

USHIC Annual Meeting
2007

Andrea Barber welcomed everyone, expressing appreciation to those who had traveled considerable distances to come. She then introduced the Board members in attendance: Ed Hilgaertner, Barb Riva, Sandie Weaver, Anne Elwell, Caryn Cantella, Katrin Sheehan, and Bernie Willis, and explained that Lauren Benson, another Board member, could not be present.

Andrea then gave attendees a brief overview of today's agenda, with an explanation of break times, and lunch and dinner options and times.

Andrea began with the President's report from 2006. She particularly wanted to explain some changes that have occurred this year.

Regarding regularly scheduled Board meetings, she explained that, prior to this year, Board meetings had been held quarterly, or as needed. However, the Board came to realize that, due to the amount of work, and things that needed to be taken care of on a regular schedule, they should move to more frequently scheduled meetings. Currently, meetings are held every month.

Another change this year was to have officer and committee reports given at each Board meeting. A recap of committee activities and officers' activities is held at every meeting. This serves to keep the general membership informed.

Andrea said that she tried to set the agendas up in advance as much as possible, and to have those agendas posted on the website, and also sent out to the regional clubs. She emphasized the importance of sending it out to the regional clubs, so they could decide if there was an issue or a topic they were interested in, and if they would want to have an observer in on that meeting.

Bernie has instituted a procedure for putting motions before the Board for voting, and Andrea explained that this was the first year they had actual voting, and those votes were posted in the minutes.

Another change this year has been to have a recording of any email-made decisions, and to put those in the minutes, with the intention of keeping the membership informed.

Andrea shared the following statistics to illustrate the productivity of the Board in 2006: in 2005 we had approximately 1,719 Board emails exchanged on our list; in 2006 that number increased to 4,921 emails, an increase of 186%. It works out to be approximately 14 emails a day for every day of the year. Also, in 2005, we had about 4

Board meetings that were held via teleconference. In 2006, that number increased to 8, a 100% increase.

In 2006, we saw the membership getting involved in the organization more than ever before. We had several committees that became headed up by members, with a liaison to the Board. The pleasure rider program became an actual committee. New for this coming year, we have the Quarterly committee, headed up by Judy Strehler. Also new for the coming year will be a Constitutional Review committee.

Andrea thanked everybody who took the time and volunteered. "We on the Board, as volunteers, all know that it's hard to make time and take time, and we thank you for doing that."

In 2006 Andrea said we also saw a renewed commitment to our participation in FEIF. We had one member, Nicki Esdorn, and two Board members, Katrin Sheehan and Sandie Weaver, attend the FEIF conference in Glasgow.

The following are our Board officers for 2007: Bernie Willis as President, Sandie Weaver as Vice President, Barb Riva as secretary, and Ed Hilgaertner as Treasurer.

The following are our committee chairs for 2007, which include some changes. Breeding: Katrin Sheehan; Sport: Heidi Kline, the Board liaison is Katrin Sheehan; the Quarterly: Judy Strehler, the Board liaison is Anne; Regional Clubs: Andrea Barber; Education: Bernie Willis; Promotion: Laura Benson; Youth: Sandie Weaver; Website: Mark Peal, Board liaison is Katrin Sheehan. Amy is resigning from the Pleasure Riding committee, "and we have a lot to thank her for". Andrea will be taking over that position, working with Amy to make the transition over the next year. There is a new Constitutional Review Committee, headed up by Anne Elwell.

Andrea closed her presentation with a "big thanks for all who contributed in 2006", and asked for questions. When there were no questions, she then turned the meeting over to our new President for 2007, Bernie Willis.

Bernie Willis thanked Andrea, saying: "You can see that Andrea has done a wonderful job in advancing the cause of the Icelandic horse over this past year, and I look forward to trying to follow her example and activity levels for this next year. I think we'll have an exciting time together."

Bernie said that he had the official minutes from last year's annual meeting in his hand. Although he would not take the time to read them out loud, he wanted everyone to know they were available if anyone wanted to see them.

Rich Moore, Virginia, asked if the minutes from last year's meeting were posted anywhere. Bernie replied that they had not been, but they could be, and Rich said, "Yes, could you? It would be nice if they were posted somewhere." Bernie asked Barb Riva to make a note of Rich's request.

Bernie then explained the procedure for publishing minutes in the past, and asked for a show of hands to see how many in the group were actually reading them. The response was good.

Bernie said that as the Secretary he has been responsible for answering the emails that come to the Congress. The office is at his home, and the email address on our website is info@icelandics.org, and he receives emails from people throughout the country at this address. Bernie said, "We seem to be building towards a crescendo of interest towards the horse. It used to be that I would get an email a month from someone asking where could I find a horse, and now it's almost one every day. And so, I refer people to the farm listings, and we develop more interest in the horse through our website and this system."

Bernie said he receives only about one phone call a week at the Congress phone number, 346-2223, and that "the internet has just taken over since we've gotten info@icelandics.org." However, to maintain communication with all of the members and people interested, Bernie has listed the Congress number, his home phone number, and his cell number, so that he can be fully accessible to the membership.

