

BASIC INFORMATION PACKAGE
USHWA MEETINGS – FEBRUARY 25-26, 2017
PLANET HOLLYWOOD, LAS VEGAS

Containing:

AGENDAS for the various MEETINGS

COMMUNICATORS HALL of FAME – NOMINEES for 2017

ANNUAL DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

VOTING TOTALS IN USHWA ELECTIONS

SUMMARY of USHWA CORRESPONDENCE

USHWA OFFICERS MEETING AGENDA

Planet Hollywood -- Brentwood Boardroom

Friday, February 24, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

1. Several Members Passed Away – A Moment of Silence
2. Review of 2016 Finances
 - a. What impact did cost-saving measures introduced in 2016 have?
3. 2017 Weekend from a Financial Standpoint
 - a. Income
 - i. Ticket Sales
 - ii. Journal Sales
 - iii. Sponsorship Income
 - iv. Anticipated Raffle Income
 - b. Expenses
 - i. Dinner Costs
 - ii. Journal Costs
 - iii. Raffle Costs
 - iv. Travel – Hotel for Directors
 - c. Projected Net \$\$\$ for 2017 Weekend
4. 2017 Weekend from an Operational Standpoint
5. Projections of Finances for Year 2017
6. Location for 2018 Weekend
7. Thoughts on BLCs/R&RCPs
8. Any Other Topics Needing To Be Covered?

USHWA DIRECTORS MEETING

Planet Hollywood – Wilshire Rooms A/B

Saturday, February 25, 2017 -- 4:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call of Directors (both Directors and non-Directors will sign a passed-around sheet)
2. Moment of Silence for Deceased USHWAnS of Past Year
3. Director Reimbursements – Barry Lefkowitz
4. Recap of the 2016 Fort Lauderdale Weekend – Steve Wolf
5. Report on and projections for the 2017 Las Vegas Weekend – Judy Davis-Wilson
6. Report given by Ellen Harvey and Mike Farrell concerning the value of HOY disclosure prior to the banquet.
7. Report of the Budget and Tax and Audit Committees – Tom Hicks, Bill MacDonald, Barry Lefkowitz, Tim Bojarski (placed here and not tomorrow, when other committee reports are to be given, because these reports should have a large impact on the BLCs and R&RCPs)
8. By-Law Change Proposals (BLCs) and Rules & Regulations Change Proposals (R&RCPs)
 - a. Discussion
 - b. Voting
9. Voting to Select Communicators Hall of Fame Ballot Candidates – Leon Zimmerman
10. Any Other Business Needing to be Addressed before Sunday's 9 a.m. meeting
11. A Look at the Weekend's Activities to Come – Gordon Waterstone
12. Adjournment

USHWA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Planet Hollywood – Wilshire Rooms A/B

Sunday, February 26, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

1. Roll call (sign-up sheet will be passed around)
2. Remembrance of USHWAnS passed away (moment of silence yesterday)
3. (Deferral of?) Reading of minutes from 2016 meetings
4. Vote to accept 2016 minutes (with/ without corrections)
5. (Deferral of?) Reading of correspondence since last national meeting
6. Vote to accept correspondence (with / without corrections)
7. Membership Report
8. Report of National Officers
9. COMMITTEES (and SUBCOMMITTEES) REPORTS (answering any questions)
 - a. Recap of Budget and Tax and Audit Committee Reports from Saturday – Tom Hicks, Bill MacDonald
 - b. Hall of Fame Screening Committee – Leon Zimmerman
 - c. Integrity Committee – Moira Fanning
 - d. General Dinner Committee
 - i. Location Committee – Gordon Waterstone
 - ii. Sponsorship Committee – Steve Wolf
 - iii. Dinner Planning Subcommittee – Judy Davis-Wilson
 - iv. Awards Night Logistics Subcommittee – Callie Davies-Gooch
 - v. Script and Host Subcommittee – Debbie Little
 - vi. 50/50 Hirt Raffle Subcommittee – Sam Pendolino
 - e. Journal Committees (includes subcommittee reports) – Kim Rinker
 - f. “Hervey Awards” Committee – Ken Weingartner
 - g. Amateur Drivers Committee – John Manzi
 - h. Breeders / Broodmares Committee – Dean Hoffman
 - i. Hirt Workshop Committee – Debbie Little / Ken Weingartner
 - j. Insurance Committee – Leon Zimmerman
 - k. Welfare Committee – Barry Lefkowitz
 - l. Social Media Committee
 - i. Website – Tim Bojarski
 - ii. Other Social Media – Heather Vitale
 - m. Membership “Committees”
 - i. New Membership Subcommittee – Jerry Connors
 - n. Caretaker Award Committee – Tim Bojarski
10. Summary of Saturday’s BLCP / R&RCP discussions and voting
11. Summary of Communicators Hall of Fame Ballot Candidates voting
12. Old Business
13. New Business
14. Election of National Officers
15. Assistance for banquet room setup – Gordon Waterstone
16. Adjournment

COMMUNICATORS HALL OF FAME FINALISTS

DIRECTORS VOTE – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

CHAPTERS NOMINATING:

CARL BECKER (nominated by DV, FL, KY, M-G)

JAY BERGMAN (NYC)

DAVE BRIGGS (CAN)

MARK HALL (FL, KEY, OH)

DAVE LITTLE (KEY, NYC, UNY)

CARL BECKER -1

Carl Becker served as the track announcer for three pivotal moments in the sport of harness racing, calling both the final Hambletonian at DuQuoin and the inaugural Breeders' Crown at Lexington, both telecast live by ESPN, as well as the Niatross time-trial which produced the sport's first mile in 1:50 or faster. In his role as the announcer for the Grand Circuit at both Springfield and DuQuoin, he also described such memorable performances as the all-time trotting world records established by Mack Lobell (Springfield, 1987) and Tom Ridge (DuQuoin, 2004), as well as serving as the longtime voice (1981-2004) of the World Trotting Derby.

As pedigree reader for the sport's leading auction houses, Becker has been senior announcer at Tattersalls (1975-1997), Standardbred Horse Sales Co. (1975-2005), Garden State Sales Co. (1978-1995), and Kentucky Standardbred/Lexington Selected (1998-present). He was on the stand for the inaugural Standardbred auction at The Meadowlands in 1978, and he was the announcer when Laugh A Day fetched a then-record \$625,000 at Tattersalls in 1983.

A native of Altamont, Illinois, Becker graduated from the University of Illinois as Outstanding Senior in the College of Agriculture in 1958, before entering the Standardbred business as a breeder and race announcer in 1963. He called his first racing program by traveling 300 miles in June of that year to announce at a matinee program in Maquoketa, Iowa, where he worked pro bono in order to gain experience.

By the mid-1960s, while Becker was serving as superintendent of speed at the Illinois State Fair, track announcer and future Hall of Famer Stan Bergstein took Becker under his supervision and played a significant role in mentoring him for the roles he would play on a larger stage in the years to come. Now 79 years of age, Becker remains active in the sport as one of the leading breeders in the Midwest as the principal of Fair Meadow Farm, which annually ranks as one of the top three breeders in Illinois in terms of both progeny earnings and races won. A veteran of 50 years in the industry, Becker is a member of the Illinois Harness Horsemen's Association Hall of Fame.

CARL BECKER -2

Kurt Becker, the son of Communicators Hall of Fame nominee Carl Becker and both an excellent announcer and knowledgeable surveyor of the Standardbred scene, was asked to identify the strengths of his father for consideration in this award, and he responded: "I've long believed my father's work as a communicator in the sport has been largely defined by how he revolutionized the job of pedigree reader for Standardbred auctions and transformed it into a salesmanship position. I doubt there are many individuals who have landed in the Hall of Fame on the basis of the sales portion of the industry, but sales arguably are a key indicator of the economic health of the sport, and my father was particularly adept at combining a knowledge of pedigrees with an enthusiastic presentation which went beyond a dry recitation of what was already printed on the catalog page."

