

Oregon Lavender Association Board Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2015, 7:00-9:00 PM

Board Members Present: Gene Schmidt, Karalee Mitro, Michael Lemmers, Melissa Van Hevelingen, Chris Mulder, Bonnie Rinaldi, Marilyn Kosel

Board Members Absent: Carol Tannenbaum

Guests Present: Amy Morris

Membership Update: Bonnie reports **73 total OLA members** which is an addition of 4 more members since the beginning of the year: **22 Relax with Us, 24 Grow with Us and 27 Promote with Us members.** Bonnie will address the group at the general membership meeting on Sunday, April 12 and introduce the newest members and ask them to share where they are from.

Treasurer's Update: Michael reported that several bills came due and were paid, including the bill for the insurance premium. Michael spoke with the agent from the company about the changes that needed to be made in the names and address on the OLA policy. Michael also paid the attorney in Newberg to renew the OLA business license and registration. Michael questioned if it is necessary to have the attorney do this, or is it an unnecessary expense? There is a **balance of \$11, 265 in OLA bank account,** after all debits and credits. Bonnie requested that Michael provide a fiscal year accounting so that the board can clearly see a portrait of the OLA expenses and how they are paid out.

Action: Michael agreed to compile that report at a later date.

Marketing/Website Updates: Chris asked the board members if we had received the first OLD public newsletter? As Board members did not receive it, Bonnie said that all OLA members could easily be added to the list through Constant Contact. This will be brought to Amy Morris' attention. Chris reported that **Carol Tannenbaum has been chosen to be the representative for OLA on Travel Oregon's Agritourism Partnership Committee, with Marilyn Kosel as our alternate member.** This is a great opportunity for OLA. Their attendance of the four committee meetings per year will provide more exposure for the OLA.

Amy joined the board meeting to present information on the new OLA Public Newsletter Marketing Plan. She explained the new features available. Amy and Cheryl have created a test spot on the OLD website for the public to sign up for the newsletter. Amy outlined the projected goals for the next year. The main objective is to gain new members throughout the year, with the hope to gain at least 12 new members this coming year. The newsletter has not been sent out to the OLA members yet. Amy suggests sending out the newsletter to the membership AFTER the April Membership Meeting so that she can tell members about it before they receive it. Chris suggests that OLA members promote the newsletter to their customers and encourage them to sign up to receive it.

With regard to the **OLA Facebook**, Amy reports many likes and shares and that the OLA page reached almost 2000 people in the last month. Chris said that there is also a way to link with Travel Oregon on Facebook. Amy reported that OLA is already connected to Travel Oregon on Facebook because we have “liked” the Travel Oregon Facebook page. **Action: Amy**, (Chris and Bonnie), will speak at the **April 12th Membership Meeting** about the newsletter and how it works with Constant Contact. They will also present the **new OLD website additions** and changes that Cheryl Wilson has made. They will stress the **importance of members checking the OLD website to make sure their farm listings on the OLD and their own websites are current and updated.**

Question: Is the Event Finder present on the OLD website yet? Amy reports it’s the same thing as the SERVICE FINDER. The services are showing up but the events have not been added yet. **Action: Bonnie will ask Cheryl Wilson about this and report any updates back to the board.** Bonnie suggested that screen prints be made available to show the members what the website looks like now and what changes have been made. **Action: Amy** will send out an email with the website information to all members prior to the April Membership meeting for review. She will print five copies to have on hand at the meeting.

Follow up from last Board Meeting:

Chris reported that she emailed Skip Morley, OLA Member with Nationwide Insurance, to request an insurance quote for OLA. Skip requested a copy of the OLA policy to review. Unfortunately, Skip said he cannot give OLA a less expensive option for insurance coverage, at this time. Michael reiterated the need for more money to cover the increase in expenses. Chris questioned whether or not the 100 new road signs ordered and received last year have been paid for yet. Michael said he does not have an invoice to know what is due, or the name or address of the company/person that made the signs. The signs were ordered by Donna Delikat over one year ago. (It is believed that the cost was approximately \$150-\$200).