Then Bernie told the following story: "Recently, my wife and I made a transition in our residence. Our official mailing address is still the same. We still have daily contact with our house in the city, but we are living at the farm. And as we were unpacking some things at the farm the other day, I went through this little fire safety box, and down in the bottom of this box was a small yellow envelope I had never seen before. I picked it up and I looked at it and wondered, what in the world is this? On the outside of the envelope, in my father's bold printing—and he's been deceased for about 14 years—it said, "upon my death, give to my son, Bernie." Well, I'd never seen this before. I opened it up, and inside was this message: 'William Allen mailed this dollar to his niece. He was killed in 1849, after staking a claim. The murder was believed committed by his competitors. William Allen was an uncle to Cora's mother. William was in California during the gold rush. This coin was passed down through the family to

me, a rather personal treasure.' And I thought, you know, that's kind of special. That means something to me, this little, tiny gold coin, smaller than a dime. And then I realized, you know, together, as members of this Congress, we have a treasure that we all are involved with, something that's much more important to us than a dollar gold coin. It treats us kindly. It keeps us focused. It gets us up in the morning. We have to attend to it during the day. We deal with it during the evening. For many reasons it's unique among all equines. It deserves our attention and support. And let me tell you, its gold is more than skin deep, hidden at the bottom of the box. And I'd like our focus this next year to be on the promotion of our favorite equine, this Icelandic horse. We shouldn't focus on ourselves, but upon knowledge and education of this great animal that we're here for."

Next, Ed Hilgaertner, Treasurer, addressed finances. He explained that the bulk of the organization's income comes from memberships. About \$28,000 forms the basis of our operating expenses every year, and that varies only by the amount of the members involved. The actual dollar amount varies because it's a mix of families and individuals. This year the membership was "somewhere in the neighborhood of 600 people".

Ed referred to a print-out showing total income, the opening balance and the closing balance. Then he addressed expenses. He explained that a major expense is the Quarterly, and that it has been about the same for the last three years. He shared the news that this year the Congress achieved tax-free status, and is now a 501c corporation. Last night he mailed off amended returns for previous years, and there is a possibility the Congress might receive rebates on that from the IRS, possibly totaling \$3,000 - \$4,000.

Next Ed addressed judging fees, explaining they were basically the two judging seminars that we had this year. He acknowledged that insurance has increased somewhat, and explained that they are looking into some kind of insurance that might be able to cover everyone in all the regional clubs under the same policy. Our current insurance covers the Board of Directors, and a set number of events which we try to anticipate ahead of time. Occasionally there are extra expenses for approved events, and the insurance company charges an additional fee.

So, in summary, the total expenses were \$39,600, and the closing balance at the end of the year was \$28,000—about what our membership fees were.

In reference to the annual dinner deposits, Ed said he didn't think that number was going to be quite the same this year. He said that the Icelanders used to contribute substantially to The Equine Affair. They no longer do that, so that particular income category no longer exists.

Comparisons: the judging seminar is pretty similar. That expense may also go down this year, 2007, as regional clubs become more involved and more active. The expense to the Congress will go down as they become more self-sufficient. From the very beginning it was a goal of the Congress to support these activities until they could support themselves, as incentives, as part of good use of the members' money.

The reimbursement from the FEIF conference was for individuals who attend. Sometimes FEIF bills the Congress in one amount for our annual membership, so in the past, those individuals reimbursed us. This year we decided to support that from the Congress point of view, because we believe it's a benefit to all the members to have a presence at FEIF.

The last item is Idaho evaluation fees. It turns out that \$15 per horse goes to FEIF. It's like a tax, but it's also a benefit.

Expenses: the Quarterly is about the same; the taxes should cease to be an expense. Website maintenance will probably stay the same. It consists mostly of the person who updates the website, and two website site fees that we pay, one for the domain name, and the other one to maintain the server.

Ed then discussed advertising in trade publications, explaining that it can change depending on the activity, and that it's difficult to assess the impact. It's felt that it's important to "keep the name out there", better to do it than to not do it". And, although that number can vary, it isn't ever going to be a huge marketing expense, primarily because the Congress is not in the business of selling horses.

The FEIF membership cost varies based on the number of members we have. In 2005 they sent us the bill for two years. The bill for 2007 has been paid, but you won't see that until next year's meeting. It's a similar number, \$1,800. It depends on the exchange rate also.

Ed then asked if there were any questions. There were not. He then gave the floor to Bernie Willis, to further address the insurance issue.

Bernie explained that every state has specific rules about insurance. Companies will apply to cover liabilities on a per-state basis. So the first problem in finding coverage that would cover all of the states, all of the regional clubs, was in finding an insurer who would do that. He stated that he found one, Equisure that insures for U.S. Equestrian. Their quote for general liability insurance was \$9,000. Bernie explained that if we take away our current insurance cost, and divide the \$9,000 between the regional

clubs, we come up with around \$750, which is about \$200 more than the current regional clubs are paying for their own individual insurance. Bernie expressed regrets that he didn't have a more positive report at this time, but said they will continue to explore insurance options.

Rich Moore, Virginia, asked if the slides that had been shown were available to individual numbers.

