

Oregon Lavender Association Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 5, 2015, 7:30-9:00 PM

Members present: Chris Mulder, Carol Tannenbaum, Michael Lemmers, Bonnie Rinaldi, and Karalee Mitro

Members Absent: Gene Schmidt, Marilyn Kosel, Melissa Van Hevelingen

The board meeting opened with Bonnie pointing out the place on the OLD website where visitors can find upcoming events using the link “Farm Finder” on the home page. This is where all events can be filtered by regions and services. Listings are displayed by date order under the “Lavender Events” tab. The events listed include all events that are included in the OLD Guide. Chris added that on the OLA website marketing members are able to advertise one other event for the year in addition to the event they have listed in the OLD Guide. Chris reported that Cheryl Wilson has informed her that she will no longer be able to continue her work on the OLD/OLA websites. The board discussed possible OLA members that may be able to assist on the website.

Action: Carol will check the member roster and try to determine who was at her table during the February membership meeting that said they did website work.

Membership Update: Bonnie reported a current total of **75 members**. The membership has added **2 Grow With Us** members and **1 new Enthusiast**.

Treasurer’s Update: Michael reported **\$12,570, as the current OLA bank balance**. The only income expected is in the sale of products which will just put OLA at the budgeted margin. Chris ordered and paid for 300 lavender chocolate bars. Members have the option to purchase the chocolate bars and the OLA could reimburse Chris in the future if/when funds have increased. Michael reminded the board that the jam being sold will result in some income because it has already been paid for; **approximately \$918 potential product income**. Marilyn has no deadlines but her product orders should all come in through the OLA Square Market. OLA receives no profit from the sale of the McTavish Shortbread Cookies. A few checks have been received for product sales but not a significant amount. **The Photo Contest** basically pays for itself, with no profit. Cheryl Wilson has run it in the past and will need to explain the process to Lori Carlson. Contestants pay a fee to enter the contest and the prizes for the winning photos are paid out of the collected fees.

In the near future, OLA will need income for website growth and future marketing. The board agreed that there is a need to discuss restructuring the OLA dues soon.

Action: Bonnie was asked to make contact with Holly Pearson regarding her survey answers and if she would be willing to provide education or help at a future membership meeting and possibly help by working on the OLA/OLD websites. (Holly is Wayne and Terry Pearson’s daughter, with Cascade Lavender in Madras).

Membership Survey Results:

We reviewed the results of the membership survey that Michael received and tallied. There were only 13 members that filled out and returned the survey. Bonnie will be sending another member survey out after the Farm Tour in July. That would be a good time to make a request for members to help OLA and ask about their special interests and expertise again. Chris asked Michael if there are certain questions that could be asked again on the next survey. **Action: If Michael and Bonnie could work together to fine tune another survey, this would be another opportunity to determine if members are actually seeking information and if they want to share their expertise or technical experience to help educate the OLA membership.**

LEO Program: Michael has connected with a Colorado distiller that submitted several LEOs to the New Zealand oil contest. This distiller has a collection of oils that were presented at the 2011 NW Regional Lavender Conference, as well as oils that were submitted to New Zealand. One of those oils was a Silver Medal winner. Michael has also made contact with the New Zealand Lavender Growers Association and has asked to receive more information about their program. Michael will host a working group of five OLA members that will meet on May 30, 2015 for a ½ day LEO workshop. These OLA members will be trained to help present future OLA LEO workshops. Michael has received oils from some OLA members, including **Liberty Natural**, and more samples are expected to come in to help to build a LEO *Bank*.

Chris reiterated that OLA is not endorsing or funding the LEO Program at this time, but will continue to look to Michael for updates.

OLA Products Update: Chris will place the McTavish Shortbread Cookie order on 5/18/15. She is currently storing: 18 cases of Marionberry Lavender Preserves, 14 tote bags, 270 sets of collector's cards and 50 posters. Chris recently had the opportunity to purchase 300 OLA Lavender Chocolate Bars which will help to fill OLA members' orders for chocolate. She is storing the chocolate for OLA members to buy and resell this year. OLA may purchase the chocolate bars later, as funds become available. There are 73 road signs.

Chris mailed a box of 300 OLD Guides to the Umatilla Welcome Center. More OLD Guides were also delivered to several Travel Oregon Welcome Centers across the state and most of the remaining OLD Guides will be distributed in May and June.

