

Southeast Endurance Riders Association, Inc.
Members' Meeting Minutes
Amicalola Falls State Park, Dawsonville, Georgia
January 19, 2019

Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President, Sudi Lenhart, at 9:01 a.m. Due to the range of important issues facing AERC and SERA, a decision was made to hold a combined meeting to allow for more discussion time. SERA business was presented first, with the special session led by President Sudi Lenhart, AERC SE Directors Susan Kasemeyer and Vance Stine, and incoming DAL Tim Worden.

Sudi announces a door prize drawing, with the prizes being:

- A two-night stay at Amicalola Falls State Park – won by Nelia Rueter
- Two packages of chaffhaye (thanks to RiteBalance and Tim and Lara Worden)– won by Nolan Whitesell and Sharon Wilson

State of the Organization – Sudi Lenhart

- The theme of this year's convention is "Solidarity".
- There is a handout at registration which summarizes the issues facing AERC and SERA regarding the potential impacts of the USEF disaffiliation vote, the recent federal law called Safe Sport and some of the issues causing a divide within our endurance family.
- SERA needs to stay strong and stick together in order to survive and thrive in the current climate in this sport.
- Our membership
 - In 2016 we had 197 members
 - In 2017, our membership was down a bit at 176 members
 - In 2018 we had 241 members - an increase of almost 25%
 - SERA would like its membership to grow, and a key to that is for current members to encourage and welcome new people to join.
- We had 35 SERA sanctioned rides in 2018
 - The breakdown of rides per state:
 - Florida = 10
 - South Carolina = 5
 - North Carolina = 6
 - Tennessee = 3
 - Virginia = 4
 - Georgia = 0
 - Mississippi = 4
 - Alabama = 2
 - Indiana = 1 (special sanction)
 - Decline in ride entries
 - AERC's ride entries are down by 21.4% from 2013 to 2018.
 - The SE region's ride entries have declined by 11.3% from 2013 to 2018.
 - Without the SE, AERC's entries would be down by 23.4%.
 - The rest of AERC's ride entries declined by more than double the rate of decline in the SE.

Treasurer's Report

- SERA received a \$2,000 donation from the Knoxville Arabian Horse Association in 2018
- SERA received \$400 in anonymous donations in 2018
- The silent auction raised \$3,700 in 2018
- SERA made a \$2,000 donation to Friends of Kings Mountain in 2018
- Financial reports were distributed to the members present.

Old Business

- Bandana Program
 - Stephanie Wanica likes the green bandanas
 - There was discussion among the members as to whether to continue with the green bandana program (the orange mentor bandana program was discontinued in 2018)
 - Sudi Lenhart- makes a motion to continue the green bandana program which was seconded and passed on a vote of the members present.
 - Ike Nelson – to order more.
 - Sudi Lenhart – RMs should contact her if they need more bandanas and she will get them to you.
- SERA Online Auction
 - Last year's online auction was very successful
 - There was no silent auction in conjunction with this weekend's convention
 - Having an online auction every year is not "special"; and Stephanie Langefeld was not available
 - There was discussion among the members as to whether to hold a silent/online auction at the convention in 2020.
 - A motion was made to have the auction in 2020, which was seconded and passed by a vote of the members present.