Ed replied that he hadn't made enough copies for everybody, but that they will be published on the website. He offered to get a copy for Mr. Moore, who thanked him.

Steve Barber asked, "Aren't those going to be published in the Quarterly?"

A speaker, (*unidentified*), replied that "all of the things you see here will be published on the website and in the Quarterly," and Mr. Barber expressed his appreciation for the clarification.

Caryn Cantella took the floor next for the Registry report. She said that she had put copies on the table for everyone, and would "just go through it quickly".

Caryn said that the beginning balance was \$56,614.66. Income was \$18,571.00. Expenses were \$10,976.82. "The overall was \$7,594.18, leaving a balance of \$64,208.84."

She explained that they had a little more left over this year because the sanction shows seemed to be able to cover more of their expenses, and we didn't have to put quite as much money out to FEIF judges for Sporting.

Caryn asked for questions; there were none. She then went on to speak about the horses that were registered for 2006, and referenced a chart. The total number of horses registered is 292. The total number of horses transferred is 178. The total number of domestic horses registered is 1,847. The total number of imported horses is 1,357, making our total 3,204. Members: to date we have 1,159 horse owners. We have 107 new horse owners this year. She said she has about 87 horses left on the data base to register in WorldFengur. About 30 - 40 of them were foundation horses, and the rest are offspring of those foundation horses. She explained it had been a particularly busy year, and she had "left some of the really hard horses to the end. Hopefully, this year it's my goal to get the rest of those horses in."

Caryn asked for any questions on this report.

Dawn Shaw, Washington, said that she was curious about horses that have come down from Canada, that are not in WorldFengur, that are registered.

Caryn replied that she was talking about horses that have borne domestic offspring here. She explained that she is only concerned about getting the U.S.-born horses in, so the only imported horses she puts in are those that have offspring here. For example, imported geldings, such as from Canada, she does not enter. Or, if there's a mare that's registered here from Canada, if they don't have any offspring, she doesn't enter them in WorldFengur.

Dawn asked if Canada, or some other country, was responsible for entering them in WorldFengur. Caryn replied that Canada has joined WorldFengur, and they will now be responsible for entering their own horses, and Dawn thanked her for the information.

Steve Barber, upstate New York, asked why there was an expense for the riding badge program patches, and how that relates to the Registry.

Caryn replied that the monies that are in the Registry are typically set aside or used for new programs or things that don't have to do with the general membership. When the Congress decides to do a special event, then they usually tend to go to the Registry money, and can withdraw funds from there. Steve thanked her for her answer.

Caryn said that there has been a question about investing the surplus money that is in the Registry, and wanted to remind people that that's an accumulation of 25 years in the ending balance. She said Steve has started to look into it. Although they haven't made a decision yet, the plan is to take a portion of that and put it some place where we can make some interest on it.

Caryn next spoke about the stallion reports. She explained that they start with 2005 because she doesn't have any offspring yet for 2006, and that she went through 2004, 2003, and 2002, to give the members a comparison. In 2005 there were 78. Out of that there were 211 breedings. There have been 49 foals registered out of those 211 breedings so far; seven leased. As the years go down, she said you'll see that the number of foals registered come up. People aren't necessarily registering their foals the first year in which they're born, so it doesn't mean those are the only foals that will be registered. She pointed out that in 2003, now there are 123 foals registered. But, there is a problem, because maybe half of the foals are getting registered within the first couple of years. Caryn said they are looking for ideas on how to get people to register early, as that would be beneficial.

Dawn Shaw, Washington, remarked that it made her think about DNA, because people have to do a DNA before they register the foals. She asked if there was any plan to set up a contract with U.C. Davis, and if that would make it easier if we did. Caryn replied that she didn't think it would make the process any easier. She mentioned that WorldFengur is asking to have genetic markers on file. But as far as the process, a person still has to fill out the form, pull a hair, and send it in.

Dawn then asked about the expense. Caryn said she thought it would probably still come out about the same, because of the paperwork expenses involved. She said they had looked at it years ago when they first started with blood-typing. Caryn said she would check into the price and check on the contracts, to see what difference it would make. She checked for clarification that Dawn's interest was in obtaining a less expensive fee for DNA testing.

Dawn said she thought there might be other advantages as well, and is looking at overall advantages to both the members and the Congress. She asked if the organization would then begin handling the records themselves, as part of it. Caryn said that, years ago, when she checked into it with the blood-typing, they would send the results directly to the Congress, so if there was something incomplete, for example a form filled out incorrectly by the owner, then the Register would then be responsible to contact the owner. Caryn said she was trying to stay away from extra work that could be taken care of by the owner. It would take another step, as opposed to the owner working directly with Davis to find out what they're missing. She said she would check into it, as things could have changed over the years that she is not aware of. Dawn thanked her.

With no further questions at that time, Caryn then went on to point out a document on the screen reporting owners, horses and members by state. She said she would leave it out for people to look at.

Caryn then went on to report the membership status, as follows: in 2006, 592 voting members, 346 individual members, 120 family members, and 97 juniors, for a total of 689 members. In 2005, there were a total of 552 members. She expressed happiness at seeing this increase.

