

RAS Board Meeting, Thursday February 18, 2021

Present: Thomas Narten (TN), Jamye Carr (JC), Curtis Smith, Maggie Poole (MP), Caroline Morgan (CM), Michael Maieli (M2), Chris Smith.

Regrets: none

Minutes produced by: Thomas Narten.

Meeting length: 2H21min

Topic: Moving board meeting to different time. Issue: Caroline will start working evening shifts soon and will be unavailable Thursday evenings. Turns out that two other board members have conflicts on other weeknights, so no change to meeting time is made.

Topic: Approval of minutes. December minutes approved. January minutes tentaviely approved pending OK from Caroline who hadn't had chance to review. Once she OKs, they are approved.

Michael mentions that in previous meeting, he brought up that he has access to digitized versions of Buntbarsch publication going back many years. During the discussion at that time, Neil pointed out that there may be restrictions on redistribution (e.g., copyright). Access to archives are typically benefits for individual members only. Michael did go back and check on that and agrees. So He is withdrawing his offer to share his copies with others.

Topic: Review of previous monthly meeting. Had 44 people on the Zoom call. Gary Lange's talk on Pseudomugils. 44 people on the Zoom call. Overall another good meeting. Talk was good. Good banter before meeting started. No auction (no submissions), also had wetspot delivery same day. CM: great talk. Learned a lot. m2: we had him at one of our workshops in past. Question as to whether we are giving him honorarium. Yes. 2021 budget has \$600 for external/outside speakers. Approved last year (details in Oct 2020 minutes).

Topic: Review of social hour: People who come seem to enjoy it. Seems to be working as intended.

Topic: Treasurer report. Chris shows his usual (but updated) chart. Current through 2/18/2021. RAS account balance is still growing (not decreasing). Primarily due to memberships. Chris reviews how he is tracking things. Revenue coming in via stripe (credit cards) and paypal. TN reviews the monthly auction spreadsheet. It shows what was bought/sold, what was a donation, what was a split, etc. One column shows amount owed to individual sellers. So Chris should be able to just use this to cut individual reimbursement checks for those who took a split of their items. This is how we are tracking auction proceeds. Chris: we also need a high-level spread sheet for group buys. One that just says amounts, how much RAS owes the sponsor, number of participants, etc. Discussion about how to track this, and what needs to be in summary that treasurer needs. Treasurer only needs a summary. Doesn't want details of individual purchases.

Discussion about FAN group buy. And how Larry/Matt divided up the work. Larry had done one FAN group buy in 2019 (or early 2020). We are acutally buying from a wholesaler who has access to FAN (FAN only sells to wholesalers). Discussion about how signupgenious was used. JC/Chris really liked how the signups worked.

Topic: Memberships. TN: we have 101 paid renewals. M2: Highest number ever so far at this point in year. TN: Reminders and mentions on list and FB are helping. Renewals continue to trickle in. TN sees an uptick in renewals after a note goes out or there is some other mention of membership.

Discussion of benefits of being member. TN shows the RAS web page that covers joining/benefits. A couple of updates have been made. Added bullet on PAR meter. Includes a link to a form people can submit to get info about borrowing the PAR meter.

Topic: Membership cards. TN asks if we really need membership cards. Personally, he never uses one. And there is a non-zero cost with creating them. M2: No cost for cards (we have plenty printed already - about 400). Just fills them out with the appropriate year. Historically have passed them out at meetings. But without meetings, we would need to mail them. Would cost a postage stamp (\$0.55) and envelope per member. M2 also pushes back on notion that they are not useful. People use them at participating pet stores for discounts. Discussion about whether to mail out the cards to everyone. Or to just sent them out by request if a member specifically asks for them.

JC reminds us that we produced a club flyer last year. To promote the club. Passed out at meetings, and also distributed at other events. Good way to promote club. JC asks if we should print off the flyer, and include it in the mailing with membership cards. Support for this. Discussion about updating the flyer for 2021 (update with current board members) and include with membership card in mailing. General support for this. Jayme needs short bios from board members.

Motion: update flyer, print off 200 copies, have M2 mail out cards with flyer. Unanimous approval.

