

Oregon Lavender Association Board Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2015, 7:00-9:00 PM

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

Board Members Absent: Gene Schmidt

Guests Present: Amy Morris

Membership Update: Michael reported that two **Grow With Us** members have renewed their OLA membership bringing the current membership total to 72 members.

Treasurer's Update: Michael reported that as of today all marketing expenses have been paid, with the exception of the Travel Oregon membership fee, \$500. The invoice for printing the 2015 OLD Guides and Amy's fee for designing the Guide have been paid. The OLA checking account balance is \$12,800. The Travel Oregon membership is due by April. Michael will send a check to pay for the OLA membership this month.

A bill for renewing the OLA liability insurance has been received for approximately \$700.00 and is due in May. A suggestion was made to ask OLA member, Skip Morley with Nationwide Insurance, for quotes if he is able to provide the needed coverage. Chris will follow up with a call to Skip. Chris reported that she picked up the Marionberry Lavender jam and paid for it with an OLA check.

Marketing Update: Amy reported that she will begin collecting email addresses from the public through the OLD website and OLA Facebook. She and Susan Harrington have created an OLA public newsletter format and they will be sending an e-newsletter through Constant Contact to those people that sign up to receive it. All current OLA members will also receive the public e-newsletter. An email will be sent out to all OLA members the first week in April providing the dates and locations for the upcoming farm events.

Chris spoke about the OLA marketing meeting she had with Amy and Susan Harrington. Amy has been working on the OLA Public Newsletter Marketing Plan and would like to help launch the public e-newsletter and start the plan for OLA. Chris suggested that Amy spend less time on the OLA Facebook posts in February and March and use some of her budgeted time to work on the newsletter. Amy has started this work and the newsletter can be evaluated at a later date to see if it is successful and if this marketing tool will help the OLA membership grow. The goal is to have the ability to measure the results. Susan will help and tell us if these ideas are reasonable. Chris reiterated that Susan is willing to volunteer her time to help us out. **Questions:**

1.) Is there any possibility that people will misuse any posted photos? Answer: **The hope is that people will be respectful of the content and not misuse it.**

2.) Have newsletter goals been decided? Answer: **Yes, the first newsletter will begin in April, and continue to be sent once a month going forward.** An attempt will be

made to develop what the OLA marketing plan would like to see via the newsletter and then later evaluate what we actually do see. Amy will report to the Board when those goals have been evaluated. **The main idea is to create value to members and value to the public.** Currently, the body of information that will be sent has been predetermined and is ready to send, but every month Amy will have the ability to add additional information and edit the content. Amy states that this is yet another great way of letting our members and the general public, know what events are going on and when. Amy left the Board meeting after this discussion.

OLA Product Orders/Update and Discussion: Chris reported that she has not ordered the lavender chocolate bars. We do not have the minimum amount pre-ordered to get the best price. It was asked if the new online store should be taken down. Chris thinks it should remain up since we still have the Marionberry Lavender Preserves and tote bags available. Bonnie has looked into who placed orders in the past and thinks that it would be a good idea to contact them to see if they want to order again. Chris also suggested that we follow up with members that have ordered products in the past and that we give them more time to place orders. Currently 135 chocolate bars have been pre-ordered and paid for by a few members. Discussion followed regarding whether or not OLA should make up the difference in order to place an order for the chocolate bars. (We would need to order 500 to get the lowest price of \$1.65 per bar). We have already collected \$256 of the \$825 that we would need to make the order. If OLA chooses to make up the chocolate bar order, an additional \$569 would have to come out of the OLA account. Michael stated that we have monthly expenses that are currently undetermined such as office expenses and farm tour expenses. Melissa questioned our ability to afford the additional cost incurred should we order the chocolate bars at this time. Chris mentioned that we would be getting a pre-payment for the chocolate bars and additional money coming in as we sell more jam. She also talked about the option of another chocolate product that she is looking into, but doesn't have all details yet. Chris said that it is a local product (made in Oregon) with chocolate and hazelnuts. She will report more about this product at the next Board meeting. Chris reported that OLA has purchased 75 cases of jam and has already pre-sold 49. We are currently sold out of the tote bags. As a group, it was decided that we should hold off on the chocolate bar order at this time.

Bonnie reported that the Square Market online store looks good and is working very well. She stated that any orders after March 1st, 2015 were subject to availability and will be available by June. OLA has been contacted by a lavender farm owner in California. He has asked if he could purchase several OLA products that he purchased at the NW Regional Lavender Conference last October. These products include several sets of the Growing Tips/Collector's cards and several bottles of lavender honey and jars of the Marionberry Lavender jam. A couple of suggestions were that this person be told to contact the farms that are selling these products, or go through the OLA website to search for the products he wanted. Marilyn offered to ship the honey and the jam. Chris expressed her concern that members would be unhappy with Board members having the first opportunity to sell OLA products. We need to ask what farm members want their products listed as available and for sale. It would be helpful to compile a list of OLA members that sell OLA and other products online and are willing to mail order them.

Bonnie agrees with Michael that we should fulfill the order now and work on how to do this later, to include all members and what they can offer. **Action:** Chris will answer the person's email and she will mail the collector's cards to him for OLA. She will also give him Marilyn's contact information and **Marilyn** will fill his OLA honey and jam order.