Dawn Shaw, Washington, asked if Caryn knew what the trend in memberships was for 2007, if many people were renewing, and if they were getting a good number of new memberships.

Caryn explained they were hoping to get more new memberships because of the WorldFengur subscription. She explained that, due to the Constitution, their memberships don't actually roll over until March 31, 2007, so the data base currently shows both the renewals and the memberships from last year. For that reason, she

couldn't give an accurate report at this time, but she could tell "by a very primitive way by the types of envelopes that come in", and from that, she would say they had not gotten a lot of new memberships, but were doing well on the renewals. Dawn said it would be interesting to compare new memberships to people who are not renewing. She's wondering whether we are losing members.

Caryn clarified, asking if Dawn was looking to see an annual report showing new memberships per year. Dawn replied that she would like to see these numbers and comparisons clarified. Caryn explained how she could track this. Dawn thought this would be interesting for the Board to know, and Caryn agreed to look into doing this.

Rich Moore, from Virginia, asked for clarification on how the numbers were added up, and whether the "voting members" was the total of individual and family. Caryn replied that there are 120 family memberships, but this breaks down differently in terms of adults and children, and that's why they have sorted out how many people can vote. Rich said it looked like the individual and family memberships together don't add up to 592. Caryn explained that many of the families represent two votes.

As there were no further questions, Caryn's report was concluded.

Next, Anne Elwell was introduced to give the breeding reports. As far as evaluations go, Anne said we had two more regional club evaluations in 2006. NEIHC in New York held a second evaluation, and the Cascade Club held its first evaluation this year. At Cascade there were 11 full evaluations, and 6 evaluations for conformation only. At NEIHC there were 18 total evaluations, and 5 for conformation only. Both evaluations went well, despite the fact that they were faced with the necessity for some substantial changes, which she then went on to address.

Anne explained that in the past there had been two kinds of breeding shows. For many years there were national breeding shows that were won under a combination of FEIF rules and national rules in the different member countries. Then, in recent years, there were also international breeding shows, which were a different kind of breeding show. At the World Championships, for example, it's an international breeding show. There were two different sets of rules for these kinds of shows within FEIF.

When we were organizing our first evaluation in 1999, we were advised by FEIF to do them as national breeding shows, and not international breeding shows, because it would allow us much more freedom to fashion some rules that were particularly suited to the U.S., so we did them as national breeding shows. There was no difference to us. They were run by the same rules, and the results could be entered into WorldFengur, so we would have official results. But this year, in February of 2006, the executive Board of FEIF, with no warning whatsoever to any of the member countries, decided that the

results from national breeding shows could no longer be entered into WorldFengur. The countries could enter them in whatever kind of record-keeping system they had, but they would not go into WorldFengur. Only the results of international breeding shows could go into WorldFengur. This was a huge shock to all of the member countries, particularly to new countries, such as the U.S., because we have no system of recording official scores here, and so we are totally reliant on our ability to enter into WorldFengur to have these results posted as official results where people could look them up.

There are certain rules for international breeding shows that create problems for all the countries, but particularly for the U.S. The most significant one is that, for international breeding shows, if you have less than 25 horses, you can use two judges, but if you have more than 25 horses coming to the evaluation, you are supposed to have three judges. As any of you in regional clubs who have experience with this know, the main expense at evaluations is the cost of judges—bringing them, housing them, and fees. It runs around \$2,000 - \$2,500 for each judge. Adding that kind of expense for a third judge would make it very difficult for regional clubs to put on evaluations. Because many people sign up at the last minute, it's difficult for clubs to know in advance if they are going to have less than 25 horses, or more than 25 horses. That seems to be a line that we hover around at all of our evaluations. So, we needed permission from FEIF to say that, even if we went over that 25 horse number, we could still use only two international breeding judges, and have our results go into WorldFengur. We got that permission, which was exceedingly important.

There are two other significant changes. We have never required micro-chipping in this country, and horses appearing for international evaluations must be micro-chipped or freeze-branded. They must have an identification system, which then becomes part of the world record.

There are also "spavin rules", which state that any stallion, 5 years old or older, showing up for an evaluation or the first time, must comply with this rule, which requires x-rays to discern whether that horse is showing any degree of spavin. There are strict requirements as to how those x-rays must be done, etc., and you also have to set up a central agency for review of those x-rays. We requested an extension of the international rule that says this must be done by the time of the evaluation. As we could not meet that, we asked for an extension for a reasonable time beyond that. FEIF granted this extension, and then decided to do that with all the countries, as all the countries were in the same position. As a result, all of our results have gone into WorldFengur from the two evaluations that we had.

In 2007 there are two regional clubs that have applied to do evaluations. NEIHC and Flugnir, in Wisconsin. Theirs will be in June, and NEIHC has applied for a date in

September. Both evaluations have been approved. There is still some ongoing discussion about the NEIHC date.

Anne said they are still hard at work on the evaluation handbook, which had to be put on the back burner because of the things that needed to be done this year to deal with the changes to international breeding shows. These changes also impacted the handbook itself. It's close to a first draft now, and that is expected to be our major focus for 2007.