OLA Products Update:

Chris reports that **McTavish shortbread cookie order deadline is coming up on May 15th**. She reports that we do not yet have a \$1000 group order to get the lowest wholesale price. She has not received any more product order forms and John Melville has not received any other orders through the OLA Square Market. **Action: Members will need to be reminded of the deadline at the April meeting.**

Chris said that three more cases of jam were sold and paid for this month.

Michael questions whether there is an inventory list available on the OLA Square site. Bonnie reported that this is possible and it needs to be updated. **There are no tote bags left to sell so we need to indicate “sold out” on Square.**

Action: Marilyn will need to let members know that the chocolate sauce, soap and honey can be ordered all year. Chris thinks we should still leave the OLA Square Market online in order for members to get used to using it and be able to see what is available throughout the year. Marilyn reports that she has taken several new orders of her OLA products and she prefers to have members pay OLA directly.

Bonnie explained that members can go to Square to order and pay for products, or use the paper order forms and pay by check to OLA. **Action:** Chris will make copies of the order forms and have them available for members to fill out at the meeting.

Road Signs/Photo Contest Photos:

Chris reports that **OLA has 104 road signs** to distribute to Promote with Us member farms that are open for the Oregon Lavender Farm Tour July 11 and 12th. We should not need to order more signs this year.

OLA will not order any new photo contest posters to be made at Costco this year, as the photo contest expense was not budgeted for 2015. Chris is storing 10 posters that were returned last year. We will need to distribute these posters at the April meeting. Chris states that it would be nice to have at least one photo contest poster displayed at an OLA farm in each region of the state this year. We currently don't know how many OLA photo posters have not been returned. A suggestion was made that a farm could download photos from the OLD website if they want to use them at their own events.

Action: We also need to make sure that the photo contest page is updated on the OLD website before the lavender season begins and all the farms that will be displaying photos from the OLA Photo contest are listed on the OLD website.

New Chocolate Products:

Chris has been looking at other lavender chocolate options, since there were not enough orders placed by members for OLA to order more OLA chocolate bars. She will have several new products available for sampling at the April membership meeting. These include two dark chocolate lavender truffles. One truffle uses the OLA lavender honey, the other truffle uses the OLA Marionberry Lavender Preserves. Also, a third product is a dark chocolate bark with blueberries and hazelnuts, that uses dried lavender buds and lavender salt, (from Chris' farm), sprinkled on top. These three products are made by **Puddin' River Chocolates in Canby, OR**. They can be ordered by individual farm members to sell this year. A group order is also possible, for those members that are interested in selling it.

Chris has also been talking to a **company in Sequim, WA. - We Do Fudge.**

They make several types of fudge in many different flavors. The company is able to make the fudge using lavender buds and essential oil that is provided by the farm that orders it. The company will add a personalized logo to their packaging.

There will be four different samples of lavender fudge at the meeting to taste. The company uses Royal Velvet ground buds and essential oil from the Sequim area lavender farms to flavor their fudge. Bonnie commented that OLA will need to decide if this is a product that we want to label as an OLA product or something that we want to offer to our members for their own personal marketing opportunity. Discussion followed regarding future decisions the OLA board will have to make about this product. The benefits of this fudge product, is that it can be frozen, has a longer shelf life than other chocolate products, it is affordable and can be made in assorted flavors.

Several OLA farms could order the fudge with an OLA logo, as a group order, with a minimum order of 504 pieces. The company would not charge for shipping a large order, if it goes to one destination. The current wholesale price is \$3.45/package, (suggested retail price is \$5.50), if their Royal Velvet lavender buds and oil are used and

they packaged the pieces with a personal logo. **The minimum order is a box of 28 pieces, with a shipping cost of \$9.00 per box.** Bonnie questions how this product compares for mark up to other chocolate products? Also, do we want to use a non-Oregon product as an OLA branded product? Is there any option for fudge made in Oregon? Melissa is not sure about offering chocolate as an OLA product due to the problems with it melting and the fact that members may not be interested in a higher end chocolate product.

