

Oregon Lavender Association Board Meeting Minutes **Tuesday, September 8, 2015**

Members Present: Chris Mulder, Carol Tannenbaum, Bonnie Rinaldi, Michael Lemmers, Dan Callen, Karalee Mitro, Melissa Van Hevelingen and Gene Schmidt.

Members Absent: Marilyn Kosel

August Membership Meeting Recap: Bonnie reported good attendance at the meeting and several new members also attended. Bonnie mentioned the fact that there is a need for more **basic** educational workshops and classes. Michael expressed that the members looking for this may be expecting to gain more information as a part of their membership, but perhaps not willing to pay for additional information/classes. Bonnie feels that the newer members may want to get information more often than every quarter and she believes that they may be willing to pay for more education. Carol suggested creating a mentorship as a way to educate newer members.

Membership as a whole reported a very good festival year. As the Newberg festival site was in a higher traffic area and within a good distance to area farms, attendance was high. Members also reported that the various area maps were a good tool used to bring visitors to their farms. Michael reported a very good tour and presentation was given by Jim Dierking of The Oregon Lavender Farm/Liberty Natural Products.

Additions or changes to last board meeting minutes: None reported and minutes were approved as written.

Membership Update/New Members: Bonnie reported a total membership of 73 members: 27 Promote with us, 21 Grow with us and 25 Relax with us. One member has signed up this past month but no payment has been received yet. Since last month, about 4 members have expired and several are new. Bonnie explained that when a membership is about to expire, she contacts the member reminding them to renew. Members are considered to be expired when they have failed to respond to two notices. Gene asked if expired members were given any kind of exit interview to which Bonnie replied that this had been attempted in the past with poor results as these members did not want to talk about their reasons for leaving the OLA.

Financial Update: Michael reports that there is possibly a bill from Cascade Lavender that has yet to be paid for an order that Marilyn filled. Bonnie suggested that the board have a separate product coordinator in order to relieve Marilyn of the burden of filling OLA orders and the work that is involved with that. A coordinator would have a Square payment tool available at meetings so that members can pay for OLA products onsite and eliminate Michael having to match payments with invoices. Carol suggested picking up orders from Marilyn and then paying through the OLA Square site, which is the correct process. Chris reiterated that when she fills an order for jam, she collects a check, completes an order form and sends them to Michael for deposit. Chris also stated that there will still be members that will not want to use Square and will continue to pay with

a check or cash when they need products throughout the year. The OLA product order/payment system needs to be looked at and tuned up.

Michael reported that he did not know of any outstanding invoices for website work. More jam will be sold and that should help with the current deficit. Chris relayed that she thinks the photo contest entries resulted in the “swipe” fees that OLA is charged. Bonnie stated that the “swipe” fees were from the Square transactions and that the “stripe” fees were the fee we didn’t recognize. Chris believes that these extra fees could be from the photo contest entry payments when they are paid online with a credit card.

Michael will be receiving the information on the photo contest winners so that he can send them the appropriate prize money checks. **The prizes awarded are: \$100.00 First Place, \$50.00 Second Place and \$25.00 Third and Fourth Place.** Lori Carlson will notify the winners and congratulate them.

Survey Update /Extend Deadline/Discussion: Bonnie sent the newest survey to all active members, including new members and members that have expired in the last year. Bonnie has currently only received **16 responses** to the survey. Bonnie suggested extending the deadline for completing the survey. She has sent 2 reminder emails to the members that did not respond by August 25th and September 1st. If we extend the survey deadline it would need to be completed by September 25th so that the data could be collected prior to the next board meeting. **Action Item: Bonnie will send the survey out again and give members time to respond. She will then send member information to Gene, Karalee, Melissa, Carol and Chris, for the members that still haven’t responded. They will call the members that have not responded and ask them to fill out the survey.**

OLA Benefits/Dues Increase Discussion: Bonnie reviewed the thoughts regarding membership dues compiled with the aid of Michael’s financial statistics and the OLA Membership Dues Sub-committee.

The committee proposed that the **Relax With Us** membership remain the same with the same cost of \$35.00 and the same benefits that are now in place.

The committee proposed that members at the **Grow With Us** level be given additional benefits to include:

- *A business listing on the public OLD website
- *Inclusion in the “Products and Services” Finder
- *Ability to purchase lavender-specific postings (subject to OLA editing) for events and happenings. Such postings will be listed on the public website Calendar of Lavender Events and will be included in an OLA Facebook post.

The sub-committee proposed an increase of \$75.00 for the **Grow With Us** membership, resulting in \$150.00 for membership dues at this level.

The sub-committee also proposed that members at the **Promote With Us** membership level continue to benefit from their current status as well as have the ability to purchase more OLA signs at a discount.

The committee proposed that the Promote With Us membership dues should be increased in the amount of either \$25.00 or \$50.00.

Bonnie stated that it was thought that there should be a definitive difference between the **Grow With Us** and **Promote With Us** levels. **The main difference is promoting a destination versus promoting a web presence.** It was also established that the **Grow With Us** members would be able to advertise an event for an advertising fee.