These are some of the highlights from the career of Carl Becker:

- Announcer at the DuQuoin State Fair for the Grand Circuit from 1974-2005, serving as track announcer for the 1979 Hambletonian and as both the track and television voice for the 1980 "Last Hambo" at DuQuoin, which was carried live by ESPN; was also the longtime voice of the World Trotting Derby, including the inaugural edition won by Panty Raid in 1981
- Announcer for the Fall Trots at Lexington's Red Mile from 1979-2000, calling 22 consecutive editions of the Kentucky Futurity, announcing the inaugural Breeders' Crown (both for the track and live on ESPN) won by Workaholic, the legendary Niatross time trial in 1980, and calling the Tattersalls Pace and Kentucky Filly Futurity in prime time for ESPN 2 in 1997
- Track announcer for Louisville Downs in 1980, including the live call for the PBS network telecast of French Chef's triumph in the Kentucky Pacing Derby
- Track announcer for the Grand Circuit at the Illinois State Fair from 1966-2005, including the Cambest world record time trial, and for the Grand Circuit at the Indiana State Fair from 1978-2000, including numerous editions of the Fox Stake
- In his roles at Springfield, DuQuoin, Indianapolis, and Lexington, had the call for dozens of world record performances, including his memorable description of Mack Lobell's world record at Springfield in 1987
- Served as senior announcer for the Standardbred Horse Sales Company at Harrisburg (Pa.) from 1978-2005, for P. W. Tully's Garden State Sales Company (including sales at The Meadowlands) from 1979-98, for the Tattersalls Sales Company in Lexington from 1978-1997, for Lexington Selected Sales Company from 1998-present, and for The Blooded Horse Sales Company in Delaware, Ohio, from 2000-present

JAY BERGMAN

Jay Bergman has covered harness racing for 40 years and much of that time was spent as perhaps the most influential and talked about columnist in North America as Editor-in-Chief of Sports Eye, a daily past performance newspaper which served as the information source for the sport before the digital era.

Never one to shy away from controversy, Bergman often rocked the boat during his career to provide fans of the sport with the true story. While others would hold their tongues to paint a rosy picture of the situation, Jay served as one of the few columnists willing to hold people accountable for mistakes and poor decisions.

Bergman began his career at Sports Eye in 1977. Originally on board as a handicapper, writer and chartcaller, he was elevated to Editor-in-Chief in the mid 1980s. During his 27-year run at the paper, he wrote countless articles about all aspects of the sport and was a key cog in the creation of creating track variants to assist handicappers.

A 1984 Hervey Award winner, Bergman was not limited to just his Sports Eye work. He has also written for Hoof Beats, Canadian Sportsman and Trot Magazine. Currently Bergman contributes as a regular columnist for DRF Harness, the harness racing arm of Daily Racing Form.

While writing has brought Bergman acclaim, the pen and typewriter have not been his only tools during his career. The Brooklyn, New York native served as a regular contributor on Racing from The Meadowlands during the 1980s, served as on-air host during major stakes dates at the Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono during the last few years, and provided behind the scenes assistance to numerous live broadcasts of the Hambletonian and Breeders Crown on network television.

Speaking of the Breeders Crown, Bergman worked as morning line oddsmaker and chart caller for the series for the first two decades of its existence.

Bergman also served as Racing Manager/consultant for Joe Gerrity's Little Farm in New York and helped handle 1986 upset Breeders Crown winner Sunset Warrior as a stallion.

For four decades Bergman has been a fixture covering races at the track, serving as a key cog in bringing handicapping data to the public via Sports Eye, and been the voice of the people. His four-decade career in the sport is certainly deserving of a place in the Communicators Hall of Fame.

DAVE BRIGGS

Dave Briggs is the top working journalist covering harness racing in North America today. He was publisher and editor of the longest-running publication (of any genre) in Canadian history, harness racing magazine *The Canadian Sportsman*, for more than 18 years.

Briggs is currently the editor of *Harness Racing Update*, co-editor of *Canadian Thoroughbred* magazine, and in charge of standardbred communications for Ontario Racing. After *Harness Racing Update* ceased online publication in 2015, he became its editor as part of a successful relaunch which continues to this day.

His sport-specific articles have also been featured in the *Guelph Mercury* newspaper for more than a decade, importantly bringing informed racing journalism to a mainstream audience.

He has won 20 national and international awards for his written work in a career spanning more than two decades and numerous top publications (*The Horseman and Fair World*, *Hoof Beats*, *The Canadian Sportsman*, *Harness Racing Update*).

Briggs, who holds a Masters degree in journalism from the University of Western Ontario and an honours BA in communication studies from the University of Windsor, won his most recent John Hervey

Award in the News and Commentary category in January 2017. He has previously been honoured a record eight times with Hervey Awards recognizing excellence in harness racing print journalism (1996,1997,1998, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015). Briggs has also twice accepted top prize for outstanding written work in the Standardbred Canada O'Brien Media Excellence Awards (2008, 2014).

His exceptional reporting and writing have been recognized outside of harness racing, and in international competition, with American Horse Publications (AHP) awards for best magazine profile (2010, 2011, 2014), best editorial (2010) and best magazine feature (2010); and World Trotting Conference International Media Awards for best magazine article (2001, 2003).

Briggs is a knowledgeable and respected figure in the industry, serving on the standardbred nominating committee for the Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Fame and being selected as founding president of the U.S. Harness Writers Association Canadian chapter in 2013.

He has been a frequent volunteer at the annual Clyde Hirt Student Sports Media Workshop at The Meadowlands, to help encourage and mentor the next generation of journalists covering the sport. His contributions to harness racing media are ongoing, even as his record of accomplishments to date already warrants special commendation.

MARK HALL

It seems only appropriate that Mark Hall financed his college education by being a photographer at weddings, for he has made two other successful marriages in his life – on the personal side, to his wife Becky, and on the professional side in harness racing, a marriage between the racing/warmup/conformation shot and the artistic “feature” shot, with the talent he has shown in both styles of sulky photography establishing him as one of the sport’s premier cameramen.

Mark brought a knowledge of both higher-profile sports and of harness racing when he came to work at the USTA in August 1982 (“It’s hard to believe that it will be 35 years that I will have been at the USTA!” marvels Hall, who keeps young of spirit by occasionally doing his very skilled imitation of Elvis Presley). He had shot Ohio State football games while working for the wire services during college and thereafter, and he had seen the harness horses of his brother Marshall and sister-in-law Dee compete on the Ohio fair circuit when Dee let him know that there was a photography spot open at the USTA.

When Mark started with the USTA, there were already two future Communicators Hall of Famers doing camerawork – two people who couldn’t have been more dissimilar in terms of both personality and racing photography.

There was George Smallsreed, a colorful (especially turquoise), flamboyant character who preferred to focus his attention on the unique and the spectacular in his photography, taking pictures through many techniques and from many venues (upon seeing a group of cameramen gathered by the finish line, he’d paraphrase baseball’s Wee Willie Keeler and his “Hit ‘em where they ain’t” by saying “Go (take pictures) where they ain’t”).

Alongside George was Ed Keys, a man whose picture is next to the word “unassuming” in the dictionary, but a superior photographer in his specialized areas of close finishes and glamorous, powerful shots of

horses warming up, so essential in the operation of the USTA's Hoof Beats magazine and for the USTA's job of supplying photos to other venues. (Both men could do "the other style" of photography well, but became known best in their individual areas.)

Choosing wisely, Mark sought to master both styles and techniques of harness photography, with a large addition of his own gifted insight, and he has succeeded so well that, with his 2016 win, he has earned a record six George Smallsreed awards in photography, for both racing action and feature pictures. Mark attends all of the major races on the Grand Circuit calendar, and one can find his work throughout USTA communications, and accompanying releases of major awardwinners.

In addition to learning photographic technique from two masters, Mark has also evolved in his lifestyle from one to the other: he started as a bit of a Smallsreed "wild child," but his marriage to Becky – along with the arrival of children Jacob and Sarah -- "calmed me down some, gave me a different perspective and a different look on priorities," a statement with which Keys would nod his head affirmatively.