Regarding the adoption of FIZO. FIZO is the FEIF breeding committee equivalent to FIPO, in the sense that it spells out the rules for breeding shows, registration, etc. However it is much less clear than FIPO, much more ambiguous. In the U.S. we have not formally adopted any of the FEIF documents, although we have followed them. In the Breeding Committee we have followed FIZO. Within the Competition Committee, we have followed much of FIPO. The Competition Committee has now formally adopted FIPO, and Anne suggested that the Breeding Committee formally adopt FIZO. A subcommittee met and reviewed FIZO, and came up with 25 questions/problems/issues within FIZO. These were sent with Katrin Sheehan to the Breeding leaders meeting in Glasgow, and she discovered that the entire Breeding Committee also had issues in terms of just what FIZO means, and she will address that. It was clear that the Breeding Committee was quite different than the Sport Committee.

Anne said she believes that before the year is out there will be revisions to FIZO to make it a clearer document, and that we will formally adopt FIZO. All of these documents can be found on the FEIF website.

Next, regarding U.S. breeding horses eligible for the World Championships: we are able, as a member association of FEIF, to send horses to the international breeding show at the World Championships. The rules we established in the past were that mares had to score 7.5 or above at the evaluation, and stallions had to score 7.75 or above to be eligible. These numbers came from the old, original studbooks in Iceland, which preceded WorldFengur by decades. We can send two horses in the 5-year-old category, mares or stallions, judged separately, and the category for 6-year-old and 7-year-old horses and older. We would look at the horses eligible and interested in going, and elect the ones with the highest scores to go. It costs about \$15,000 to send a horse to the World Championships, which is a limiting factor.

Anne did a list of all horses eligible. There are 19 such horses in the U.S., and she has done a list of the horses and their owners and their scores for people to see. According to WorldFengur, 28 U.S. domestic-bred horses have been submitted for full evaluation. Of that 28, 19 horses, 73%, have met the eligibility requirements to have been entered in the old Icelandic studbooks. That is an impressive percentage! It's even

more impressive to realize that most of these horses have had very little preparation for an evaluation. Many of them go with only a few weeks of training, and these are still the scores they received. There's little doubt that if we had more trainers here, and we could increase the length of training, similar to training horses receive in Europe or Iceland, that a lot of these horses would be first-prize horses. Anne says she has sent letters to the owners of all these horses to see if they are interested in sending their horses. She has only received one response in the affirmative so far.

Anne's report was concluded, and questions were sought.

A woman, (*could not discern the name*), from California, asked if the rule pertaining to having 3 judges for 25 horses included horses for conformation only. Anne responded that it does not. She said that was one of the ambiguities in FIZO that has now been clarified. We are allowed to have horses come for conformation only, and that we "won't run into trouble until we start significantly going over 25 for full evaluation."

There were no further questions for Anne. At this point a brief break was announced.

The meeting resumed with the report from Glasgow from Katrin Sheehan, after comments about the tremendous enthusiasm for going to the conference.

Katrin said she wanted to concentrate on the facts that most concern us at this meeting. Plans are underway to make WorldFengur the only worldwide data base for the Icelandic horse by 2012, and everyone is working towards that. She said there was a report from the genetic evaluation group, concerning how the breeding results of Icelandic horses and the competition results can come together and be found in the offspring of horses. However, she said "there was not a whole lot that the normal person could understand!" She expects that it will be translated into English and be made available on the FEIF webpage. It was clear that there is a significant correlation between the breeding and competition results.

There were a couple of people elected to the Breeding Judges Committee. There is an interesting thing that started in Germany. Barbara Frische has put up an evaluation system for young horses, foals born that year up to 4-year-olds, to evaluate their gaits, their interior—that means their reaction and characteristic points—and the exterior of the horse. She was voted onto the Judges Committee so that she can educate these judges and get more people involved. Katrin expects that there will be a decision made soon as to whether that will be accepted for all the nations. At the Flugnir evaluation this June we will have that available here in the U.S., so she hopes that many people bring young horses and get educated on this topic.

Katrin said that Barbara Frische has a very nice, easy approach to that. She explains how they look at the horse. She judges openly. Every single score she comes up with, she does while she talks, explaining what she is seeing, which is very interesting and well received by the audience.

Katrin said that nothing was voted on in that committee during the two days she was there. She said problems with FIZO concerning the DNA testing and spavin testing of horses came up and were discussed, but there was no solution found yet. She expects many emails to be exchanged in the future on these matters. She said she had a very pragmatic solution to that, which everyone liked. She expects some of these issues will be brought forward at the Board of Directors meeting next month.

She said that regarding the whole issue of FIZO, it was not all written in correct English, and it lacks explanation. She proposed that the U.S. rewrite FIZO, not in its content, but in its structure and language. This was well received by the committee at that time, but not voted upon.

Katrin said there was a discussion about color and breeding evaluations. She said there is a tendency to put more emphasis on young evaluated horses than older evaluated horses. For example, they think a 4-year-old that receives an evaluation over 8 overall is a better horse than a 6-year-old that gets the same result.