New Business

- AV Equipment
 - SERA has a new wireless speaker thanks to an anonymous donor who donated \$200. This speaker can be used at rides.
 - Joe Schoech
 - SERA's old AV system was succumbing to frequency interference issues.
 - The new speakers and microphones purchased by SERA are a long-term fix to our AV system.
- Trails Donation
 - SERA made a \$1,000 donation to South Mountains State Park towards the purchase of a Yanmar Construction Ultra-Tight Turning Mini-Excavator, also known as a "dingo".
- Insurance Renewal
 - SERA renewed its policy of liability insurance for 2019 – 2020 at the same premium as 2018 – 2019.
 - Eric Rueter – would our liability insurance policy need to be re-written if SERA were to sanction CTRs, ride and tie events, or other types of equine events?
 - Laurie Underwood – the insurance policy is written as a farm policy. The company is indifferent as to the type of event. However, the way a ride manager "taps" into SERA's insurance is through sanctioning. Our bylaws currently only describe endurance rides which are sanctioned by AERC (SERA rules control in the event of a conflict), and SERA's current sanctioning rules require that a ride be AERC sanctioned, among other things.
 - AERC will add landowners, state parks, etc., to its policy of liability insurance for free; SERA is charged \$25 per additional insured by its carrier and passes that cost onto the ride manager.
 - SERA also obtained a quote for \$750 for a \$1,000,000 policy for cyber coverage
 - Vance Stine – this coverage is not a bad idea and insures against liability associated with hacking or an accidental release of members' personal information.
 - Nolan Whitesell – Asked about the total dollar amount of SERA assets that might be at risk in the event of a lawsuit and recommends a "gambler's election" which would be more cost effective over the long term than paying \$750 per year in premiums.
 - Tamra Williams – recommends we review the information available on our website.
 - Eric Rueter – no personal member information or credit card information is available on the SERA website other than the general membership list; all database information is kept off site.
 - Larry Mitchell – makes a motion to table consideration of cyber coverage. The motion was seconded by Sudi Lenhart and passed by a vote of the members present.

- ERIC Program – Eric Rueter
 - Eric made some changes to the ERIC program
 - The changes are contained in ERIC V2.
 - Riders can now enter online and pay the entry fee with a credit card.
 - Eric is offering a demo of V2 to ride managers this afternoon.
 - The SERA leaderboard is a part of ERIC V2.
 - Asks for feedback if anyone has problems using ERIC.
 - Stagg and Cheryl Newman purchased a 50" TV for the leaderboard and donated it to SERA.
 - Vance Stine – every ride manager should hire Eric to be their ride secretary.
- Sudi Lenhart - AERC Convention
 - SERA typically helps the SE Directors with a donation in the amount of \$750 per Director to help with their costs in attending the AERC Convention which the Directors personally pay for.
 - This year are three SERA members from the SE who are on the AERC BOD – Susan Kasemeyer, Vance Stine and Tim Worden.
 - Larry Mitchell made a motion that SERA give \$750 each to Susan Kasemeyer, Vance Stine and Tim Worden to help with their costs of attending the AERC Convention.
 - Laurie Underwood seconded the motion.
 - A vote of the members present was taken and the motion passed.
- Door Prize Drawing
 - Eric Rueter wins a package of chaffhaye (thanks to RiteBalance and Tim and Lara Worden).
 - Larry Mitchell wins a pair of cam straps.
 - Patsy Gowen wins a lead rope.
- State Representative Elections
 - By a vote of the members present, State representatives were elected. They are:
 - Georgia – Jane Larrimore
 - Tennessee – Sudi Lenhart
 - Florida – Kim Williams
 - Virginia – Dana Reeder
 - South Carolina – Patsy Gowen
 - North Carolina – Lara Worden
 - Mississippi – Jack Price
 - Kentucky – Amy Whelan
 - Alabama – Ike Nelson

Special Session with AERC SE Directors Susan Kasemeyer and Vance Stine, and incoming DAL Tim Worden.

- Susan Kasemeyer – Change to the Rules Governing Limited Distance Rides
 - The AERC BOD passed a revision to the rules governing completion time for limited distance riders
 - The new rule allows LD riders 6 hours to arrive off trail, 30 minutes from their final arrival time to meet pulse criteria and get a placing, and an additional 30 minutes to pass the remainder of the completion exam.
 - Duane Barnett – the original intent was to all LD riders 6 hours to arrive in in camp off their last loop and 30 minutes to complete AND pass the final veterinary exam. We have gone backwards by allowing an additional 30 minutes for the final completion exam.
 - Susan Kasemeyer - the head vet can make the criteria more stringent by making an announcement at the ride meeting ahead of time.
 - Laurie Underwood – we are losing a teaching opportunity with this rule change. LD riders should learn to manage their horse within the 30-minute time frame; moving up to 50s and doubling the distance traveled warrants 60 minutes for the final completion exam.
 - Joe Schoech – it encourages people to leave the pulse box instead of vetting through at the same time you pulse through.
 - Stagg Newman – this is a horse welfare issue; AERC is losing pace on horse welfare.
 - Stagg Newman – wrote a column for Endurance News which former President Paul Latiolais would not allow to be published. The article suggested that AERC take a total look at horse welfare, compare our horse welfare position to the rest of the world and retake leadership on this issue.
- Susan Kasemeyer, Vance Stine and Tom Worden - Disaffiliation with USEF
 - There have been several motions and amendments regarding USEF.