Marketing Update: All board members reviewed the Facebook report that was sent by Amy. The board discussed whether we want Amy to continue doing three posts per week during the busy season. **The board agreed to approve 3 postings per week May through August, and then reevaluate the amount of Facebook postings in September for the rest of the year.** Amy has asked for a board member to help her as an administrator on the OLA Facebook page. **Action: Karalee volunteered to assist Amy with the Facebook administration duties.**

Karalee reported that she is now checking the OLA email 3-4 times per week and that requests for more information are now caught up and current.

Carol reported that she was contacted by Alaska Airlines Magazine to provide information for an article on McKenzie River Lavender and the Oregon Lavender Farm Tour. The article will include a photo taken at her farm. A request was received from AAA, as well.

Chris expects to be informed of who is sending photos or being interviewed by the media so that we can keep OLA members informed and collect the printed news articles that are published throughout the year. The hope is to get more media requests for information and possibly interviews with OLA members to increase the coverage for OLA farms and the Oregon Lavender Farm Tour this year.

OLA Website Update/Webmaster News: Chris reported that Cheryl Wilson will no longer be able to continue her work on the OLA Website due to health concerns. Mark Wilson will continue on in his current capacity as the OLA webmaster. Per Cheryl, Mark is currently working on the events page and he will also be adding titles, dates and links to the members' listing page. Cheryl asked for several board members to test and send feedback on using the websites. Carol requests a copy of the email Cheryl sent so that board members know what Cheryl is specifically requesting. **Action: Chris will forward Cheryl's email to all Board members.** Bonnie asked if Mark will have the new functions up and working prior to the busy lavender season. Bonnie reported an issue on the **Products** page; we need to find out if the products page is working or still in process. **Action: Bonnie and Carol will test the websites and report any issues to Cheryl and Mark.** Chris asked if there is someone who could work with Mark to update the website, (things that Cheryl has been volunteering to do for free in the past). Carol stated that we should try to find someone who can do this on a volunteer basis. **Action: Bonnie will contact Holly Pearson to see if she can help.** Bonnie noted that on the OLD website there are **two listings** for each farm; one festival or event and one for the farm tour. This was not what was originally approved. This will be added to Bonnie and Carol's feedback to Cheryl and Mark, when they complete a test run of the OLD website changes.

Travel Oregon Agritourism Committee Meeting Report:

Carol reported on her attendance at the committee meeting on April 30th. **The name of the committee has changed to Travel Oregon Agritourism Network.** The purpose of the committee is to work with Travel Oregon to develop a way to communicate the tourism opportunities available in Oregon to a larger audience. Carol believes there are opportunities for those in the lavender business. The committee consists of about 30 members. This group's efforts will feed into many industries and allow many more people to become involved. Senate bill SB341 bill has recently passed. This will allow farm owners to post signs on their farm and help them to receive liability insurance coverage.

Question: Does the board feel comfortable keeping OLA members informed about Senate Bills and political actions that can be taken in the future?

Yes, the Board members present at this meeting feel it is important to notify OLA members about what is happening at a state level. **OLA will continue to inform members about what is happening and about issues, like agritourism, that could directly affect lavender farm owners. OLA will not endorse a particular action or push members to get involved. Taking political action will be left entirely with each OLA member and what they feel comfortable supporting.**

Carol also has contacts for Amy so that the OLA marketing information on the OLA Farm Tour can be streamed into the Travel Oregon website for greater exposure. Carol reported that several small working groups were formed to study the goals of the committee. Included were groups covering the development of an industry driven network, marketing, standards, education and economic impact. Carol mentioned that Travel Oregon is testing a mobile tourism studio and that they would be willing to visit OLA to share opportunities and to help us learn more about tourism opportunities in a workshop environment. Chris suggested that Amy be in touch with Travel Oregon regarding this.

Action: Carol will continue to keep the board informed as the group develops.

Next Membership Meeting: Chris suggested that the next membership meeting be held at either the Pearson's farm in Madras, or somewhere outside the Portland area, perhaps Southern Oregon again. The suggested dates are either August 22nd or August 29th. Michael suggested having the meeting at Liberty Natural, or at another Portland area member's farm in the fall, where there is room to have the meeting inside, when the weather is cooler.

Chris reported that she will be gone in August and it will be up other executive OLA board members to plan and preside over the membership meeting. Michael suggested that a **good topic for the August membership meeting may be how to keep your product viable and what to do with it after harvest.** This will be discussed at the next board meeting, as well as the possibility of a 2016 OLA sponsored educational opportunity like an intensive one day conference or workshop.

Chris said that Donna has reported that Steve Seymour, an attorney and OLA member, is still in the process of reviewing the OLA By-laws.

Next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 2, 7:30-9:00PM

Minutes submitted by Karalee Mitro and Edited by Chris Mulder