved unanimously.

Final Review of the Revised AU Convention Agreement

The revised AU Convention Agreement was distributed to board members. By-laws Chair, Shannon Demler, said the new agreement refers to clubs and suggested the word “clubs” should be changed to organization. Shannon said the convention host could be a combine, federation or more than one club. Coletti directed Karen Clifton to make the change on the new agreement. Karen will get the new agreement on the AU website, as well as to directors for inclusion in the AU Directors’ manual.

Freddie Rivera said the new agreement should require the host to include a show during the convention. Tom Coletti said a show requires even more work than just hosting the normal convention and race and that there is not enough interest. Tom reminded the board that in prior years, the AU has tried to encourage the convention host to coordinate a show for those pigeon fanciers that would like to compete in a national show. However, convention hosts have not had the desire or capability to handle the extra work. Tom suggested that perhaps verbiage to the agreement be added giving the convention host (organization) the option of having a show as well as the race.

Guest Dr. Paul Miller joined the meeting.

Shannon Demler said the revised agreement states liability for the convention and the race is that of the convention host (organization). Shannon stated that this could be modified to include all activities of the convention. Demler said that changing the verbiage from race to “convention” in the application implies all activities, not just the race.

Proposal/Demonstration of Topigeon/Home Evaluation (Don Chapin)

Chapin was not available for presentation.

Review - New Board Action Requests

NW-173 Arrange for Board training for AU Board members every two years. Most incoming board members have not served on boards and this would help as they discuss, revise and approve change, policy, etc.

Discussion: Tom Coletti said the tools, such as the AU Directors' Manual are provided to work together as a team.

Ron Pairan said we need to look at the related cost and asked if others felt it would require a separate meeting.

Karen Clifton suggested a separate meeting would not be required; rather the first four hours of a meeting would be devoted to training. Karen shared that in the past, we have identified a firm within the local area of a board meeting. That company would have a consultant attend our meeting and provide hands on training seminar. Karen said the cost is the consulting fee and that would vary depending upon location.

Tom Coletti said training has been helpful in the past and assists new board members as they become familiar with fellow board members and AU policies and procedures.

MOTION to table until 2018 mid-year meetings when Karen has had time to research time/cost/content. Pairan/McSweeney. Approved unanimously.

NW-174 Allow the full board to participate in the selection of AU Member National Recognition Awards.

Discussion: President Coletti said that presently the executive committee reviews nominations and recommends winning candidates for awards. Coletti would like to have the entire board review the candidates in a closed session following mid-year board meetings.

MOTION to allow the full board to participate in the selection of AU Member National Recognition Awards. Porter/Hassler. Approved unanimously.

PLAINS-045 Allow use of live clocking and evaluations.

Discussion: Total cost is believed to be about \$99 for the unit plus annual fees possibly up to \$450 per member for annual use of the Benzing Live clocking system.

Al Hassler said it is not right to have one clock company monopolize the market and he felt that members will like the fact that live clocking can take all clocks.

John Hundrup said Benzing is the only clock manufacturer with live clocking right now. John said that as with Unikon you have to run a race through Winspeed© then load into MYPigeon, therefore it is not a live clocking.

John McSweeney said allowing live clocking will reduce the inconvenience of traveling and that it is easier to transmit data electronically and is a huge time and effort saver. John posed the question, why deprive people, as in voting, of ability to participate despite distance?

Coletti said there is no provision for timeout for darkness, so data must be run through Winspeed© to allow timeout for darkness.

Hassler said their club provides unofficial results and the information is available almost immediately.

Joyce Stierlin said she can send data via email link and recommends going ahead and fill in second email to the national race secretary so he can review and oversee the whole operation.

Robert McKenna said the technology is here and that we should move on with it. He said that approximately 100 out of 900 are using live in his area. He represents his area and everyone is in favor. McKenna added that so far, they have found no security problem and that the G2 clock is cheaper and works on that too.

Alan Porter said if it is secure, he is in favor and that if it was built to our specification that we requested, we should approve.

John Hundrup reminded the board that not all members have systems that would allow live clocking and asked what would be done for those who do not have it?

Stierlin said the race secretary still comes in to evaluate the clocks and the data goes into the same folder as Pidex. She said the knock off time is the same as physical clock time.

Lee Kohli said eWinspeed© is ours and that we should move forward quickly on this.

Stierlin said it is a huge project compared to the NDB.