- On January 14, 2019, the AERC voted to disaffiliate/terminate our affiliate agreement with USEF as of 12/1/2019
 - The 12/1/2019 date was to allow ride managers to keep their rides for the 2019 ride season
 - The affiliate agreement in its present draft form requires AERC to follow USEF's bylaws, rules and suspension lists.
 - It would require an entire rewrite of AERC's bylaws.
 - USEF always actually had this requirement but it was never enforced.
 - AERC attempted to send out a joint press release with USEF. Instead USEF CEO Bill Moroney chose to send out its letter announcing that USEF planned to sever ties with AERC before the 12/1/2019.
 - Their bylaws give USEF three months (and maybe more) to separate, however the deadline is unclear.
 - Bill Moroney has already contacted AERC and says that USEF would like to work with AERC to preserve co-sanctioned rides for 2019.
- Tim Worden
 - His view of the 1/14/2019 motion which passed is that it was an olive branch for both sides of the issue
 - His operating philosophy is that if we have problems, we need to go with the flow and figure them out.
 - His interpretation of USEF's actions is that they would like to take over AERC/endurance in the US.
 - He is mindful that from 2015 – 2018, approximately 30% of ride entries in the SE came from co-sanctioned rides.
 - Bill Moroney/USEF made the choice to leave and the speed with which they delivered their announcement indicates that the letter was prepared ahead of the AERC vote.
 - Tim supports carve outs and does not see any reason why AERC or SERA cannot co-exist with USEF; we manage to co-exist with other disciplines like CTRs and ride and ties.
- Stagg Newman
 - Stagg provided his perspective as a member of the USET (US Equestrian Team) National Advisory Country. USET is the non-profit that helps supports USEF (US Equestrian Federation) international competition.
 - Has been frank with him about the problems within USEF as an organization.
 - Stagg spoke with Bill Moroney, CEO of USEF, on 1/15/2019.
 - Endurance is a very small percentage of all USEF as measured by members, activity level, and results. The USEF Endurance International Program finances are heavily subsidized in the sense that the revenues and donations from endurance probably only cover less than 30% of the cost of the USEF program.
 - AERC has caused problems for USEF. AERC has not fulfilled what USEF expects from an affiliate organization. Some AERC members have filed a protest with USOC against USEF. Endurance athletes have threatened lawsuits against USEF. Given USEF's mandate to serve many equine disciplines and breed organizations, USEF may decide to cut back on supporting endurance to the minimum required by their bylaws and the Ted Stevens Amateur Sports Act.
 - USEF does not want to disrupt the 2019 ride season for USEF endurance riders and want to enable dual sanctioned AERC and USEF/FEI rides to continue in 2019.
 - Stagg suggested that a carve out in the USEF rules to allow dual sanctioned rides that are both USEF and AERC, even if AERC is not the national affiliate, could work. There is established precedent in other USEF disciplines. The SE can show strength and solidarity to be a successful model.
 - USEF and AERC are working towards an operating agreement that would allow 2019 to be a successful transition year. From an athlete and ride manager standpoint, rides would work like they did in 2018.
 - Cheryl Newman
 - FEI ride managers currently have guns pointed at their faces.
 - USEF has requested that ride managers hold tight, that it will be worked out
 - If it does not 'work out', USEF rules read: USEF/national federation rules apply
 - As an example of a few USEF rules which might apply to AERC open riders at co-sanctioned rides:
 - USEF could assess a \$45 fee for any non-USEF member rider
 - USEF will require that any horse at the competition will be required to provide proof of Rhino vaccination
 - If an adequate work out is negotiated with USEF, the above example would go away.