Mark has noted, "I am amazed that I have been so lucky in winning (the photography awards). There is a large group of very good photographers in harness racing: Dave Landry and Claus Andersen ... Chris Tully is doing some different things, quality work as well ... there are a lot of them." Hall is always looking at the photography of his peers, looking at a particular technique or perspective they used, and files it away for a future shot; similarly, just going through life, Mark says, "I try to see things in terms of how they might make a good picture. You can always learn."

That answer gives insight into a final matter: "Mark, in your opinion, what is the best picture you've ever taken, or your favorite picture?"

Immediately from Hall: "I haven't taken that picture yet."

The legacy of his mentors carries on, and Mark Hall carries on, with the enthusiasm of a colt, looking for that "best picture" and creating his own legacy while establishing new criteria of excellence in Standardbred photography.

DAVE LITTLE

Dave Little likes to say his motto is "anything for money," but those who know him, know it's far from the truth.

Little currently volunteers as Grand Circuit Week announcer at Goshen Historic Track and at the Orleans County Fair in Barton, VT.

And if it weren't for Little's presence at the New York Daily News for 24 years, harness racing would almost have been a forgotten entity in the greater New York City area.

Little's newspaper career started at age 13 when he called in basketball, baseball and football scores while attending Hasbrouck Heights (NJ) High School to the Bergen Record and other New Jersey newspapers.

At 16, he took a part-time job as High School Sports Coordinator at the Record, starting a newspaper career that spanned almost four decades.

After high school, Little went full-time at the Record, working nights compiling the scoreboard and racing pages. It was then that he developed an interest in horse racing.

Handicapping came naturally to Little, but to pursue his calling, he'd have to move on to another paper.

In 1986, he was hired by the New York Post to compile the scoreboard pages, but Little wanted to be a racing handicapper, and, after doing so under the moniker Can Do Cassie for several weeks, proved himself and was then allowed to use his own name. It was only six weeks into his stay at the Post when Little's claim to fame would come, as he selected all nine winners on an afternoon card at Roosevelt Raceway, a feat that has not been duplicated at any NYC paper since.

But Little isn't just a talented handicapper, he is a "triple threat", since he can also announce and write.

In 1988, Howard Oil critiqued some of Little's race calls off a tape recorder and eventually made Little the backup announcer at the Mighty M.

Years later, then Goshen general manager Thom Young would ask Little to call his races and he's been doing it annually ever since.

In 2010, he was asked to become track announcer at the Orleans County Fair and every year since has made the 12-hour round-trip drive to Barton, VT.

Little also served as announcer at the New York State Fair's Syracuse Mile from 1998-99.

He worked for the New York Daily News from 1991 until 2015 as the paper's racing editor and was well known at the News for covering numerous harness stakes events, as well as for his weekly harness racing column, and, of course, for his expert handicapping.

He also handicapped thoroughbred racing at the News, at one time picking five Kentucky Derby winners during an 11-year span, and won the News' yearly in-house thoroughbred contest, the Battle of Saratoga, five times.

Former News racing writer Bill Finley nicknamed Little "The Trotter Guy" in the Battle in the mid-1990s as a jab at his harness roots, but it is a moniker Little wears proudly to this day.

During his tenure at the News, Little did plenty of television work at the Meadowlands, as after appearing on the track's "Racing from the Meadowlands" live in-house simulcast and nightly regional cable replay shows occasionally beginning in 1991, he became a regular weekly co-host on the production in 1995 and served in that capacity for five years.

When his stay at the News concluded in 2015, Little became a contributing writer at the online harness newspaper harnessracingupdate.com, before taking a position in the spring of 2016 at the Meadowlands as morning-line odds maker and track program race analyst.

Little is an active member of the United States Harness Writers Association and has served as master of

ceremonies at both local and national dinners for the organization. He also volunteers every year as an advisor for USHWA's Clyde Hirt Journalism Workshop and is the main copy editor for the stories produced by the college students.

Little was honored with a U.S. Trotting Association President's Award in 2008 and the Good Guy Award (2009) and the Phil Pines Award (2016), both from the Monticello-Goshen chapter of USHWA.

He has been married for 27 years to his wife, Debbie, who is a harness writer and handicapper for the New York Post.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE UNITED STATES HARNESS WRITERS ASSOCIATION

Saturday, March 5, 2016 – 1:30 p.m.
Crystal Room 2
Hyatt Regency Pier 66 Resort, Fort Lauderdale FL

ATTENDING (38, including *Delegates, of 44 Directors):

Officers: Chris Tully, President; Tim Bojarski, 1st VP; Shawn Wiles, 2nd VP; Steven Wolf, Chairman of the Board; Judy Davis-Wilson, Treasurer; Jerry Connors, Secretary.

Past Presidents (if not Officers): Marv Bachrad, Moira Fanning, Debbie Little, John Manzi, Nick Saponara, Jason Settlemoir, Gordon Waterstone, Leon Zimmerman.

Chapter Directors / *Delegates:

At-Large: Ellen Taylor
Canadian: Dave Briggs, Darryl Kaplan
Delaware Valley: *Barry Lefkowitz, Matt Sparacino
Florida: Kathleen Dempsey, Tom Hicks
Kentucky: Whitney Fields, Randy Manges
Keystone: Kevin Decker, Roger Huston
Mid-Atlantic: Joe Fonte
Monticello-Goshen: *Kate Forry, Janet Terhune
New England: Bill Ellis, *Bill MacDonald
New Jersey: Callie Davies-Gooch, *Mike Farrell
New York City: *Derick Giwner, Dave Little
Ohio: Carol Cramer, Phil Terry
Upstate New York: *Sam Pendolino. *James Witherite

USHWA Members: Joren Fields (prospective member), Tim Konkle, Dawnelle Mock, Heather Wilder; also, guests Mr. and Mrs. Sam Stathis.

Before the meeting proper, there was a morning 2-hour Social Media Workshop focusing on Major Race Days: Content and Strategies. It was facilitated by Rob Key and Allison Conte, with David Carr and Gabe Prewitt featured speakers. Lunch was also served prior to the meeting.

The first order of business was a moment of silence for three USHWAs who had passed away since the last meeting: Murray Janoff, who had been the last surviving founder of the organization; Alan Prince, longstanding and longsuffering Treasurer of the organization; and veteran midstate New York writer Chet Gizara. All three had at least 50 years as an USHWA member, and combined they totaled 176 years of knowledge and help and dedication to the organization.

The roll call was taken, as above.

The business turned immediately to the selection of the two ballot candidates for the Communicators Hall of Fame; the chapter nominees had been “whittled” down to five by the Past Presidents, per the bylaws: Carl Becker, Dave Briggs, Dave Little, Gordon Waterstone, and Steve Wolf. The Directors had previously been provided biographical materials, and they cast their votes, tallied outside of the room.

During the tallying, an “USHWAN’s Calendar” was distributed, giving a month-to-month description of what major events, voting, and deadlines fell when, with the hope that members, especially Officers, can check it from time to time, and not be surprised by deadlines which may have fallen by the wayside.

Steve Wolf discussed “the Orlando experience,” the meeting and banquet held early in 2015. Revenue would turn out to be down – 275 attendees at the banquet, and \$22,000 in sponsorships acquired – relative to the current banquet, for which 330 tickets had been sold, and \$27,000 in sponsorships raised. Steve also introduced guests Mr. and Mrs. Sam Stathis of Celebrity Farms; Sam is a noted breeder, owner, amateur driver, and innovator within harness racing, and a very successful businessman outside the confines of the racetrack.

The balloting tabulation was then presented to the Directors: Steve Wolf 17, Gordon Waterstone 16, Dave Little 13, Carl Becker 11, Dave Briggs 10. Wolf and Waterstone thus would be on the ballot for election to the Communicators Hall of Fame (postscript: they both were elected).

Shawn Wiles was then appointed by President Chris to head the review, discussion, and voting for the By-Law Change Proposals and the Rules & Regulations Change Proposals.

Accompanying this paperwork is a list of the BLCs and RRCs that were submitted and acted upon during the meeting, along with two RRCs submitted from the floor (only BLCs have to be submitted 30 days beforehand). Also in this packet is the recording of the vote on the proposition, as well as amendments or minor points of discussion that arose.

