

Notes from the May 16-18 Board of Governors Meeting held in Lexington, Kentucky

The Course Walk

A report from the USPC BoG Meeting May 2008

The Board of Governors of USPC met May 16-18, 2008 at USPC Headquarters at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY. The meeting was a combination business meeting and strategic planning retreat with Pat Maykuth leading the strategy session. Due to the time needed for the strategy meetings, each of the committees had been asked to hold their meetings by conference call and bring the reports to the BoG.

Action Items: Vice President of Regional Administration Mike Amos and Karol Wilson reported on the survey on Age Extension that was sent out to regional supervisors, district commissioners, members 18-21 and age-extension members, noting very positive responses from the survey. In general, the program earned positive marks, with a general “no” on opening age extension membership to people who have not previously been Pony Club members. A motion was made and passed that age extension to 25 (through Dec 31 of year in which they turn 25) become a permanent part of the organization and be added to the By-Laws.

With regard to USPC Riding Centers, there was a short discussion of whether Center members should pay regular regional dues or continue with the current \$5 fee. Since on the whole Center members are participating regionally more than initially expected, the Board voted that beginning next year Center members should pay the regular dues of the region in which their Center is located.

By-Laws Revision: Dan Murphy, board secretary, reported on the details of the USPC By-Laws revisions that have been underway, as initially proposed before the Annual Meeting in Boston. The new By-Laws were voted on and passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance: Karen Winn, Finance Director, reported that corporate sponsorships are coming in with some new contracts; we have the recently announced Eleanor Brennan fund and other additional

funding sources. Building #2's finances are good. Karen also noted that with the organizational directors and officers' current insurance renewal, the policy doesn't reach the region and club level. Staff is reviewing options to correct this. A recent audit provided a very clean review.

Communications: Nancy Ambrosiano and Mary Pierson provided the written report from the committee's March 12 conference call, with updates on the highly successful Prince Philip Cup Games and Celebrity Challenge round held during Rolex. There was discussion of holding similar games demonstrations at the World Equestrian Games in 2010, as the Celebrity round especially brings excellent visibility to USPC. The addition of USPC's 2007 and 2008 press releases to the main Web site was noted, with the collection of releases providing background material for reporters and others looking for news of note, in addition to examples for clubs to see current press release subjects, wording and format. See the press release page at <http://www.ponyclub.org/press-releases.php> online. Also regarding Web pages, the committee will be working with the various contributors to USPC's discipline and Horse Management Web pages to provide reasonable guidelines, although it was noted that negotiations are not yet complete to sign on a new company to handle the Web redesign and creation of page templates.

Development: Development Director Marian Wahlgren reported that outreach to former members is going well, and they are beginning to research other organizations' alum Web sites and contact methods in order to make the most of the renewed relationships. Among possible alum efforts would be distribution of an alumni newsletter distributed electronically, now that enough alumni have been contacted to form a reasonable target group. USPC is doing reasonably well with corporate sponsorships, but overall totals for Board giving are down and across the membership, a small percentage of the core constituency consistently gives. Among the new By-Law additions is a note of a fundraising component for each club's annual meeting, reminding sponsors of the importance and uses of Annual Fund contributions. An ongoing discussion point is how to best incorporate culture of giving amongst our membership – in most organizations, the dues cover the operating expenses, and additional donations go to special funds. USPC has held dues low, with donations covering the additional costs per member. Some discussion occurred on potentially scaling membership fees, matching dues more closely with members' category of use and benefits.

The group is still strong on holding the USPC mailing list as a private item, not shared with other organizations or commercial entities. Staff is looking at other creative ways to connect the sponsors with our members, while maintaining the privacy of the membership listings.

Regional Administration: Vice President of Regional Administration Mike Amos and Member Services Director Karol Wilson noted the need for better networking in connecting Alums with clubs, as often a newly contacted alum will show interest in working with a local club but is not necessarily contacted or welcomed by that club. The committee could potentially provide a document with some ideas for DCs and others on how to reconnect with these alumni and engage for mutual benefit, whether it is in management mentoring, teaching or rating at the club level, or simple volunteer time. Leaders Camp: The program may have another format change, coming up with a program to actively involve Activities and Instruction, although time is always short and it's difficult to both schedule lecturers and fit more items into the agenda. A new effort involves videotaping some presentations so they can be used more broadly, distributed on disk to regions and clubs as continuing education tools.

Activities: Anna Clader and Wayne Quarles noted that with the ongoing safety discussions in the Eventing world, USPC will be closely monitoring changes, sending a representative to the USEA Safety Summit, and following any recommendations made by USEA and USEF. In other areas, Jessie Reed is the new co-chair for Polocrosse, and there are two new Polocrosse committee members. Regarding Games, the Prince Philip Cup budget falls under the general budget this year as it was lacking a sponsor. The Board discussed opportunities to make this excellent event a more sponsor-friendly item through use of banners and the like. A significant change for Games will be the 2008 Extraordinary Rule Changes (see RS/DC Digests of May 27 for detail on Reckless Endangerment, elimination of final heats at 2008 Championships, and a dowel-length change for balloon, fishing, flag and litter games. For 2009, rule changes include Championships Competition Divisions and Qualifications (This is to be set up as a 3-year trial period). Finally, pinneys will change from team-name identifiers to Regional and Club pinneys, with Regional pinneys to be worn at Championships and Prince Philip Cup games.