- If no adequate work out happens, Cheryl will not be able to co-sanction the Biltmore ride with FEI.
 - If she does not receive confirmation soon, she will pull the ride's FEI sanctioning.
 - Duane Barnett
 - Has spoken with Cheryl Van Deusen regarding Broxton
 - Please come to Broxton
 - Cheryl Van Deusen feels the same way as Cheryl and Stagg Newman
 - If USEF requires the additional fee and proof of Rhino vaccinations, she will also pull FEI co-sanctioning.
 - Peggy Clark
 - Mary Katherine is a Young Rider who has represented the US in international competitions.
 - They have not yet renewed their membership with FEI because they are waiting to see what happens.
 - A compromise solution is out there, but FEI riders are currently at a loss and in limbo.
 - Vance Stine
 - This is a process and we are in the middle of it.
 - Thanks to Stagg and Cheryl Newman have put a lot of work into this issue.behind the scenes both with USEF and AERC.
 - Susan Kasemeyer
 - Everyone in the US that rides international are AERC members first.
 - It's not "us" and "them". We are they.
 - They ride for our flag and country.
 - Sudi Lenhart
 - There are many questions with no answers yet.
 - We need to stay together and support each other while everything gets sorted out.
 - Stay off Facebook – ride more!
- Effects of Disaffiliation on AERC's Drug Testing Program
 - USEF will no longer provide drug testing services to AERC if AERC is no longer the affiliate.
 - Finding labs to do the actual testing is not the problem.
 - The problem is arranging for qualified, licensed vets to collect the blood samples and maintain the chain of custody.
 - USEF has the personnel and the lawyers to defend lawsuits.
 - Laurie Underwood – there have been several posts on Facebook which have stated that the drug testing program can be easily replaced, and that a former AERC director has said the same thing. I am on the Horse Welfare Committee, and to date I have not seen one solution, proposal or replacement program offered.
 - Duane Barnett – he and other ride vets have no interest in collecting the samples due to liability issues, as well as conflict of interest issues – regional vets know most of the riders at any given competition, and sometimes the riders are their clients.
 - Vance Stine – USEF is currently the best option for blood testing services; AERC is trying to find a viable solution.
 - Duane Barnett – Monica Chapman has said that channels with USEF are "open" for an "operating agreement".
 - Vance Stine – members ask why AERC should worry about a drug testing program.
 - Deterrence is the goal.
 - Duane Barnett – statistically, 1 – 2 rides per region doesn't add up to much, but it is both a deterrence and an issue of public perception.
- Divisiveness Amongst AERC Members
 - Susan Kasemeyer and Vance Stine – do not believe everything you read from some people on Facebook regarding USEF, the reasons the BOD voted to disaffiliate, how much certain people say they have done for AERC, etc.
- Susan Kasemeyer - Change of AERC President
 - Paul Latiolais was voted out by the AERC Board of Directors in a no confidence vote during the December 2018 conference call. Monica Chapman is now the AERC President.
- Susan Kasemeyer – Change of AERC Rules Regarding Lottery Rides/Limited Entry Rides
 - Complaints were made to the AERC Sanctioning Committee