Katrin said she would be happy to give people more detail individually, and will make the paperwork available also. Her overall impression was that there are many people with great knowledge, but they are not very well organized, and she would like to see that changed.

Caryn Cantella, California, said she was just wondering if they're more interested in the 4-year-olds reaching 8 or higher because they're looking for the natural ability of the horse, and not the trained ability. Katrin replied, "Very much so, yes."

Dawn Shaw, Washington, expressed concern that people are going to start pushing their 4-year-olds more, which means, if they train in Iceland as much as we were told, they're going to be starting them at 3, and pushing them for a year. She is concerned that there's a risk to the well-being of the horses. Stephanie Surbey, Oklahoma, replied to Dawn's statement, saying that she thought that in Iceland they're only riding them two or three times a week, and not really pushing the 3 ½ year-olds like we would do here. Katrin answered that it depends on the individual, but she thinks they do try to do what is good for the horse, at least the professional trainers do.

As there were no further questions or comments, Katrin's report was concluded.

Bernie Willis spoke, sharing a picture showing Nicki Esdorn, who had represented him at the FEIF Education Committee meeting. He said that the emphasis of the FEIF Education Committee has been to coordinate the education of the teacher-trainers with that of the judges, so that when they're looking at the horse, they're looking at the same thing, and so that the trainers are teaching the horse to do what the judges are looking for the horse to do. There's been a growing separation, but now these things are coming back together. Bernie said he would like to share some notes from Nicki, in which she says there's an analogy between young horses and young riders: smile and wait for them to grow up. Patience and guidance are needed. "I think that applies to just about every aspect of our dealing with horses, and our dealing with young people as well."

Then he shared Nicki's comments on future seminars. FEIF has arranged for seminars that are specific for teachers and trainers. There was one last fall at Holar, which was primarily for qualified teachers and trainers of horses. She wanted to emphasize that, once these people with some credentials have been invited and have had an opportunity to accept the invitation, then these seminars are open to everybody on a first-come, first-served basis. So, if someone has an interest in attending these specific seminars for teacher-trainers in Europe, all they have to do is contact our office, and we'll see if we can get you in.

Nicki mentioned the program that has come out of Holar under the direction of Eyjolfur (Jolli) Isolfsson, the chief riding instructor there. There was an article in the Quarterly this past year about it. She wanted to emphasize that they're seeing more and more horses that are having troubles, and Jolli's response to that was that they have not followed the early training for the 1, 2 and 3 year-olds. This is somewhat a reversal of the previous concept that we don't touch these horses until they are 4. They're still not riding them until they're 3 ½ or 4, but they are now expressing a strong interest in training them, even if only for a week or 2 a year, in their first few years of development.

Regarding the education committee within the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress, we have continued to develop our sport judge training program. It has been recently written, and rewritten, and the Board has given tacit approval pending a couple of changes, which were reviewed by our Education Committee yesterday. That is now ready to submit to the Board of Directors, as well as our program for breeding judge education. We expect those things to be added to the website in their final form in the next month or so, and we can look ahead to educating in these two important areas.

Next on the program, Amy Goddard addressed the members, and welcomed pleasure riders. She asked for a show of hands of anyone in the room who's currently in the pleasure rider program, or has been in the past. She said that the expression, "if you build it they will come", seems to be working, and the pleasure riding program has really

grown. We had 71 members last year, which represents over 10% of the membership. We have 55 adults and 16 juniors. She is searching for ideas to recruit more juniors, and wondered if one problem might be that they just don't want to keep track of their hours. Last year we went up 33% in one year, by 24 members. We had 23 Eastern, 6 juniors; 26 Central Mountain, and 22 Western, with 4 juniors. She said we may want to think about dividing Central and Mountain, because we're getting more people in the Mountain area. That's growing more significantly than any other region, so we may eventually have four regions.

Amy welcomed Roy Mortenson as a special guest. Roy decided he would like to start riding at the age of 78. He hadn't ridden since he was a boy. He's now been in the pleasure riding program the last several years.

Next, Amy announced the winners. She explained that the points are the hours that you rode that year, combined with any special events that you did. Special events include clinics, parades, demos, and trail rides of 5 or more horses. You also get points if you organized a trail ride, or mounted orienteering, or gymkhana. First place is Alys Culhane, Palmer, Alaska, in the Western region Adult Division, with 581 points; Morgan Venable, Santa Cruz, was second place, and Donna Rich was third. (Pictures of winners were shown.)

Next, Amy announced the junior winners: Western region: Lucy Nold, from Santa Cruz, California, and Alexandra Venable, from Santa Cruz. (pictures shown.) Central Mountain: the famous Raven Flores, with 1866 points. Amy said that even if we didn't have all her camping and trail riding that she does, she still would have won just by the sheer number of hours. She rode over 800 hours last year. And she has one horse! Kristin Shirley from Waterville, Minnesota was second; and Gerald Oliver, who is here. (Gerald was asked to stand up, and applauded.)