There were two BLCs/RRCs which shared the same theme, a familiar one, and detail of the discussion on these seems in order here. These both dealt with the question of when to release the Harness Horse of the Year / Pacer of the Year / Trotter of the Year materials, one indirectly by saying that if we were not going to announce these award-winners at the banquet for the first time, we should do so for the categories of Owner, Trainer, and Driver of the Year.

Debbie Little and Mike Farrell both capsulized the basic question of the debate: Debbie said, “The question is a loss of media in December vs. the draw of people and attention to the Banquet room”; Mike put it as “It’s getting the news out vs. a ‘sexier,’ more dramatic dinner.” (Mike, as an AP writer/disseminator/facilitator, is literally one of the “moving forces” in getting the stories out over the national wire.)

Dave Briggs noted that from his experience with the O’Brien Awards, a release could be prepared about the winners, sent to the major media, and “embargoed” with a certain release time. Moira Fanning asked about whether an embargo would be honored, noted that both forms have been tried over the years, and that metrics, proof should be the overriding factor (planting the seeds for the eventual actions taken).

The factor of social media, Facebooking or Twittering from the banquet floor itself, was something that had not even been much of a discussion point when the matter was last reviewed a couple of years previously, but now needed to be considered because of the exponential growth of usage of these media within certain demographics, a point seconded by guest Sam Stathis, a successful international businessman. Derick Giwner noted that “younger people don’t even read newspapers on a regular basis.”

Gordon Waterstone asked if the announcement at the banquet would be damaging to Journal advertising sales, so crucial in the financial health of USHWA, and President Chris, Journal chairman, said that it certainly would, in congratulatory ads for the winners, “and also ‘robbing’ breeders of taking ads associating their horses with the three eventual selectees.” He also said we as a group should be doing what is best for the industry as a whole, not what is best for USHWA or 300 people gathered for the banquet.

In the end, the decision hinged on Moira Fanning’s point of “what are the actual measures of the impacts of these styles” – the number of “\$2.5 million in newspaper space if we had to purchase it in advertising” was voiced, but not sourced. It was decided to table this motion for the day (26-11), as Ken Weingartner, who works for the USTA’s Harness Racing Communications arm and who would be familiar with the exact amount of “good” generated by the earlier announcement, could not attend this meeting but would be present for the Sunday membership session.

The R&R change about announcing Owner/Trainer/Driver raised many parallel points. Chris Tully said that experience has shown there are traditionally three stories which could possibly intrigue the non-trade media: Owner of the Year, Trainer of the Year, and Driver of the Year, and that we would be losing two of these three “hooks” were we to follow what this RRCP was offering. This proposition was tabled 26-10.

The two “add-on” RRCPs (legal in USHWA status), requiring the “whittling committees” in charge of narrowing the award nominees of the various chapters so they MUST vote for three in each category, indeed was not on the original handout, as some noted when the three selections were called for at 2016’s end; this discussion came after the distributed RRCPs had been voted on.

Original proposer Debbie Little’s point was that the voters in some chapters “whittle” down to only their own candidate, which was not in the spirit of trying to find the best candidates for award consideration. She moved that a requirement that three candidates be specified in the Bergstein – Proximity whittling vote done by the Directors. After that suggestion Jerry Connors jumped in to ask to expand this provision to include the “whittling” done on year-end human and broodmare candidates, done by the Past Presidents and now the Officers as result of an earlier RRCP change. This motion was ACCEPTED with three NAYS.

Janet Terhune suggested that the Treasurer be required to produce a quarterly financial report for the Tax and Audit Committees and the Officers. There was some favorable comment on this suggestion, but it was agreed that to accomplish this one would have to redefine the role of the Treasurer, which is in the By-Laws.

Moira Fanning raised the question of the overseeing that Directors having nights of hotel being paid by USHWA, instead of any “additional” nights being borne by the Chapters, following the requirements

under which this policy was established. After discussion, Mr. Wiles agreed that there could be a problem in this area, and endorsed a suggestion by Mr. Settlemoir that a committee be appointed to ensure compliance. During this discussion, mention was made of the credit card “points” accumulated by USHWA in making these reservations and being the billing agent; Callie Davies-Gooch urged USHWA to be using those points actively.

In “Any Other Business Requiring Discussion Before Tomorrow’s Meeting,” Moira Fanning started the discussion by using the phrase “dire financial straits,” and saying it was her understanding that USHWA lost \$20,000 over the last year. She emphasized that everybody must be a fundraiser for USHWA, and stated that the organization should have a reserve of \$100,000, so “in case there was a nuclear war,” USHWA still could conduct its Banquet and recognize the sport’s champions – “we are the organization that does that.” She then asked for a clear financial State of the USHWA Financial Union.

The immediate answers given by President Chris were that in 2013 there was a profit realized because of the Congress and the attendant gathering of people and events, and good sponsorship backing; in 2014, when the weekend was held in Dover where hotel rates were lower and transportation was not as much, plus a substantial auction contributing, there was a loss of \$1700; and in 2015, in Orlando, because the higher costs of airfare, hotel, and food, plus a drop in revenue from the auctions, there was a loss of about \$17,000. The current USHWA financial reserves are at approximately \$75,000, an approximate recent average which has been up or down at any given time depending on calendar year vs. current time.

It was simple, Tully noted. Revenues were down, and expenses were up.

The President also said that for long periods of time he did not see progressing financial reports; the Treasurer’s response was that no report was asked for. With the tenor getting somewhat confrontational, Callie Davies-Gooch called this tone “unacceptable,” and “that you people up there, in charge of the organization, should not be fighting among yourselves,” after which some tension was derailed (Derick Giwner noting that “the Communicators needed to communicate better”), and substantive questions starting come from the floor.

Jason Settlemoir noted that while we have our “regulars” who “give back to the sport” every year, we cannot be perceived as “begging” for money every year.

Steve Wolf said that selling sponsorships, an area in which he has done much work, can mean a difference of \$20,000 net for a banquet / weekend.

Barry Lefkowitz made a statement that would become one of that day’s, and many days’ afterwards, mantras: “The problem is not really with the expenses; expenses only vary about 5-6% from year-to-year. What we need to do is raise more in revenue – and that process should be starting this Monday (after the banquet). And we need to do it with consistency and with conversation – we need a list of who is working with whom, preferably encoded in a special section of our website, so that the same people are not approached by a number of USHWAs. ”

Debbie Little then asked a couple of questions: 1) if our finances are not good right now, why did we come to this rich and expensive resort for this year’s weekend? and 2) why is USHWA staying at the resort, when there are “offsite” accommodations that would cost half of the rate where we are (we have stayed at lesser-priced hotels before)?

Jason Settlemoir tackled the first question, saying that some of our most regular sponsors and attendees would give us complaints about not going to a “class A” destination, and have done so in the past. Barry Lefkowitz then noted that were USHWA to stay at a site that was not the base of the convention, there would be liability issues in transporting USHWAnS back and forth.

Moira Fanning observed that when we are picking a site in the spring of a year, we cannot know that at the end of the year one entity is going to win six awards, which drives down banquet attendance and advertising / sponsorship possibilities – it’s hard to “budget” around that unknown.

Derick Giwner said he was approached by people who thought the 2015 weekend and banquet were not particularly good; he then asked why we are not raising our ticket prices if we are in need of revenue / profit?

Roger Huston noted that it seemed that our most profitable weekends in recent years have come when racetracks were the hosts; Chris Tully countered along the same lines as Jason Settlemoir had used (above), that our target audience wanted the upscale, “class A,” resort-like facility.

This discussion would be expanded upon at the Sunday general membership meeting.

Steve Wolf then updated the group on the weekend’s further activities and their timetable. After that, a motion for adjournment was made, seconded, and passed.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNITED STATES HARNESS WRITERS ASSOCIATION

Sunday, March 6, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.
Crystal Room 2
Hyatt Regency Pier 66 Resort, Fort Lauderdale FL

ATTENDING :

Officers: Chris Tully, President; Tim Bojarski, 1st VP; Shawn Wiles, 2nd VP; Steven Wolf, Chairman of the Board; Judy Davis-Wilson, Treasurer; Jerry Connors, Secretary.