Demler asked how would physical presence be possible with the current rule.

Stierlin said if there is a physical knockoff, three are required, or you could do full Benzing live participation and the race secretary declares the final results.

Pairan shared that Demler was saying the wording in the current rule would need to be changed.

Stierlin said she would be glad to help find where the rules changes would be needed.

Tom Coletti said based on this discussion, it is clear “We don’t know what we don’t know.” Further, we are currently unaware of potential actual cost in the end and that this group is not ready to approve this.

Guest comment: Jerry Michielli said we should have appointed a manager to control the programmers when development of eWinspeed© was initiated.

Coletti responded that Michielli is correct and that we did not know. He said that out of respect for the board member that was in charge, we waited. Tom also asked Jerry if he was interested in filling in that role. Michielli said no, he does not have time right now.

Lee Kohli requested elaboration on the time frame.

Coletti said the NDB must be done first and that if unfortunate events (hurricane and family emergencies) had not occurred, the programmer would have already been done. Tom added that he believes the programmer will catch up quickly. Tom also shared with the board that we, ourselves, pulled the programmer off of the project a few times.

Coletti continued that the board should not pass anything until we know all details and result of any action taken.

Stierlin said she estimates it will be a while and the specs are ready, but we need to complete the NDB rewrite first. We must maintain Winspeed© and offer technical support while we wait.

Alan Porter said it sounds like there is a financial involvement and we need to be sure of the product before we approve an expense.

Stierlin asked what will produce income with eWinspeed©?

Michielli thinks we will lose eWinspeed© to something else. People will not wait, but utilize other programs such as Benzing Live.

McSweeney said we were going to charge for use of eWinspeed© but this is part of what members' dues paid for. He doesn't think members should be charged to use eWinspeed©.

Coletti said we never intended to charge the members, rather he believes we should charge vendors to download eWinspeed© to download their products and that is where the potential revenue is.

Coletti said the programmer needs time to finish the NDB. Nothing else will function without it.

Demler said we've been talking future and it seems like this is the future. Demler said his club doesn't have to change, but that his club shouldn't hold up another club either so doesn't see a need to delay.

Ron Pairan said live clocking was brought up because of the need to go to the club but we don't need to go to the club. He added that no one in his combine will be using live clocking. He said they are not into technology and he is willing to wait a little longer to see how it plays out.

Lee Kohli said Winspeed© has been one of the greatest developments and that it is a shame to delay profit from it. He said he believes the manufacturers should pay to have access to NDB.

Tom Coletti said he believes that if the three programmers that have been recommended work together, we would have a finished product sooner.

John McSweeney said he could see waiting to two years but then move on to something else.

Alan Porter suggested postponing until summer for a progress report and not consider any similar board action request for any live clocking or external systems until the NDB rewrite and eWinspeed© is complete.

Guest, Jerry Michielli, said the delays may have been a blessing in disguise and this is not an easy task to execute.

Kohli said he empathizes with flyers that have long hours to travel to and from the club and that it is very short sighted for us to walk away from this.

Ron Pairan said going to the club is not an issue.

Jerry Michielli said he has ideas how to push eWinspeed© forward.

Joyce Stierlin said we have concurrent projects and that we should move on it.

Michielli suggested we have a contract with a time period.

MOTION to table indefinitely allowing use of live clocking systems and evaluations and not take action at this meeting. Porter/Hassler. Approved: 7 in favor; 2 opposed.

PLAINS-046 Approve the use of live clocking.

Comments: 100% club participation required. The cost is \$6/member.

MOTION to table 046 indefinitely and not take action at this meeting. Porter/McSweeney. Approved unanimously.

NW-175 Add Topigeon V8 FCI approved clock to AU approved clock list.

Hundrup said it is the same as other live clocking alternatives but in one unit. He sees no reason not to approve just the clock.

MOTION to approve the clock itself though use of the live clocking function is not to be approved or used for closing a race. The upload to Winspeed© remains the same and clocks still need to be brought back to the club, race results closed and an arrival reported printed, the same as required of all other clocking systems at this time. Hundrup/Pairan. Approved: 8 in favor; 1 against.

NW-176 Consider qualified timers for home evaluation.

MOTION to table this BAR indefinitely until such time the NDB rewrite is complete and eWinspeed© is functional. Hundrup/Pairan. Approved unanimously

NW-177 Live clocking be authorized for home evaluation with AU supervision.