Barb Riva gave a report on the Promotion Committee. She said that in the past it had been chaired by just one Board member, but now we have 7 individuals working on the committee throughout the country: Lynne Alfonsi, from Pennsylvania; Deborah Cook, from Minnesota; Lisa McKeen, from Washington; Sali Peterson, from Virginia; Brian Puntin, from Massachusetts; Dawn Shaw, from Washington; and herself, from Wisconsin. She said that, "together we are an enthusiastic group... looking forward to working on many ideas for the future for the promotion of the Icelandic horse." Barb announced that Laura Benson will be taking over the chairmanship of this committee, although Barb will continue to stay on and work with the committee.

Barb said that in 2004 the Congress invested in a tabletop display for regional clubs to use when participating in breed demonstrations throughout the U.S. While there are some requirements to use this display, the Congress will pay for shipping to and from

your area to qualified groups, the regional clubs. This display has been at the Equine Affair since it was purchased. in Springfield, Massachusetts. It has also been at the Equine Affair in Columbus, Ohio, and it will be there again this year, next month, where they will probably be looking for people to man the booth. This year it traveled to Pomona, California for the Equine Affair there. We encourage the regional clubs to take advantage of this very nice display. It comes shipped to the individual's home in a secure package, and then you either ship it back to Sara Conklin, who's taking care of it, or you could ship it on to next location if it's cutting it close. Barb showed a picture, and said it's also on display in the back of the room.

Last year Congress received a gift of a FEIF flag, which is also available for the regional clubs to use at their events and demonstrations. This flag would make a nice addition to the evaluations that are being held throughout the U.S. It is 5' x 8', made to be put on a flag pole, or hung as a banner on the side of a wall.

Barb said she thought many of us would agree that most of our members are trail riders, enjoying these horses out in the open where they excel, and so they decided to try advertising in the first issue of the 2007 Trail Rider magazine. The Icelandic horse had a great feature article there with a lot of good pictures, and they did get a fair amount of inquiries from the farm locations in the U.S. This is one of the two ads that were in Trail Rider magazine, which covered many of the things that different people of different ages are doing.

The Promotion Committee is currently working on a new brochure. Dawn Shaw and Anne had worked on text, and their group is working on procuring pictures and new information for the brochure. They hope to have this available on the website for people to download, which would be easier than ordering them and having someone keep a supply.

Barb said they're also excited about the Icelandic horse coloring book, which was presented to FEIF at the 2007 conference in Glasgow, and has been given as a gift to FEIF in order to allow the member organizations in other countries to print and distribute the book. She said our Youth Committee is currently working on that, and Sandie will talk more about it. Barb said, "It's a beautiful book. It's got pictures to color, and shows the parts of the horse and the tack. I think it would be a nice addition to the youth camps that are cropping up around the U.S. through the regional clubs."

"That's the end of my report. I would also like to invite anyone to join the committee. We could use more representation in different parts of the United States." Then Barb asked for any questions, additions, or comments.

Doug Smith, from California, said that when he came back from Landsmot last summer he had brought back a handful of the Farmers' Association breed brochures, and asked if any thought had been given to using those, as we could get them for free. Barb said she thought Bernie had gotten a supply of them and sent a copy to everyone.

Bernie said he had received several from Doug and had a supply of his own. He had contacted Helga Thoroddsen, who works through Holar, and she said he could have as many as he was willing to pay postage for. He had ordered 100, and that was last November. He's contacted her twice since then, and he still doesn't have them. Bernie said if Doug could "make something happen", it would be appreciated. He had done this as an interim solution. Doug said Lucy is going to be heading to Iceland in about a week, and he will send her to the Farmers' Association office, and have her see about getting a case back to us in the mail.

Sara Conklin, New York, said she still sends out the new members packets, in which she includes a welcome letter, which includes the names of the Board members, a frequently asked questions sheet, something on registering your horse, the magnet, brochures, and a Quarterly. One thing that hasn't been addressed yet is getting extra copies of the Quarterly shipped to her, so she can continue to include these. Barb responded that this had been discussed, and they'd been running out of them due to the increase in membership.

Sara also asked, regarding the booth, that they do need people to send in the required paperwork.

Sverrir Bjartmarz, from Iceland, spoke regarding the booklet that the Farmers' Association has, which was published from the Horse Breeders' Association. He said that it was free, and "it should be possible to send it to you, very easy." He also talked about a very comprehensive educational system at Holar they have been working on for some years, to train riders. He said this is something new that Iceland has been doing for three years, and thought it would be interesting for us to have more information on that system. He said Helga is responsible for that.

Bernie said he has been in contact with Helga on that, and that we have copies of the first three booklets, and have asked for permission to translate it from Icelandic into English, but that so far they "haven't responded in a positive way. They want to be responsible for the translation after they have taught the program at Holar and determined that it is as good as it can be." He said we are very anxious to have access to it, but can appreciate their hesitance to recommend it fully until they have proven it. "So, we're

ready, able and willing to translate. We have our Icelandic-German-English speaker on the Board who's ready to get into it. I look at the pictures so far."

Andrea Barber came to give a report on the regional clubs. She said we have 12 clubs total throughout the U.S. We gained one new club this year, the Los Angeles Icelandic Horse Association, which is very active. Unfortunately, we lost one club, the Heartland Icelandic Horse Club. It seems the toughest thing is getting people together to do the events. This seems to be the main reason we have clubs breaking up—nobody wants to do the organizing, which is a necessity if you want to actually have club events.