Past Presidents (if not Officers): Marv Bachrad, Moira Fanning, Debbie Little, John Manzi, Jason Settlemoir, Gordon Waterstone, Leon Zimmerman.

Chapter Directors / *Delegates:

At-Large: Ellen Taylor
Canadian: Dave Briggs, Darryl Kaplan
Delaware Valley: *Barry Lefkowitz, Matt Sparacino
Florida: Kathleen Dempsey, Tom Hicks
Kentucky: Whitney Fields, Randy Manges
Keystone: Kevin Decker, Roger Huston
Mid-Atlantic: Joe Fonte
Monticello-Goshen: *Kate Forry, Janet Terhune
New England: Bill Ellis, *Bill MacDonald
New Jersey: Callie Davies-Gooch, *Mike Farrell
New York City: *Derick Giwner, Dave Little
Ohio: Carol Cramer, Phil Terry
Upstate New York: *Sam Pendolino. *James Witherite

USHWA Members (non-Directors): Tom Charters, Allison Conte, Karen Craft, Mark Davis, Jay Farrar, Joren Fields (prospective member), Susan Garey, Mike Hall, Bob Heyden, Tim Konkle, Dan Leary, Patricia Miller, Dawnelle Mock, Fred Segal, Heather Vitale, Ken Weingartner, and Heather Wilder; plus a contingent of non-members from Batavia Downs: John Clifford, Todd Haight, Ken Lauderdale, Michael Nolan, and Tom Wamp.

An attendance sheet was passed around, with attendees asked to designate whether they were directors, members, or non-members, and whether they would be attending the luncheon after the meeting.

The first orders of business were to examine the minutes of the 2015 session, and the correspondence that National had received in the last year. A formal reading of both of these was waived, and both were ACCEPTED.

The membership report, which like the minutes and the correspondence had been included in the preparatory packet for perusal before the meetings, was also ACCEPTED. At the time of the meeting, there were 215 active members of USHWA plus 9 associate members, those figures marking changes of -2 and +1, respectively, from the report at the 2015 meeting. A positive sign was that already in 2016 there had five new members added, and three members rejoined (included in these figures); the secretary thanked the New Membership committee, who did much good recruiting.

Dave Little asked about membership trends over the last 14 years, the length of the present secretary's service – "Are we plateauing, or will figures drop?". Connors said that we have had as many as about 270 active members in his years of service, "but the sport is contracting – that's just a fact. With the best efforts of the membership, I would say that in five years from now there's a very good chance that we would still have at least 200 active members." President Chris said that prime targets for membership recruitment may now lie with the growth of social media, and the new people at the forefront of that effort.

The Officers then gave reports on their activities in the last year. Shawn Wiles, 2VP, noted that he was the chairman of the committee for the location of the annual meetings and banquet, and given some negative talk about the location of the 2015 meeting, "the committee started talking the night of the banquet last year." He also noted positive activity in his home Monticello-Goshen chapter, also the home chapter of President Chris, with John Manzi gearing back a bit after so many years of service.

Tim Bojarski, 1VP, said it had been an "interesting year" for him, as he continues to meet more people and learn about the chapters and their activity, in addition to serving as president / secretary of his own Upstate New York chapter. He said that he "has heard a lot of good ideas out there," and looks forward to working with those ideas and their champions.

Judy Davis-Wilson spoke of her year as treasurer, noting the trend that there were areas where revenues continued to go down. "The question of future funds is probably better asked of Mr. Bojarski (referring to the officer election at the end of the meeting, and the fact that Tim would be president if "normal succession" took place), as I am sure there will be a committee which will again try to improve our financial structures and status."

Steve Wolf, Chairman of the Board, said that he had "quite a busy" USHWA year with being the point man on the sponsorship and dinner committees (the latter because of his "home turf" of Florida is where this meeting is being held). "Those committees required weekly, sometimes daily, communication with the membership," he stated, "and with good people helping you, things get done." Steve was also able to get to Goshen in 2015. Moira Fanning thought that a round of applause was due the Florida Chapter (of which Steve is President) for sponsoring the cocktail party on Saturday, to the tune of \$12,000, and the generosity of the chapter was acknowledged.

The secretary thanked his fellow USHWAs for the honor of being voted into the Communicators Hall of Famer over the past year. He said that he was constantly learning more and better ways of getting the news out about USHWA, especially through some of the newer electronic means available, and that he would try to keep those communications as up-to-date as possible, adding he himself always welcomed feedback of any kind that would help the organization. In closing, he noted USHWA's own website, www.ushwa.org, as a valuable resource for members to learn about the organization.

Chris Tully noted that he has been a member of the organization for well over 20 years now, and that he now was coming to the end of his two-year term as President of the organization, and is grateful for having had that opportunity. He has spent hundreds of hours trying to improve the organization's operational processes and in putting together the two dinner Journals.

Next came the Committee reports, given by the chair of the Committee if present, or a member of the Committee. A document combining the individual reports was distributed; the representative could say that the report spoke for itself, or could expand on salient points, and was also to take any questions from the membership.

Leon Zimmerman said that his Hall of Fame Screening Committee report spoke for itself, and thanked the members of the Committee.

Moira Fanning thanked all the members of the Integrity Committee, who were very invested and involved in the important work that that Committee did.

Steve Wolf said he wanted to add one other name into the report on the Dinner Committee, Kim Rinker. He thanked Debbie Little and "our team of 4" for their work in scripting and hosting the banquet this evening, and Ellen Taylor and Bob Heyden for coming early and preparing the giveaway materials. Moving to the Sponsorship Committee, Steve said that, after raising \$22,000 for the 2015 banquet in Orlando, \$26,000 in sponsorship money would be coming to USHWA in support of tonight's event, and thanked many of the individual donors by name.

Shawn Wiles had spoken earlier of taking a very quick start off the mark in Location Committee work for 2016 after some negative feedback in 2015 about Orlando, and singled out Steve Wolf and Barry Lefkowitz as prime movers. The search went far and wide, from racetracks to Charleston SC, before arriving at tonight's venue; Shawn acknowledged that while "I think it is a good venue, respecting what people wanted; I and the Committee were also aware of the financial considerations involved." He ended by saying that shortly tonight's banquet he expected work to start shortly on finding a 2017 location.

Questions from Debbie Little and Mike Farrell about dinner logistics were addressed by Dinner Committee members. An ~~out of the box~~ unorthodox question from Mr. Connors holding the USHWA meetings apart from the Banquet, as the former has no relevance to location whereas the latter does, led Jason Settlemoir to note that we should be in communication with other organizations such as USTA and HHI to see if everyone would be meeting at the same time and at a common place, "not even necessarily a Congress"; Chris said such dialogue were indeed started and planned to continue.

Gordon Waterstone said that he had indeed already been exploring costs having a meeting and banquet at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas, and that preliminary talks, "in which they (PH) have been very cooperative," show that hotel rates would be even cheaper than this year, and the costs associated with the entirety of the dinner would be about the same – with the advantage, if holding the dinner on Sunday, February 26, leading right into the already-planned USTA meetings in Las Vegas, which would start the next day

Fred Segal negotiated that there are "site selection committees" who represent several companies, and can get some costs reduced because of their "bulk negotiation" position.

Steve summed up this segment by saying that the net of “everything” – meetings, dinner, Journal – for this weekend would be approximately +\$12,000. “Is that better than last year? Yes. Is it enough to run USHWA for a year? No.”

Chris Tully said that the Journal Committee’s report was included and spoke for itself. He stated that ad sales were about \$50G, down a bit, and re-emphasized that everyone in the organization should either be taking an ad or helping to sell ads, so that “we might return to the \$60G-\$65G level of a few years ago.”