Topic: Group buys. Summary of recent group buys. Maggie asks why we aren't giving JEHMCO discounts back to buyer. TN: didn't know we had ever done that until literally a couple of weeks ago. When MarkD did group buy last year, Chris/TN/MarkD spent a couple of hours on the phone trying to figure out what the discounts actually were. But hard to do. It's not a straight percentage off the total. Some items discounted, some not at all. Jehmco does not make this clear. We finally decided it was too complicated to sort out and just had RAS pay the difference between total cost (which included shipping) and what buyers paid. Note also, the official documented group policy never even mentioned such discounts. It only states that RAS covers shipping.

Chris on WetSpot. Shipping is different now (last 2 times). Flat fee for \$40. Doesn't matter how many boxes. So RAS only pays \$40 for each group buy. This time we got 4 big boxes. Only cost \$40 for shipping. No guarantee. TN: were they insured before? Chris: Not clear. Not sure what it means.

Chris reports that we did have one issue with order. When we get fish, we have 4 hours to report problems. They arrive at 9AM ish. I look at bags, to look for problems. By time buyer gets fish, 3-4 hours have elapsed. In this case, "issue" with Discus. One was smallish. One was stressed, bag may have been broken (if so, Chris didn't notice with his quick inspection). Buyer called wetspot. Chris not in the loop. Wetspot would prefer working with Chris, not individual buyers. But for Chris, would be easier to be out of the loop. Going forward, we need to clarify how to handle problems. And we need to get fish delivered more quickly (i.e., less than 4 hours). Maybe next time just have them come to my house. General support for this.

TN: I think we need to be involved in dealing with any problems. If we are not in the loop, we don't know what actually transpired. And we want to manage the relationship with WetSpot to minimize any problems and to maintain a good working relationship for future buys.

Next wetspot group buy? First week in April? Weather still cool. Before people get distracted with summer stuff. Seems like a good goal.

Topic: March meeting. program: 5 Mini-talks. Should we have door prizes? yes.

Topic: Flyers (revisited): Discussion of cost to print flyers. JC asks if 150 copies enough? no, make it 200. Would cost roughly \$110. chris: last year, cost was \$138.

Motion: approval to print 200 copies, at \$130 or less. Board approves (unanimously).

Topic: Waiving membership fees. JC: some persons may not be in position to pay \$20 to join at current time due to financial hardship. Had non-member who wanted to sell items in auction. Doesn't have funds right now to pay for membership. Idea: set aside \$100 for 5 active volunteer members who express financial hardship and don't have \$20 to join at current time. Must demonstrate being active and volunteering. This is not even "coming out of the club", it's money "not going into the club". We already do waivers (e.g., for NSCU members). View this an extension. Part of our education mission. Chris: we'd need to advertise this. JC: don't expect we'll get a lot of these. Chris: this could also set a precedent. How does this fit long term? TN: nothing we do here automatically sets precedent. Future board can reverse any decision we make now.

Discussion about setting up a separate sponsorship. Or a separate program that people could contribute into so that the club itself is not directly subsidizing it.

Discussion circles back to club doing waiver. CM: How do we decide who gets one? Needs to be case-by-case bases. Can't really see people abusing it. If they do, we can revisit. Limit to 5.

Motion: Set aside 5 waivers. Requires approval of 2 board members. President and one other. Both have to agree. Approved by 5-2 vote. Yes votes: Chris, JC, TN, CM, Curtis. No: M2, MP.

Topic: What should RAS be doing that it is not? (Open discussion). Plan for outdoor picnic in July? Plan for Sunday auction in fall? Tag Sale (outdoor)? What else?

Chris: need to start planning 2022 workshop. Speakers, date, advertising. Broad agreement.

What about picnic in July? Have to see the covid numbers of course. But vaccinations are happening. JC: The last outdoor BBQ venue was nice. M2: Was at Shelly Lake. Close to stream we clean. Can we reserve spot? no. no covered shelter either. Close to Harris Teeter if we need to go get more things, which simplifies planning. TN: think we need a place we can reserve. Otherwise a bit iffy. Venues will be in high demand this summer.

Curtis: There is a park by lake crabtree. You can reserve it. Discussion about "centrally located" for access by members. Members are scattered across triangle. M2: I sorted all the members by cities. reports the list. raleigh 31. Durham 15, Cary 11. So Curtis is the geographical center!

Discussion about whether we can supply food. Or whether folk should just bring their own food. Or whether we should pay for catering.

Call ends after 2H21Min