

## Board Meeting & General Members Meeting January 18 & 19, 2014

### Board Members

Present: Doug Smith, Sara Lyter, Ásta Covert, Andrea Barber,  
Katrin Sheehan, Lori Cretney,  
Via Skype\*: Juli Cole, Anne Elwell  
Excused: Kari Pietsch-Wangard

The Saturday Board meeting had one required piece of official business – election of 2014 officers – and one urgent item to consider. The remainder of the time was an open discussion of the state of the Congress and our thoughts for how to advance the mission in the coming year. As this is not the traditional format for meetings, these minutes will not take the normal form.

1. Officer Elections
  - President – Sara Lyter
  - Vice President – Lori Cretney
  - Treasurer – Kari Pietsch-Wangard
  - Secretary – Doug Smith

2. Equine Affair Ohio Booth Space (Juli Cole)

The Promotion Committee asked the Board to approve payment of the full amount of the cost of the booth space rental at the Ohio Equine Affaire. The Congress has a prime location which, if lost, we would likely never get back. The Promotion Committee cannot make promises about the quality of our participation this year but feels strongly that we should preserve our right to the space.

It was unanimously decided to pay the space rental to protect our location for the future and to make the best of the space this year.
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Sara Lyter led both sessions using the published committee reports and the USIHC response to the FEIF SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) survey as a loose framework for the discussions.

The following items rose to the top as action items for the Board and Committees in 2014:

1. The *Grant Program* established by the board in 2013 has shown promise as a vehicle to bring new ideas from the membership. It is clear there are two valuable enhancements:
  - a) Provide examples of successful grants.
  - b) Create a “how-to” page to help clubs or members get started on the process.
2. The majority of the people at the meeting have a great deal of experience with the Congress and its various departments. Further most present also have strong experience in creating and managing events. Collectively, we concluded clubs and members might be hesitant to start and perhaps continue events because they don't have the confidence to get started. In response we plan to:
  - a) Create a “how-to” page for the events we know how to plan. We already have some of this

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\* These Board members connected to the discussions on Saturday via Skype but were not present for the open session on Sunday.

material in place on the website. The “how-to” will link to that information and provide a contact person who can offer personal advice at any stage in the process.

3. The “how-to” idea took on momentum. Planned topics include...
  - a) Join the Congress
  - b) Renew a membership
  - c) Organize an event
    - Breeding evaluation
    - Young Horse evaluation
    - Fun show
    - Schooling show
    - Sanctioned show
    - World Ranking show
    - Riding clinic
  - d) Presentation to 4H or Pony Club
  - e) Get copies of the Congress promotional materials
  - f) Use the display booth
  - g) WHATEVER ELSE THE CLUBS AND MEMBERSHIP IDENTIFY
  
4. The Congress needs to have people with appropriate knowledge and a willingness to work. The Sport committee established prerequisites to make sure the committee has a basic working knowledge of the competition rules. The committees all have an educational responsibility but that does not mean the committee membership should include those who don't understand the basic requirements of the department. We plan to:
  - a) Duplicate the Sport Committee's prerequisite system on other committees to make sure the committees have the basic working knowledge they need to manage the departments and advise FEIF as needed.
  - b) Offer a Sport Judge Seminar. It has been some time since one has been offered and the new Sport Judges Guidelines will be released by FEIF this year.
  - c) Make it clear to the membership that we are not trying to exclude people who want to learn but that committee service is not appropriate training.
  
5. Expand use of Facebook. It seems likely that more people are getting information from Facebook than from the website or *The Quarterly*. While we are active in many ways it seems like we may not be communicating that activity as well as we could be. To that end:
  - a) Change the way all calendar items are posted to Facebook so they reappear as the event gets closer – something along the lines of half way from the initial announcement until the date of the event, then at 8 weeks out, 4 weeks out, 2 weeks out, and 1 week out.
  - b) Encourage the clubs to list more events on the calendar. There's really nothing too small if it involves Icelandic horses in the US or FEIF.
  - c) Develop a way to make Pleasure Rider Program activity more visible on Facebook. This might be in the form of replacing the paper logs with an iPhone app to let people log rides immediately and share things like locations and photos. For those without an iPhone provide a similar service via the website. In any case, get the information sooner and share it so others see the activity.
  - d) Encourage all clubs to have Facebook pages and make sure to tell us about them so we link to each other.

6. The Regional Clubs program isn't as active as we'd like. We received reports of inactive, outdated web pages and we seldom receive requests from clubs to post events on the national calendar.
  - a) Identify someone on the national level who can proactively contact clubs on a regular basis to remind them to be more vocal on their websites, social media, and with calendar submissions.
  
7. The Pleasure Rider Program isn't as active as we'd like. We have made behind-the-scenes improvements to make the program easier to administer but we don't see new names on the scoreboard and we don't see activity during the year. There are some quiet reminders to those in the program to submit logs but other than the tally of hours announced once or twice a year this program is largely silent. FEIF is growing a Leisure Riding department to help address issues riders face with trail closures and other restrictions on "riding in nature." Our current structure does not lend itself to growing to match the FEIF department as we have with Sport, Breeding, Education, Youth, etc.
  - a) Look to transform the PRP Committee into a Leisure Riding Committee with the current PRP as one area of responsibility but with a charter more in line with the FEIF department's.
  - b) As already mentioned, develop technology to support direct entry of PRP hours in a way that can demonstrate activity and generate some momentum for the PRP.
  
8. The question of the financial state of the Congress came up again as it did at the NEIHC-hosted meeting. The Board reiterated the fact that our current bank balance does not cause any legal problems with regard to our status as a non-profit. Further, the Board is very willing to spend money on mission supporting activities. Suggestions to be explored:
  - a) Hiring support staff for the Registry to help resolve procedural difficulties.
  - b) Hosting webinars on topics of interest to the membership. The Board would pay the presenter (trainer, farrier, vet, etc) and any fees for the supporting technology. Participation would be a free benefit to members and an income and advertising source for presenters – mainly trainers. This is one of the ways we can try to make the size of the country less of a barrier.
  
9. Next Annual Meeting. The Board feels this event deserves to stand on its own instead of competing for attention by having the meeting on top of another scheduled event. Even with the low attendance, the Board feels significant progress was made in the work done over the two days that would not have happened if this was an adjunct to another event. Steve Cook observed that we have not held the meeting in the mid-west. He further offered to organize the 2015 meeting in Minneapolis with the target of March 7 & 8, 2015 for the date.