Ken Weingartner spoke on behalf of his “Hervey” / Journalism Awards Committee, noting that the amount of entries has had about the same in recent years, and that one of the winners was present at this meeting, at which time Mr. Briggs was given a well-merited round of applause. Otherwise, he said, the report spoke for itself. (Ken has chaired the committee for several years, and a new chair may be in the works to give him and other longterm members a chance to enter.)

John Manzi next spoke on behalf of the Amateur Driver of the Year Committee, who noted that amateur racing is one of the few segments of the industry which has shown steady growth, and also has provided tracks with betting races to fill out their cards. He urged everyone to read the committee report, then added, “In many years, our decision has been very close, and we’ve had ‘split decisions,’ but this year the choice was unanimous for our first female Amateur Driver of the Year, “‘Hurricane’ Hannah Miller,” with this announcement drawing applause from the gathered.

Randy Manges deputized for chairman Dean Hoffman and said that the Broodmares and Breeders Committee’s report spoke for itself.

Debbie Little, as one chairperson of the Hirt Workshop Committee, thanked the major “advisors” for their time and input: Ellen Taylor, Hollywood Heyden, Dave Briggs, and Yonkers and The Meadowlands; co-chair Ken Weingartner immediately chimed in with “but Debbie and Dave Little are the heart and soul of this effort,” which drew them well-deserved applause. Ken went on to note that he thought “that the Hirt Workshop was the best project that USHWA ‘does’ within the course of the year.”

To offset the approximate, variable cost of \$5000/year, Steve Wolf suggested that perhaps a sponsor would want to have its name attached to the Workshop; Debbie noted that she did not want the number of participants, currently 5 or 6, to grow, given the attention that they get from the advisors, and other logistical concerns.

Next came the report of the Tax and Audit Committee, Barry Lefkowitz, chair. There had been much pre-meeting speculation that this would be the major focus of the day, with the most challenging concepts presented – and the committee report lived up to the “hype.”

Barry laid out the basic terms first: after a profit in 2013, the organization lost just short of \$2000 for 2014 (calendar year), ad reports a loss of \$20,000 for 2015, most of which can be attributed to unfortunate circumstances with the dinner. THIS IS A TREND THAT CANNOT ACCEPTED, BUT MUST BE REVERSED. Expenses must be lowered; income needs to be raised, with the latter half the key. The Committee recommends a balance of \$150G-\$160G in the USTA treasury at a year’s end, with the \$175G of 2013 a “target.”

Jason Settlemoir agreed with this basic point: “Look at the expenses for areas of reduction, but adding revenue seems to be the process that will work for us.”

Leon Zimmerman complimented Barry on the extensive work that they had done in isolating the major avenues of discussion (Leon was also part of the hard-working committee, but the comment was not made in any self-congratulatory style; those who know Leon know that is not be his *modus operandi*). “We must look at every expense, such as having one director for each chapter; the principle of two directors was something created in another time. Alternate directions for USHWA must be explored.”

Tom Hicks asked the question of whether a budget had been prepared for an upcoming year of USHWA activity; to the knowledge of Barry and others, there had not. (Mr. Hicks would become appointed as the chair of USHWA’s 2016-2017 Budget Committee; this was not a case of *beneficium non est impunitum* [no good deed goes unpunished], but something Tom put heart and soul into and would become the next USHWA of the Year.) He then talked about a “menu of sponsorships,” actively maintained: annual sponsorships as well as direct events sponsorships.

Barry speculated about making the “unofficial” meeting at Goshen in July an “official” meeting: the current financial state would be known; much of the theoretical work for ongoing USHWA finances and structure could be theorized and discussed; and we would be able to draw a good representation of USHWA, since that is the segment of the country where most USHWAs lived ... “not incurring any expenses” for this meeting.

Kevin Decker mentioned constructing a formal Budget Committee (as above), subject to the vision of the new President. “We couldn’t operate our own businesses without a budget.”

Jason Settlemoir here made a motion to amend the R&Rs, Operations, which evolved into “one fewer night of hotel for all Directors, vs. what was currently in the bylaws, plus looking at capping transportation costs. I realize that this could be a very unpopular motion. But we need to make drastic changes; if this motion would be voted down today, we would at least spurring conversation on the topic.” Leon Zimmerman supported Jason’s thoughts.

John Manzi suggested that attendance would be cut at USHWA’s annual meetings, “and instead of growing the industry, we would be cutting it. This does not seem the right time to do this.”

Debbie Little said that if we are to cut a night of hotel stay, we might also look at combining the two major meetings into one meeting. The bylaws allow this, and precedent was cited; some were doubtful it could be done.

Kevin Decker suggested that before we pass this motion, we should go through a year of budgeting through a committee, to see what that process would yield.

Steve Wolf concurred, mentioning that Tom Hicks had brought up the same idea; this concept was supported by Moira Fanning, who noted that “right now we really don’t have the kind of specific, overall information” for informed decisions. It was becoming apparent as well that a “timetable” for the large theoretical work, then adjusted to the practical, would be very hard to pinpoint.

Mr. Settlemoir’s motion was then voted on, and resulted in a 24-24 vote, which meant that the motion was TABLED for this time.

A break was taken after this wide-ranging, intense discussion, after which Leon Zimmerman gave his report as the chairman of the Insurance Committee. He gave an update on his report: he said that the cost of recent years' coverage for directors' liability held steady this past year at \$1900. The group would continue to explore any chance of general liability coverage, especially special events coverage.

Judy Davis-Wilson noted that the Welfare Committee report spoke for itself, noting that these payments were among the last of Alan Prince's contributions to USHWA.

Tim Bojarski spoke about the Railbird Awards, in which this year the Person of the Year category drew by far the largest number of votes, and the winner had a much higher percentage of the voting than anyone winning the award previously, despite a built-in mechanism against "swamping" a vote. Tim has already spoken to Dan Leary of the USTA about the possible futures of these awards.

Crossing over to the Media Committee, Tim highlighted some of the record numbers for website traffic outlined in his report. In response to a Jason Settlemoir question, Tim noted that USHWA and USTA did work closely together, and intended to find ways to work even more closely together. He also mentioned that the USHWA had a mobile component, m.ushwa.org, which allowed full contact with all the items contained on the website.

Tim then gave highlights of the report of the Caretaker Award committee, put in place to select the award-winner to be honored at this evening's banquet. One salient note is that it was on the day the Caretaker Award was announced that USHWA's website enjoyed its most-trafficked day.

The final report came from the New Membership Subcommittee, a part of the Membership Committee specifically charged with trying to gain new members for USHWA. Committee chairman Connors especially praised the work of committee members Derick Giwner and Melissa Keith over the past year.

The committee was formed to create a new membership recruitment brochure, which it did in 2011. The design was done by Jessica Schroeder, who was the chair of the committee at the time; the cost was \$340 for 2000 pieces. A motion to proceed with the reprinting of an updated brochure, with the provision that any cost increase of 20% being approved by the Officers, was ACCEPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

The committee report had asked for a brief period during the membership committee to get a greater sense of what the general membership thought "the benefits of joining USHWA" were, as the committee was not satisfied with the thoughts, expression and breadth of purposes it was devising. Despite this being requested in the committee report, discussion was not allowed, saying that "such discussion was committee work."

Derick Giwner then mentioned that he has had people tell him that they would not join USHWA because USHWA has not made it a simple process to send in information online and pay dues electronically. President Chris said that the further electronification of USHWA was an ongoing process, and thanked Mr. Giwner for his comment. Mike Farrell then proposed that committee reports be closed, and this was voted so (with one NAY).

A summary of the discussion about on voting on the BLCPs and R&RCPs in Saturday's meeting was presented by the secretary; he also gave a summary of the previous day's Communicators Hall of Fame balloting.

Moving to “OLD BUSINESS,” Steve Wolf reminded the assembled that there was a year-long audit of USHWA concerning financial year 2011, after which the fact emerged that each chapter needed to obtain its own FEIN number, separate from USHWA national. In the intervening four years, only a handful of chapters had obtained said FEIN numbers. Fred Segal spoke up, saying he was familiar with the procedures in both obtaining a number and complying with a yearly 990 form that must be filed every year – “it takes about 9 minutes to do it on the computer.” A chapter of an organization that carries 501[c] designation must fill out a 990 postcard if the chapter money involved is under \$25,000.