MOTION to table this indefinitely and not consider any similar future BAR's requesting consideration or approval of live clocking or external systems until the NDB rewrite is complete and eWinspeed© is functional. Hundrup/Hassler. Approved unanimously.

NW-178 Approve Terry Gilmore and Jerry Michielli to be named AU Person of the Year for 2017.

Comments: Karen Clifton advised the board that member recognition awards nominations are due by June 1 each year and are reviewed at that time. The 2017 member awards were determined during the 2017 mid-year board meetings.

Tom Coletti also said member award nominations are not a Board Action Request item; rather the appropriate award applications should be used. Tom suggested that John Hundrup advise Don and that the applications be resubmitted in proper form by June 1, 2018. They will be considered during the 2018 mid-year summer meetings.

Good of the Sport

John McSweeney said some board members are concerned about money spent. John feels it would be a good idea to share bank balances as of October 30. Coletti said it was okay with him. That information was distributed to the board. Karen Clifton was directed to send a list of checks written each month, as well as the bank account balances to board members.

Agenda Assignments for Annual Membership Meeting (Tom Coletti)

Coletti listed order of presentations to take place at the general membership meeting on Saturday.

- Welcome/Flag Salute/Moment of Silence (Clifton)
- Approve Annual General Membership Meeting Notes as posted 12/16
- Introduction of Board Members (Clifton)
- President's Comments (Coletti)
- NDB Update (Stierlin/Hundrup)
- Treasurer's Report (McSweeney)
- Promotion Update (Roberts)
- 2018 Convention Update (Andy Waclaw)
- Introduction of Lobbyist (Clifton)
- Lobbyist Update (Smith)
- Good of the Order
- Adjourn

Other Committee Assignments

Individuals were assigned duties to carry out convention functions.

MOTION to adjourn. Porter/Kohli –unanimous.

November 18, 2017 – Phoenix, AZ

The annual membership meeting was called to order 9:00 am. After the welcome, flag salute and moment of silence, board members and committee members were introduced.

MOTION to approve annual general membership meeting notes as posted 12/2016. Lawler/Cartmell. Approved.

President Coletti welcomed all attendees and said that he would like to wish Joe Houghton happy birthday.

Tom said this would be his last general membership meeting as President and he will turn it over to the new President at the convention in Chicago. He stated that we've made a lot of changes and assured members that the board is mindful that the money AU is spending is member money. Tom said since he has been President, he has done his best to ensure expenditures are necessary and controlled.

Coletti introduced officers and directors, starting with Ron Pairan, Vice President and Infraction Committee Chairman, thanking them for their service. Tom said the AU is experimenting with a different model of convention, with the office running the convention and the race being left to the local members. Tom thanked Dennis Aycock, an Arizona member who was willing to take that on. Coletti thanked all the Arizona members that worked with Dennis as they have worked hard to ensure the race was run well and fair.

In addition to that, Tom said Ron Pairan and Robert McKenna are coordinating the American Breeders Auction. Tom shared appreciation with another local member, Dick Doud, for assisting them with the auction and coordinating shipping the birds to winning bidders. The money raised will go to the AU Scholarship Fund.

Tom continued board member introductions and introduced John Hundrup who is the Northwest Zone Director and National Race Secretary. Tom said John has had a rough couple of years too trying to assist with rulings, which sometimes result in conflict. Tom announced that John is also running for President next year so he encouraged members to get to know him.

Next, Tom introduced John McSweeney, Southwest Zone Director and Treasurer and that McSweeney is running for Executive Vice President.

Alan Porter the Plains Zone Director was introduced. Tom said that Alan is instrumental in getting clubs in sync in his area.

President Coletti then introduced Lee Kohli, Lakes Zone Director, as a standup guy. Tom said Lee is new to board and did not just sit around during his first term. Tom reported that Lee got busy right away dealing with state veterinarians to allow continued racing in states hit by the 2015 Avian Influenza outbreak. Tom added that Lee is also a great writer and is good at getting background on individuals you may not have known and getting that information to members. Lee is running for Vice President in 2018.

Tom said that Robert McKenna is another one of our newer board members. Tom again thanked Robert and Ron Pairan for their work on the AU Scholarship Auction. Tom said that McKenna is a great help and tremendous worker and good fit for AU Zone Director.