Bonnie feels that we should not do a survey of members now, but work on a list of what all members sell, and have it available next year. We could include this in the OLA budget and have this information added to the OLD website next year. Bonnie reports that the online store will remain up in order to take care of any member's orders that come in over the next few months. The OLA online store will include the products that Marilyn Kosel makes with OLA labels, (the honey, chocolate sauces and soap). These products are made in smaller batches and can be ordered by members any time throughout the year.

It was reported that there have been no changes to the website yet but those should be completed soon. Chris thinks it will be important for members to be aware of the new website changes prior to the next meeting. **Action:** Bonnie thinks it would be great to send out member emails about the website changes prior to the April quarterly meeting.

RavenCroft Lavender Essential Oil (LEO) Characterization Report:

Michael gave a thorough presentation on his recent studies involving Lavender Essential Oil Characterization and provided the Board with several test results. Michael feels that OLA, as an association, needs to set itself apart from other local lavender associations and businesses and grow beyond what they offer. Michael asked if the Board thinks that this project is something that OLA would want to take on. Would this be a benefit to the OLA? Michael suggested that a panel of members that have an interest and knowledge of essential oils be selected to judge the submitted essential oils. **Question:** Would OLA want to make money from this or just use the process as an avenue to let members know more about what they are getting from their oils? Michael stated that this process of judging oil is a good way to find out who is making good oil and who actually cares about the oil quality, and whether they are willing to teach others. The idea is to be looking for *good* oils and be able to justify why they are good. **How will this play out in the commercial market?** We expect people that are selling LEO to be able to say why they are charging the price they ask. By promoting this through OLA we would be able to say, "this oil is an OLA grade oil". Bonnie thinks that judging oil is a good idea. **Questions: Are there certain qualifications that are needed to be able to be a valid judge of LEO?** Michael says no, that judging is already being done in other countries. **How does OLA want to pursue this?** Michael says right now we have very few members that want to do this but he believes that this is an OLA opportunity. Michael is already going to pursue this idea for himself, as a service. Carol suggests starting out with defining the standards. Melissa pointed out that OLA is basically a business organization. At this time, RavenCroft can be doing this as service, but **Melissa questions if it is appropriate for OLA to do it?** Marilyn says as a business owner she views this as a good business tool and that it could possibly promote growth for OLA as an organization. Chris suggested that we need to find out who is interested and inform the membership about it first.

Question: What would this idea require to incorporate it into OLA? If OLA were to embrace this, what would we need to do? Michael says it would start very small, with maybe a couple of members that may be interested in doing the judging. But Michael believes we could build this up. At a minimum, OLA should be able to define the qualities of what makes a good LEO. This will evolve as various LEO samples come in. One benefit to OLA is that this idea could provide a great source of information about LEO. By collecting samples of LEO an *LEO Library* could be established in Oregon and be available, at least to OLA members. **Question: Would it be better for OLA to be the expert, instead of sourcing it to RavenCroft?** Michael maintains that the project could become bigger by having an *OLA seal of approval*.

Action: Michael will find out what's needed, who's interested, and what is required to begin this process. Michael will prepare a ten minute presentation and provide the submission forms for LEO at the April 12th Membership Meeting. He will also have a table with more information at the meeting and be available to talk with individual members during the Members' Fair. Members will be encouraged to bring their samples of LEO to OLA meetings and submit them for testing. This will give the Board a good idea of how much interest there is and possibly help the Board decide later if this is something that OLA would want to sponsor.

Action: Michael will write something up about the LEO testing for Bonnie to put in the Constant Contact email that will go out to members with the meeting reminder.

Action: Bonnie will send an email to members inviting them to bring their lavender products to the membership meeting to show and sell at the Member' Fair after the business meeting.

Chris presented the proposed **agenda for the General Membership Meeting:**
Sunday, April 12, 1-5 pm

Education:

Andy Van Hevelingen will be give a presentation titled:

“Lavender Identification –How to know for sure!” (similar to the presentation that he gave at the USLGA conference, January 2015 in Texas)

OLA Business Meeting:

Amy Morris will report on how we, as a Board, and the Marketing Committee have decided to increase the marketing abilities for the OLA through a Public Newsletter Marketing Plan and speak about the changes that are being made to the OLD website.

Michael Lemmers will give a short presentation about his LEO Characterization Report

OLA Product Distribution

OLD Guide Distribution

OLA Members' Fair

Board Meeting Closing Comments/Actions:

Michael: We need to be setting up education templates
What are members interested in? What can they give back? It was suggested that perhaps breaking into smaller interest groups such as distillers, growers, etc, would be beneficial.

Chris will continue to work on the General Membership meeting agenda.
She will give Board members the final agenda at the next Board meeting.

Chris needs to know how much space is needed for the Members Fair.

Bonnie will send an email to members asking them to RSVP for the meeting and to let Chris know if they want space to display and sell products at the Members' Fair.

Chris will let us know if more chocolate bars have been ordered and more about a possible new chocolate product at the next Board meeting.

The Board needs to decide if OLA will order the chocolate bars, or reimburse the money to the members that placed their pre-paid orders for the chocolate bars.

The next OLA Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 7th at 7:00 PM

Minutes submitted by Karalee Mitro, edited by Chris Mulder