Judy Davis-Wilson said that these numbers are not required for USHWA’s yearly tax filing, but that they were needed at the time we were audited, and were we to be audited again and chapters wouldn’t have these numbers ... it would not be a pleasant experience.

Under new business, Mike Farrell, “citing the dire financial situation the organization finds itself in,” proposed an increase in USHWA dues, from the current \$40 for Active members not Retired or Life, to \$50, or \$75 if the member’s corporation pays the dues, as soon as possible – “I realize this may have to go through the by-law process.” However, Article V, section 1 was pointed out:

Article V – Dues.

Section 1 – Dues and the Method of Payment.

The Board of Directors is empowered to reset the amount of dues, and may do so by majority vote at any National meeting (2012).

This provision enables dues to be raised at the present meeting.

In discussion, the dues increase was changed to a flat \$60 for all Active members not Retired or Life; Chris Tully noted that the amended form would bring in an extra \$3000 in dues, as opposed to the \$2000 of the original proposal. The modified form with \$60 was ACCEPTED for 2017.

Moira Fanning asked that, in the absence of our “streaming” the awards dinner, some volunteers assist in “tweeting” comments from the award-winners, quotes which history has shown to have widespread appeal. She asked members to go up to sponsors and award-winners and thank them for their participation. President Chris said that this idea was well-expressed and worthwhile.

Leon Zimmerman, “able parliamentarian,” headed the process of election of USHWA officers. 1VP President Tim Bojarski was elected President, to applause. Tim then made his “first act of business” the presenting of the gold Life membership pin to outgoing president Chris Tully, along with his thanks; he was applauded as well. 2VP Shawn Wiles was elected 1VP.

For 2VP, there were nominations for Kim Rinker, Derick Giwner, and Randy Manges; Mr. Manges declined standing for the office. Short statements by Ms. Rinker and Mr. Giwner were given, Ms. Rinker via conference call as she was unable to be in Florida due to a family emergency, about the qualities that they felt they would bring to the office of 2VP.

The election was then held and tallied. During the tallying, Chris Tully reminded the assembled of the work needing to be done to prepare the banquet room, starting right after this meeting, and then read a list of award presenters for the banquet. Callie Davies-Gooch asked that presenters be in place an awardee or two before “their” presentation.

There was a discussion about the length of speeches of award-winners; there was expressed the dichotomy of keeping the evening “moving,” vs. the people winning awards often being major sponsors, and then, in a very important moment of their racing lives, being “hustled” off the stage. (The author of these minutes recognizes the irony of being a prime offender later that day, and regrets the resultant ill will.)

Leon Zimmerman again took command of the meeting, announcing the results for the 2VP voting, with Kim Rinker getting 31 votes and Derick Giwner 18, making Ms. Rinker an officer as 2VP.

Secretary Connors was returned to his office; this will be his 15th year as USHWA secretary. Before the election for Treasurer, incumbent Judy Davis-Wilson announced that she was retiring from the Treasurer’s position. Barry Lefkowitz was the sole nomination, and he was voted USHWA treasurer. Chris Tully, the outgoing president, becomes the Chairman of the Board, per the USHWA by-laws.

With a final reminder of the need for assistance for banquet room setup upon leaving this meeting, the Membership Meeting was ADJOURNED.

U. S. HARNESS WRITERS ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

For the period between the Fort Lauderdale 2016 meeting and this 2017 Las Vegas meeting

ADDITIONS:

In 2016, Thomas Bennett, Bob Boni, Daniel Delisle, Ed DeRossa, Kim French (rejoin), Darin Gagne, Emily Hay, Rich Johnston (rejoin), Ed Kobesky, Jillian Luff, Pete Marinari, Mark McKelvie, Gunjan Patel, Gabe Prewitt, Jen Roytz, Megan Samulka, Phil Sporn (rejoin), Sarah Thomas, Dale Welk, J.J. Zamaiko. (17 new + 3 rejoin)

In 2017, Jessica Barnes (rejoin) plus associate Tim Vanca. (1 + 1 associate)

TRANSFER FROM ASSOCIATE to ACTIVE: Cheri Collison. (1)

DEATHS: Jack Ginnetti Jr., Marie Hill, Charles Kelley, Bill McBride. (4)

DROPPED FOR MAILINGS RETURNED THREE CONSECUTIVE TIMES: A. Burdick, P. Harmon. (2)

DROPPED FOR NON-PAYMENT of DUES: R. Balgobin, J. Billings, J. Byrne, K. Gleason, J. Johnson, R. Key, P. Lefko, S. Lilly, A. Mayotte, B. Mayotte, B. McEvoy, G. Schwarz, A. Sinclair, plus associates J. Cacciolfi and E. Vaccaro. (13 + 2 associates)

TOTAL GAINED: 22 active members plus 1 associate member (including Collison switch).

TOTAL LOST: 19 active members plus 3 associate members (including Collison switch).

NET: gaining 3 active members, losing 2 associate members.

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AT TIME OF THIS REPORT: 218 active members plus 7 associate members.

VOTING TOTALS IN USHWA ELECTIONS

From the Fort Lauderdale Meeting 2016 to the Las Vegas Meeting 2017

COMMUNICATORS HALL OF FAME BALLOT CANDIDATES

(The top five of the chapter nominees as “whittled down” by the Past Presidents, per the by-laws; the top two will go on the Hall of Fame ballot in the summer)

STEVE WOLF 17, GORDON WATERSTONE 16, Dave Little 13, Carl Becker 11, Dave Briggs 10.

LIVING HALL OF FAME (174 of 225 eligible voters returned ballots = 77.3%; includes eligible USHWAnS and all Hall of Famers)

75% of ballots cast yes/no needed for election

BRIAN SEARS: 174 votes cast, 159 yes, 10 no, 5 abstain, 94.1% of yes-no votes; ELECTED.

COMMUNICATORS HALL OF FAME (159 of 214 eligible voters returned ballots = 74.3%)

75% of ballots cast yes/no needed for election

GORDON WATERSTONE: 159 votes cast, 140 yes, 9 no, 10 abstain, 94.0% of yes-no votes; ELECTED.

STEVE WOLF: 158 votes cast, 126 yes, 18 no, 14 abstain, 87.5% of yes-no votes; ELECTED.

AT LARGE DIRECTORS (11 of 31 eligible voters returned ballots = 35.5%)

With incumbents Kim Rinker having been elected National 2VP and Ellen Taylor choosing to not stand for election, top two votegetters would become new directors for a one-year term starting January 1, 2017

EMILY GASKIN and TIM KONKLE 4 each; Tom Kelley 3; Neil Milbert and Gary Seibel 2 each; Joe FitzGerald, Joel Leanse, Kevin Mack, Pat Miller and Rick Sperman 1 each.

STAN BERGSTEIN/PROXIMITY FIRST ROUND BALLOTING, among DIRECTORS

32 of 44 directors participated = 72.7%; by-law change for the first time required each director to vote for three of the choices

MARGARETA WALLENIOUS-KLEBERG 31, JOE FARALDO and TEAM TEAGUE 22 each, Jim Carr 21

155 of 199 eligible voters returned ballots in Horse of the Year balloting = 79.9%
(includes eligible USHWAnS and race secretaries; tabulated by USTA)

VOTING AMONG PAST PRESIDENTS and OFFICERS in HUMAN/BROODMARE CATEGORIES
WHERE CHAPTERS' NOMINATIONS PRODUCED MORE THAN THREE CANDIDATES

(Top three votegetters advanced to final ballot; by-law change for the first time required each director to vote for three of the choices)

17 of 18 eligible voters returned ballots

OWNER: CHRISTINA TAKTER 17, ED MULLINAX 10, MARION JEAN WELLWOOD / DEVIN KEELING 9, Marvin Katz / Al Libfeld 8, Howard Taylor 7.