Joyce Stierlin was introduced next. Coletti said he has known Joyce for many years and worked with her on clocks. Tom explained that she is head of the California State Racing Pigeon Organization, no matter what title she carries. Tom shared that Joyce's background is programming so she took over WinSpeed© technical support and is assisting the programmer with the NDB rewrite and ultimately eWinspeed©. Tom said Joyce brings a lot of insight to the AU Board of Directors.

President Coletti then introduced Al Hassler, Southeast Zone Director. Among other things that Al works on, Tom said that he recently jumped in to help get pigeon feed to members in Puerto Rico that were impacted by the hurricane. Al jumped right in and in just two weeks, he made contacts, obtained donations and coordinated shipping and distribution of donated bird feed to members in Puerto Rico. The shipping will take place after the convention. Tom said he could not thank Al enough.

Tom presented Deone Roberts, the AU Sport Promotion Manager. Along with all her other promotion efforts and office tasks, Tom said Deone has been working with Lee Kohli with generating articles and press releases. Tom added that Deone and Karen coordinated this part of the convention.

Last, Tom introduced Karen Clifton, the AU Executive Director. Tom said Karen keeps us in line, keeps us informed, assists the board, does most of the worrying, and she keeps us coordinated. He thanked Karen and AU staff and gives them credit for the amount of time and effort they put in on behalf of the board and AU members.

Joyce Stierlin and John Hundrup were working with contract programmers on the National Database rewrite which began in July. She explained that the prior

database was built using what is now somewhat obsolete technology. She said it was wonderful when originally programmed, however, technology has evolved and it is being brought up to date according to new technology.

Joyce went on to say that the NDB upload process has been modified to make it faster by removing updates of the AU Awards statistics from the NDB upload and simply triggering a separate background process. Race secretaries need to wait a few minutes after they upload to the NDB before they check awards.

In WinSpeed©, now we use “send later” rather than “send now” option. The “send now” option does not work with the more recent operating systems such as Windows 10.

Joyce explained that the NDB rewrite will combine all series (OB and YB) for all years into one database instead of each series for each year being a separate database. This will allow for easier compilation of AU Awards that span multiple years.

They are also modernizing the language so programmers have better tools for debugging. Race results will be provided in Adobe PDF documents which are protected and cannot be changed.

Joyce explained that the programmers who have been working on the NDB rewrite are in Florida and the latest hurricane and associated events disrupted work but it is getting back on track.

Treasurer John McSweeney provided an update. He explained that the AU is sound financially. John did point out that attorney fees had accumulated throughout the year as a result of the 2016 convention issue and other significant member challenges. These expenses were not in our budget. John reminded members that our financial statements are on the website and welcomed any questions.

Deone Roberts was asked to provide a promotion update. She asked the members in attendance what they want or need to assist with promotion. She reminded members that the AU has materials and information to help with their local promotion efforts.

Deone mentioned that longtime AU member, Herb Cartmell, decided to work with 4-H youth. Once his program was up and running, Herb compiled helpful information and materials to help others replicate the information. Deone said she has been able to share that information with others.

One member that she shared the information with, Mike Netzky, decided to work with 4-H youth in his area. Deone said that the AU has provided Mike with assistance and other AU members have as well. Deone said that the program is up and running and she is anxious to hear success stories about the youth involvement.

Deone then highlighted a couple of other promotion efforts. She said two gentlemen in New Mexico made a pigeon presentation at a retirement center and met an actual pigeoneer. Deone said another member in Missouri is in every media outlet and format getting the word out about the birds. He is tying into a charitable cause that endears him to the community.

Deone pointed out there is a wide variety of possible promotion opportunities and again told members to call on the AU for assistance with their projects and events.

Cowboy Lorefice commented that he can't get the sport to grow. He said the local area ordinance is prohibitive.

Karen then introduced Andy Waclaw as the chair of the 2018 convention. Andy reported that the dates of the convention will be October 17 through October 20, lofts are filling up and he encourages attendees to reserve their rooms at the Four Points Sheraton Chicago O'Hare. He said they have meals and entertainment planned and trips are set up for guests if they want to go site-seeing while in Chicago.

Joe Corini, a member in attendance, addressed the fact that convention handlers need to be knowledgeable and in a good position for bird placement. Joe said he does not criticize but offers a constructive idea for a successful race. Joe said that inexperienced handlers can unintentionally harm the race outcome and that there should be a committee to vet handlers.