- All AERC rides are supposed to be first come, first served, but there have been rides in the West and in the Southeast that have advertised and put on “lottery” rides, where entries are not first come first served but by lottery drawing.
 - The Sanctioning Committee recommended changing the rules to permit lottery rides. In order to ensure fairness, entries to lottery rides must go to the AERC office where the names will be drawn.
 - The only ride in the Southeast that is affected by this rules change is South Mountains.
 - Lara Worden – brought lottery rides to AERC’s attention after seeing rides out west and in the Southeast with limited camping areas promote a “lottery”. She wants a level playing field. Like other ride venues, the Take No Prisoners venue has limited parking. It obeys the rules, and Lara wants to see the rule fairly and evenly applied across all rides.
 - Ride was advertised as a lottery ride in the past and is doing it again.
 - Clare Summers – what if we already signed up online for a lottery ride which is already sanctioned?
 - Susan Kasmeyer – the entries will go to the office; the office said they can handle the drawings.
 - A question was asked when the cutoff for a lottery ride will be announced by AERC.
 - Susan Kasemeyer – the details still need to be worked out.
 - Danny Herlong – if he wins a lottery entry, will he be able to sell it or give it away?
 - Danny Herlong – “winners” should pay a nonrefundable entry fee up front.
 - Tim Worden – the rules also need to need to establish rules regarding wait lists for those rides.
- Safe Sport – Sudi Lenhart
 - This is a federal law which impacts AERC and likely SERA
 - It was signed into law in February 2018 as a result of the sexual abuse scandal involving USA gymnastics.
 - The training courses were established in order to help safe guard juniors as best as we can.
 - AERC and its Legal Committee are looking at it to determine protocols, see if any rules changes are necessary to be in compliance with the law, and to see which organization(s) it might partner with to get the online training class at a lowered cost.
 - SERA wants to get ahead of this independent of AERC. AERC may come up with protocols and recommendations while we are working on this which SERA adopts, but we feel it is better to look at this law sooner rather than later.
 - At a grassroots level, the things which might be impacted are juniors traveling with people other than his or her family, juniors who are sponsored by a parent and the parent is pulled, requiring a substitute sponsor.
 - We propose that SERA start an ad hoc committee to look into how Safe Sport will affect us and to make recommendations on training implementation and potential rule changes regarding sponsorship of juniors, among other things
 - A call for volunteers yielded the following:
 - Stagg Newman (Chair)
 - Jane Moss
 - Lauren Saunby
 - Kim Williams
 - Patsy Gowen
 - Heather Wilkerson
 - Jack Price is also looking into this law for SERA
 - Stagg Newman – Safe Sport was passed by the US government as a result of the sexual abuse scandal which occurred in USA Gymnastics
 - A number of SERA members who are also USEF members have already taken the training offered by the US Center for Safe Sport
 - Susan Kasemeyer – believes the compliance deadline has been extended to 7/31/2019
 - Stagg Newman – believes that is USEF’s deadline to its members for compliance and is not an extension granted by the federal government to anyone other than NFs. Deadline is now because the law is on the books. If sued, court will decide if you made a good faith effort to comply.
 - Stagg Newman
 - Safe Sport has mandatory reporting requirements.
 - It imposes liquidated damages of up to \$150,000 plus other damages.
 - The ride managers will bear responsibility under Safe Sport.
 - A current BOD member has been sent a letter for cyber bullying a junior rider.
 - We are working to try to figure out what this law “looks like” for us. For instance, Biltmore may prevent minors to be sponsored by anyone other than a parent.
 - Lara Worden – what do we do about riders who show up as day members?
 - Laurie Underwood – the way USEF is handling it is to require the event manager to check the online database to be sure the entrants, etc., are Safe Sport certified. If they are not, they may not compete. They can go back to their hotels or a local library to take the training, print the certificates and return to the venue

to show they have taken the training since it will take up to 48 hours for the database to update and show someone has taken the training.

- Joe Schoech - the legal definition of a minor/junior depends on the state. SERA will need to look at the legal definition of a junior in each member state and tailor the threshold to the highest common denominator.

- Brainstorming Session – Stagg Newman
 - Asks members to join him to brainstorm ways to move us forward and keep us strong
 - Some great ideas were presented, like paying a new member's membership in SERA.
 - Joe Schoech – there should be a table at every ride which offers membership applications, the display board, etc.
 - We need a Sudi Lenhart and “Sudi dance” at every ride
 - Stagg Newman – is there any interest in an APEX (A Partnership for Endurance Excellence) type clinic?
 - Lani Newcomb – the OD offers a 101 clinic twice a year, 3 weeks before a ride – and then they get the participants to volunteer
 - Lauren Saunby – is a new member who appreciates the “Sudi experience.”

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m. by President Sudi Lenhart.

Submitted by Laurie Underwood, Secretary