A new mentoring program is being explored this year at Championships, offering internships for youth members to assist in the organizing and management of Championships. This is an

outgrowth of a National Youth Congress suggestion and will offer experience and training to those members who are not competing in Championships but would still like to play a meaningful role.

Advisory Committee: Laura Marsh and Mary Ann Turner announced that the committee had chosen next year's Founders Awards recipients and this year's scholarship winners. The applications were "fantastic, they were very uplifting," said Turner. "Everyone should be proud of our efforts for this organization! The winners are outstanding people, we should be proud to have them associated with our organization," she said. The Advisory Committee has no new members this year, and some discussion followed on the need to balance with both Advisory and Board the range of skills in useful fields (business, fundraising, teaching, PR) and those with Pony Club experience in the trenches.

Policy Committee, reported by Dan Murphy, reported on the difficult subject of protecting member and volunteer privacy policy, as such things as mailing lists, club and regional records and Web pages are known vulnerabilities. In addition, there was lengthy discussion of background checks for those in any role of interaction with the youth members. Discussion followed on the nature of the whole chaperone concept. The committee and Board will continue to pursue this, examining background check options, expenses and reasonable expectations. Insurance issues were another key point: There is need to clarify to members and families that some activities, under our insurance requirements, are NOT covered under PC, such as transport to meetings. Regional Admin may have a role in clarifying this wording. In many youth organizations volunteers can never be alone with kids. . . "This is how youth organizations in America have to conduct business," noted Amos.

A number of Policies and Attachments were reviewed and corrected to reflect necessary changes that came about with the inclusion of Specialty Ratings and the H-B.

C-3 Program committee – works with RICs and regions, and Curriculum and Standards. First reading of Instruction Policy 5010, Standards of Proficiency, approved for first reading. (See all USPC National Policies at <http://www.ponyclub.org/policies.php>). Also reviewed Policy 5650, Candidate Certification for Upper Level Testing – providing C-3 and H-B and higher

clarification, and there was discussion of DC's responsibilities upper-level tests signoff. Nat'l level ratings may not be right for DCs to have to approve, it was noted, for a variety of reasons depending on the club, region and candidate. Regarding regional prep clinics and RS signoff for readiness of candidate, there is no requirement for these coming from nat'l. Some regions have preps and assessment signoffs as a regional policy, but these can get convoluted, handled case by case. Lorelei noted that the best one can do is say, "On this given day, from what I've seen of you today, I think you are OK here, weak there, etc." We cannot assure a candidate or their family that this rider will or will not pass another test at a future date. Discussion of whether we are setting borderline kids up for failure or giving them the opportunity to either pass or learn from the experience.

Reviewed Attachment A to Policy 5001, formerly Clinics Committee – upgrade phrasing to "C3 program committee," eliminating some regional responsibilities. Add C3/HB phrasing, and last bullet references "level 1 examiners," not "C3 examiners" since all are now NEs at varying levels.

Update to Attachment F, 5001, National Testing Committee, was approved.

Instruction: Lorelei Coplen and Lynn Miles reported that Instruction has been involved in some far-reaching and important updates:

Standards of Proficiency Review is under a subcommittee chaired by Annika Kramer. They conducted a 90-day review (with NE seminar and Chief seminar input, including Dressage and Show Jumping specialties) Still wants to work more on safety as a teaching and training point from D-1 all the way through A. Found in 90-day review that changes were in three main categories: 1) typos / clarification of what's meant – "describe" vs "discuss" 2) correcting the language or task that's not relevant in contemporary studies 3) items in ongoing discussion such as bandaging – is the shipping bandage an intro to a specialty bandage? Is the rating an Eventing rating vs Traditional? The aim is to complete the review and release the final materials for 2009.

Personnel Management and Procedures: They are addressing a concern over how to manage the volunteer base, how be fair to the organization and its people. These procedures would apply to HM and Instruction volunteers, and could be offered to regions and clubs for their use. Would

like to implement for calendar year 09. Transparency and fair treatment are the goal. Legal counsel will review the proposed management guidelines. Other communities in the USPC organization (Activities, etc.) could adopt these guidelines if they desire. These will be procedural changes, not at the By-Law level.

National Examiner and Chief Horse Management Judge Seminars: Both communities had not seminar-ed in over a year, so this was valuable time for all involved. Lorelei noted that the meetings were an example of how portals, internet and teleconferencing do not substitute for human-to-human interaction. She is requesting budget for seminars for both communities next year.

National Youth Board – this was not an action item, but was a presentation of the National Youth Congress’ subcommittee’s report. Will move forward to full Board discussion in November. Via conference call, subcommittee members Meredith Baker and Mark Green presented and discussed the proposal with the Board. The proposed NYB would provide youth members with the opportunity for leadership across regions, interactions with the Board of Governors, and coordination with USPC national-level committees. The summer issue of USPC News will include an article on the subject, and the subcommittee will continue their work over this summer with the staff and Joint Council.

Finally, as a result of a guest presentation on the World Equestrian Games (fall, 2010 at the Kentucky Horse Park) and tying into ongoing discussions, USPC President Art Kramer appointed an ad hoc committee for the WEG, to be chaired by Peggy Entrekin. Another ad hoc committee, chaired by Nancy Ambrosiano, will explore the pro’s and con’s of a potential future name change for USPC, coordinating with legal counsel.