Dennis Aycock addressed the group and said that all handlers for the 2017 Arizona convention race are experienced

Andy said that the Chicago convention handlers all have at least 2 years of experience and that everyone is on rotation. He said that any handlers are outside the ordinance restricted area.

Karen Clifton said that several years ago former AU By-laws Chairman, Herb Cartmell, was instrumental in getting the requirement that each handler has minimum of two years' experience added to the convention agreement.

Another member in attendance, June Romero, suggested that more English/Spanish translations would be helpful. If we are financially sound, we could put more dollars to translation of materials. For instance, June said that the front portion of the *AU Yearbook* could be in English and the back in Spanish. She said she believes with the influx of Spanish speaking members, this would be a great member value.

AU member Joe Houghton asked how many members were in the AU at this time.

Clifton said we have a decrease of about 157 and that this is the first year we have not had a slight increase.

Greg Smith was introduced as the lobbyist on behalf of AU. Greg said that this is the 14th AU convention he has attended. Greg said he started with AU as a result of his association with Dr. Gary Braden, former AU NW Zone Director.

Greg reviewed his history with AU and the various projects he has worked on, which included PETA, bird flu, bioterrorism, and the inability to ship birds through the post office. Greg said the AU has been successful in protecting members' rights to ship and convincing most state officials that pigeons are not susceptible to Avian Influenza, thus allowing members to race.

Greg noted that the AU has built its positions based on sound science and policy and has insisted that public officials, when they make regulatory decisions, do the same.

Greg reviewed the AU's work on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), which was developed for tracing cows in the event of disease outbreaks. Greg, along with AU officials met with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The USDA subsequently determined that the AU's band registry is sufficient and no further restrictions or requirements were placed on members.

Greg reminded members that they are the best advocate for the sport and encouraged all to take time to educate local officials and be good neighbors and community-minded.

He went on to talk about the opportunity to generate national publicity for the AU and pigeon fanciers in general. Greg will be coordinating with governmental agencies to help celebrate Cher Ami's 100th anniversary in 2018. It is all tentative at this time, but he does plan to attempt to bring these entities together next October.

He switched to the 2016 convention topic. Greg advised meeting attendees that his firm has an office in California and his partner reached out to the convention chairman. The convention chairman retained an attorney, which, as a matter of bar ethics, requires the AU's attorneys to only communicate with the chairman's attorney. Greg said that his firm pressed hard for a full accounting and after sometime only received a very bare minimum document that outlined expenses and revenue from the convention. Greg said there was data lacking and when they pressed for a more complete accounting, the convention chairman (through his attorney) stopped communicating with Greg's firm.

Greg advised that some local California handlers took a complaint to the San Bernardino Police Department, which initiated a police investigation. Because of the possibility of a criminal process, the AU retained a firm with criminal law experience and a local office. That firm investigated, but, again, the chairperson would not communicate with anybody. Greg said that the police investigation is ongoing, as far as anybody knows, but that the police department does not reveal where they are in the process.

Smith noted that the race is run at the local level, just like other races around the country, and that AU was not responsible for the running of the race and received no financial benefits from the race. Ironically, because the AU is not involved in the race, the AU itself did not suffer direct financial harm. Therefore, while the AU may be able to sue for an accounting (which would be costly), individuals who allege actual harm would need to bring their own cases.

One member reported that they had taken the coordinator of another race to small claims court and that that had led to a settlement. The local members that were affected filed a suit against the individual responsible for the race and won.

Greg mentioned he is aware that some members perceive the AU as doing nothing. He said the AU board is not complicit in any way and was as aggressive as possible in attempting to assist in getting the convention participants paid. Greg repeated that those members that were impacted should consider their legal options in pursuing the person(s) that did receive the money and was responsible for the distribution.

A member asked Greg if there is any action to stop threats and intimidation of officers from those with a different agenda (not related to the convention) that are using the situation to harm board members.

Greg said there is no law that states anyone has the right to be an AU member. If a member acts outside the AU's rules and ethics, the AU can take action.

For the good of the order, Bob Brumagin indicated that some members don't want to attend the general membership meeting because board members are dressed formally in suits. He said he had heard from some board members that they would prefer to be casual.

MOTION that casual attire, not suits, be the dress code for board members when attending the annual general membership meeting. Brumagin/Kohli. Approved. 3 opposed.

MOTION to adjourn. Greelis/Aycock. Approved.