RISING STAR: MARCUS MILLER 17, TRACE TETRICK 14, RON WRENN JR. 12, Drew Monti 6, Alfie Carroll 2.

GOOD GUY: BRIAN BROWN 13, GEORGE TEAGUE JR. 10, PAULA WELLWOOD / MIKE KEELING 9, Anthony MacDonald 7, Clyde Francis and Chris Gooden 6 each.

UNSUNG HERO: BARBARA BROOKS 14, LEE ALPHEN 13, JOHN QUINN 9, Charlie Williams 6, Brice Cote 5, Hands-On Horses 4.

YEAR-END HUMAN/BROODMARE AWARDS (128 of 212 eligible voters returned ballots = 60.4%)

STAN BERGSTEIN/ PROXIMITY AWARD

TEAM TEAGUE 79, Margareta Wallenius-Kleberg 31, Joe Faraldo 18.

OWNER OF THE YEAR

MARION JEAN WELLWOOD / DEVIN KEELING 50, Christina Takter 47, Ed Mullinax 31.

TRAINER OF THE YEAR

JIMMY TAKTER 71, Ron Burke 38, Clyde Francis 19.

DRIVER OF THE YEAR

DAVID MILLER 71, Scott Zeron 57.

RISING STAR AWARD

MARCUS MILLER 73, Trace Tetrick 35, Ron Wrenn Jr. 20.

BREAKTHROUGH AWARD

ALLISON CONTE 63, James Witherite 44, Mark McKelvie 20, abstain 1.

GOOD GUY AWARD

GEORGE TEAGUE JR. 57, Brian Brown 37, Paula Wellwood / Mike Keeling 34.

UNSUNG HERO AWARD

BARBARA BROOKS 87, Lee Alphen 25, John Quinn 15, abstain 1.

Breeders of the Year Marvin Katz / Al Libfeld, Trotting Broodmare of the Year Cantab It All, and Pacing Broodmare of the Year Artstopper came out of the Breeders/Broodmares Committee as the only Nomination in their respective categories, so the "voting" was a "walkover."

CORRESPONDENCE TO (and from) NATIONAL USHWA

From the 2016 Fort Lauderdale meetings to the 2017 Las Vegas meetings

March 9 – A letter from breeder/owner Jules Siegel, who was very dissatisfied with the Awards Dinner of 2016, calling it an “abomination,” with complaints from the dinner selection and food, air conditioning, and length of trophy ceremonies, and suggesting that we consider refunding his ticket payments. He was written back with our apologies and regret he did not enjoy the meeting, agreement in a couple of points (the lack on entrée choice, for one), and a promise that the other areas will be looked in and definitely improved upon in the future.

June – The announcement that Hoosier Park had “signed on” as the presenting sponsor for the 2017 Dan Patch Awards Banquet at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas. Thanks go in very large part to newly-elected At Large director Tim Konkle, who was the “man on the ground” in the Hoosier State, bringing the various elements together for this win-win situation. Hoosier Park has received prominent mention in all subsequent USHWA releases, with the evening officially known as “The Dan Patch Awards Banquet Presented by Hoosier Park,” along with the track being incorporated into the event’s logo.

A press release was sent out marking the partnership; there were subsequent press releases sent out when Hanover Shoe Farms, the Indiana Standardbred Association, and the partnership of SOA-NY and Yonkers Raceway also signed on as major sponsors.

July 24 and October 10 – Two releases sent to National by the Canada Chapter of USHWA on events happening in chapter president Melissa Keith’s Nova Scotia: the sponsorship of a reading from a book which featured past equine and human stars throughout the province, an event which took place during Atlantic Grand Circuit Week (and which included a winners circle presentation), and a “mini-Hirt” pilot program, where a journalism student visited and worked behind the scenes at many “hotspots” and jobs during Atlantic Breeders Crown Weekend at Charlottetown Raceway.

August 24 – A letter from longtime At Large Director Ellen Taylor, announcing that she had decided not to stand for re-election. With fellow At Large Director Kim Rinker also leaving that post upon her election as National 2VP, two spots needed filling during the December director election, with Emily Gaskin and Tim Konkle – both Indiana people, appropriate to this year’s banquet – winning the vote.

September 16 – A press release, one of many coordinated with Harness Racing Communications, announcing the election of Brian Sears to the Hall of Fame, and the election of two former USHWA Presidents, Gordon Waterstone and Steve Wolf, to the Communicators Hall of Fame.

November 1 – An inquiry from a writer named Ellen Williams, who wrote that she is drafting a nonfiction piece of “regional history” focusing on harness racing from the 1870 to 1900 era based on recent research of hers, and could USHWA suggest an publications who might be interested in this type of writing. (We replied that the general history of the sport had been well-documented, that it was unlikely a trade magazine or newssite will be interested in a “sprawling” history, but that state or regional magazines, such as “Pennsylvania,” often feature articles of that type, and that there would be a good place to start.)

November 4 – A letter from New England chapter president Bill Ellis about the recent passing of Jack Ginnetti Jr., longtime New England stalwart in journalism and USHWA and a member of the Communicators Hall of Fame, who had been fighting through declining health since the shock of losing his wife and a son within 18 months a couple of years back. This was the second death of a New England member during 2016, following the passing of another longtime USHWA member, Charles Kelley. The bell would also toll late in the year for noted writer Marie Hill and for “Wild” Bill McBride, who had a column of his, earlier submitted, appear in Hoof Beats after his death.

Mid-November – A letter from Bruce Nickells, a 2016 inductee into the Hall of Fame, with suggestions about possible Hall of Fame candidates: more people who have spent a lifetime in the industry “making it what it is today,” and a Hall of Fame award for “The Great Families” of harness racing, ones that have turned out many high-level contributors to the sport over generations.

November 29 – A release from HANA Harness, a handicappers’ trade group, stating that USHWA member Jay Hochstetler was the winner of the 2016 Hambletonian Society Grand Circuit Handicapping Challenge, winning the first half of the contest and then finishing second to another USHWA member, Matt Rose, with Hochstetler’s total of the two halves giving him the year’s title. Hall Of Fame electee Gordon Waterstone was fourth in the second half and fifth for the year.

December 1 – An announcement from Harness Horse International of their awardwinners for 2016 – mentioned here because these awards will be given during the USHWA banquet. Winners included George Teague Jr. as the Dominic Frinzi Person of the Year (Frinzi was a longtime member of USHWA), Lee Alphen with the Appreciation Award. Mike Izzo and the late Leo McNamara as Lifetime Achievement Award winners, and Tom Cassidy and Roger Huston as Clyde Hirt Media Winner winners (Huston is and Hirt was in the membership of USHWA for many years).

December 3 ff. – Evan Pattak of The Meadows forwarded a letter from Richard Ducharme, son of the veteran horseman John Ducharme, about getting his father the proper recognition he deserves by having him elected to the Hall of Fame. A response was sent outlining the basic procedure: put together a packet of information on the candidate, with supportive statistics, a list of notable horses, and any stories written about the person. Then, since Hall of Fame candidates must come from nominations of USHWA Chapters, said packet would get forwarded to the officers of Chapters around which the highlights of the candidate’s career was achieved.

That started a long, frequent conversation which has touched many chapters, with Mr. Ducharme the younger, a stage four cancer survivor, surprised that people wouldn’t know what his father has accomplished (“They vote for the Hall of Fame?”), and beginning to put together supporting material, though most of it so far has been limited to his e-mails that “state the obvious,” as he might say.

December 29 – An e-mail from an Eric Lerner of Eric Lerner Magic, asking who might be in charge of securing entertainment for our upcoming banquet, which he had seen listed. He was answered that unless he could produce magic that made meetings or the banquet finish any sooner, we could not, with respect, use his talents this year.

January 3 – An e-mail from Leon Zimmerman, thanking USHWA for a contribution to the Bancroft group home managed facility for developmentally disabled, where his son Gary had lived for many years before his passing in October.

January 7 – An e-mail from Todd Herman, with an inquiry as to have the best chance to get his father, Billy Herman, into the Hall of Fame. See the reply of December 3, above, for a description of the process we recommend when we receive requests of this type.