OLA Product Sales/Public Requests/Follow up: Marilyn sent the OLA jam and honey to the customer in California that requested it. Chris mailed the OLA collector cards that he ordered. It is felt that it would be best to offer an online source and direct requests to the OLD website, in the future.

OLA Member Survey-Education: Michael explained the purpose of the survey he designed is to find out what members want to learn about and who in OLA has the expertise and knowledge to provide the education. The Survey should include business skills, the processing side, the farm side, etc. Michael would like to hand out the survey to all the members at the April membership meeting. Then send it out, in a downloaded form, to members that did not attend the meeting, to be completed and returned to him. **Action:** It was decided that copies of the survey will be available when members pick up their name badges at the beginning of the meeting. They will be asked to complete the survey and turn it in, or mail it to Michael. A follow up email will be sent to the entire membership after the meeting, with a link to the survey, requesting members to return it to Michael by a certain date, to be determined.

Quarterly Quiz Proposal/April Quarterly Quiz: The purpose of a quarterly quiz is to teach members and help them answer questions about the educational material presented at the OLA quarterly membership meeting. The idea is for members to be listening for the answers during the OLA educational presentations. A lengthy discussion followed about using the word “quiz” and the negative impact of that word, etc. **Action:** Michael will call the April document “**Lavender Knowledge Spikes!**” and design questions that will reflect some of the information that will be presented during the educational presentations at the meeting. Michael will also provide the correct answers to the questions during the meeting.

Update on LEO Characterization Project: Michael will give a brief presentation of the LEO project at the April membership meeting. It will be a simple introduction at the meeting indicating that this is what Michael is offering at RavenCroft and it is not an OLA sponsored service. He will have several samples that will be available for the meeting. After visiting two of our OLA members businesses, Michael suggested that the board may want to consider asking Liberty Natural and/or The Essential Oil Company about the possibility of hosting a future quarterly OLA membership meeting at their locations.

OLA Membership Meeting Agenda for April 12:

Education: 1:00 – 2:00 - Andy Van Hevelingen will present “Lavender Identification- How to know for sure!”

Business Meeting: 2:30-3:30 pm – **Bonnie** will begin with the introduction of new OLA members and give a brief membership update. **Michael/Bonnie** will give a report on the OLA finances to inform members that the membership dues do not cover OLA expenses or allow for all the website enhancements, additional marketing promotions and the education that OLA needs to grow. Members will be notified that in the near future, the Board will need to restructure and probably increase OLA dues. **Amy** will talk about the upcoming OLA Public Newsletter, OLA press releases for the Oregon Lavender Farm Tour, Travel Oregon membership and the OLA Facebook page. (Amy will be available for questions until the end of the membership meeting). **Carol** will report on Travel Oregon’s Oregon Agritourism Partnership Committee, as OLA representative. **Chris** will speak about the OLA products, show samples of products and provide members with information on how to order them. The business meeting portion will conclude with **Michael’s** educational presentation - “Lavender essential oils: Searching for the fantastic” with reference to his L.E.O. Characterization Project. **Michael** will explain the Member Survey and its purpose. Members will be invited to complete and return the survey.

Members Fair/Network-3:30-5:00: Six members will have their products available for viewing and to purchase at the April Membership Meeting: **OilExTech** (microwave distillation demo, kits and parts), **Wayward Winds** (private label products), **RavenCroft** (LEO samples/information, coasters), **Sundance** (lavender infused jams), **Still Waters** (lavender products) and **McKenzie River** (lavender products).

Closing Note: The OLA Business meeting will be taped. We will ask for Andy’s permission to tape his presentation.

Next Board Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 5, 7:00PM.

Minutes submitted by Karalee Mitro - Edited by Chris Mulder