The board thoroughly discussed the proposed changes. A few board members felt that an even greater increase in dues for the Promote With Us level would be justified due to the many benefits provided. Several board members spoke about the concern regarding a loss of members if the dues structure was set too high. Dan spoke of the great value of the OLA benefits and that OLA needs to market this value to its members. Discussion followed about the results of both the OLA Destinations Guide and the OLD website. Bonnie pointed out that the various maps available in several areas were beneficial in driving business to farms this year. Karalee spoke of the need to provide additional benefits at the **Grow With Us** level in order to encourage members that are still in the process of building their business. She believes that the middle membership is the place where growth should be taking place as these are members that may eventually move up to the next level. Michael stated that the middle level should be given an identity. Melissa suggested asking the members how they feel about these increases when making the survey calls. Michael asked if dues are increased as suggested, would the increase be enough to make up the OLA deficit. Bonnie answered that it would be close but not enough to totally delete the deficit. Dan questioned if any thought has been given to having a sponsor to help finance the OLD Guide and Chris responded that it had been attempted in the past and could be a possibility in the future. Carol asked if the basic level dues should be increased by \$5.00. The board agreed that the basic level should remain the same. Chris stated that since there is sufficient information to support an increase in dues, a decision should be made. The board agreed that the decision regarding a dues increase should be voted on by the board.

Bonnie made a motion to increase the Grow With Us dues to \$150.00 and the Promote With Us dues to \$350.00. Chris seconded the motion, a vote was taken and the motion was approved by a majority of the OLA board.

Bonnie requested a timeline for the survey reminder, the dues information email and the next general membership meeting. **Action Item: Bonnie will send the survey reminder out the week of September 8th and the dues information will be emailed out later in September.**

Marketing Update: Bonnie reiterated Amy's report regarding the Facebook statistics. From May through mid-August there were 400 new page "likes", Amy did 47 posts, over 50,000 people were reached and 320 people have signed up for the OLA newsletter.

Should the Facebook posts be decreased to one per week during the months of Oct-Dec? Dan will discuss that with Amy and he will be working with Amy on the 2016 OLD Guide. We will need to look at the present guide and see what changes can be made. Dan would welcome suggestions on how the OLD guide can be improved and be more effective. Dan would like to work with the board over the next few months to get the priorities in line with regard to the guide. **Action Item: Chris will get copies of the previous guides to Dan.**

Chris also brought up the fact that Dan's new position of Marketing Director needs to be clearly defined in the OLA By-laws and that the position will need to be placed on the ballot for October, along with a description of the position. Dan states three distinct marketing directions: to drive up OLA membership, to direct visitors to OLA farms and to sell products and collect revenue. Dan is waiting for the survey results to get ideas on where OLA members' priorities lie. **Action Item: Dan will create a "top ten" list of priorities.**

Chris made a motion that a new executive position be added to the OLA board, an OLA Marketing Director. Carol seconded, a vote was taken and the majority of OLA board voted in favor.

OLA Emails/questions from public: Karalee reported that the majority of emails received during the busy lavender season were from people that wanted to know where to find open lavender farms. Requests came from out of the country and the state as well. She took the opportunity to invite visitors to sign up for the newsletter. Additional OLD Guides were requested and forwarded to either Chris or Bonnie, depending on the area. She asked Michael if he receives bank information. He does not receive it now so she will continue to forward it on to him. She asked Dan about Twitter and how those emails should be handled. Chris believes that Amy shouldn't have to handle those emails. OLA does not have an active Twitter account. The main consensus is that the OLD website is seen and that people are connecting with OLA.

Next Membership Meeting: The board decided to hold the next General Membership meeting on Oct 17, 2015, Noon-3:00 pm. Chris will contact Penny at Red Ridge Farms to see if she is able to host.

2016 OLA Sponsored mini-conference or series of workshops: Chris has spoken with Sarah Bader about the possibility of giving a class in the future. Sarah is willing to share some of her past workshop ideas. The survey results may give OLA an idea of what types of classes to offer. Chris reiterated that Jack and Susan Harrington will not be giving a conference this fall but instead are planning one in Oregon next spring.

The next board meeting was scheduled for **Tuesday October 6, 2015 at 7:00 pm.**

Minutes submitted by Karalee Mitro, OLA Secretary, edited by Chris Mulder

**AMENDMENTS to Oregon Lavender Association Board Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2015**

1.) The day following the board meeting of September 8, 2015, an email from Chris was sent to all OLA board members requesting a revote on the Promote With Us dues increase, asking that the board consider increasing the dues for that level to \$375.00.

Via email, the OLA Board voted in favor of increasing the Promote With Us dues to \$375.00 with a vote of 5 board members in favor of a \$50.00 increase and 3 board members in favor of a \$25.00 increase.

2.) Chris was not able to book Red Ridge Farms in October for the next General Membership meeting. The OLA Board responded in favor of a date and location change. Marilyn Kosel offered to host the meeting at the Chehalem Arts Center in Newberg, if it was available. Marilyn reported that it was not available on any Saturday in October, but was available on several Sundays in October, after 1:00 pm. A date was decided by several board members and a reservation was made by Marilyn.

The next OLA General Membership meeting is scheduled for Sunday, October 18, 2015, 2:00-5:00 pm at the Chehalem Arts Center in Newberg.

Amended minutes submitted by Karalee Mitro, OLA Secretary, edited by Chris Mulder