The only current project on the table is the idea of insurance for all, which Bernie addressed earlier. This week Andrea polled all the clubs to gain specific information about their insurance, and learned there are 3 - 4 clubs that have no insurance at all, because it's too expensive to obtain. Having no insurance means they can't have any events, and therefore can't build any revenue. It's a tough thing, especially for the smaller clubs, because they really can't get the events off the ground. Many of the clubs that did have insurance said that was their biggest expense, and it was difficult for them. It would really be nice if we could get a general policy for everybody, as that seems to be one of the main things holding clubs back from having more events.

Rich Moore, Virginia, had a question on the insurance. He wondered if the Congress had considered subsidizing insurance costs for the clubs. Andrea agreed that was an idea to consider, and something she had been thinking about also.

Andrea then referred to the charts she had brought, apologizing that she is "not a numbers person." She explained that she receives the numbers in a wide variety of ways from the various clubs, from "scratched on the back of a napkin" to organized computer-created files, and so these numbers are approximate. The graph she referred to showed the total number of members in each club, and how many of that number are Congress members. She said we only have one club, the California Icelandic Horse Association, which is 100%.

Betsy Covert, California, brought up the thought that there should be some sort of "rule of thumb" regarding subsidizing insurance, that it should perhaps be percentage of membership. Andrea said this had come up with Amy and herself when they were doing the pleasure riding program. They were going to do gift baskets, and then realized that a lot of non-Congress members would be enjoying gift baskets. She agreed that this is a similar thing. If Congress is going to give funds, they are going to have to deal with that issue, as there are clubs that do not have a high percentage of Congress members. She said she had noticed, when preparing the graphs, that when club memberships grew, the number of Congress memberships seemed to grow proportionately.

Next she showed a slide which showed that the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club has the most members, and the Alaska Icelandic Horse Association has the least members. The next slide showed the percentage of club members who are also Congress members.

Gerry Oliver, Minnesota, commented that something which might prove to be an incentive would be to say that if a club wants sharing funds from the Congress they must have a 95-98% Congress membership. Andrea again agreed that it's an issue we will have to deal with. She said initially they just wanted to encourage people to join the clubs and get local activities happening. But now, if Congress is going to be giving funds, the clubs will have to give more out, which means more in actual memberships.

Dawn Shaw commented that she is "open to ideas on how to encourage people". She said people who just do pleasure riding often don't think membership in the Congress is important, and she struggles with how to articulate the reasons. She said, "honestly, I could use a little help." Andrea agreed that she also has trouble coming up with good reasons for clubs to have "this back and forth relationship" between the Congress and the clubs. Dawn talked about the difficulty of just getting her club to become a regional club. Her motivating factor was to be able to do evaluations. Andrea said that, for a smaller club, that's not much of a motivation. She said they will have to do more thinking on this issue.

Sophie Katakozinos, New York, said she had a statement to make that she has made "for the last three years." According to Best Insurance in Long Island, who still covers the Congress, she understands that this insurance will cover any Congress member at any event. If all of the regional club members were members of the Congress, they would be covered. She questioned why the Congress would want to support people who are not willing to support the Congress. Andrea said she talked to the woman at Best Insurance and was told that at these regional club events participants would not be covered, even though they are Congress members, because they are not Congress events.

Sophie then asked, if all of these regional clubs had Congress members, why wouldn't the Congress want to support their events? She understands that if there's a cost and income factor, the Congress wouldn't want to subsidize their show, but thought we could do a "separate rule book" or something for that. She believes that if all of the regional club members were members of the Congress, there would be a way to work things out so their events could be covered, which would deal with this issue.

Bernie offered more details from his conversations with the insurance representative. He said that the annual policy covers five or six specific days of events per year, and that each additional day was \$56. Andrea said they realize the policy would

have to go out, but it could still be advantageous, and is something they will continue to look into.

Rich Moore, Virginia, commented that they have 58 members, with 20 or so as members of the Congress. He said it's difficult to persuade the others to become members of the Congress because they don't see any benefit. Some may be dormant members, or have horses they don't ride regularly. He said he keeps trying to point out benefits they receive if they belong to the Congress, and that if the Congress was willing to subsidize insurance for events, that could provide significant motivation.

Ronelle Ingram, southern California, shared that she was part of the origination of their new L.A. club, and said they had a "DNA party", to which she brought applications for the Congress, for their local club, for the pleasure riding club, and Davis' DNA form. She said they had many new members, and people who had just gotten horses from Iceland that weren't registered. They had a potluck luncheon, and went around pulling hairs and putting them in the envelopes and addressing them. She said they were definitely aggressive about it.

Caryn Cantella, California, brought up the point that if it would only cost \$56 per day for an event, shared among the members of the club it wouldn't come up to too much per person.

Doug Smith, "from the third row", asked what would happen if they had a club event, and someone who comes to the event is not a club member.

Andrea commented that their current insurance rep "is not the easiest person to work with", and said they might need to consider changing carriers.

Dawn Shaw said she'd had the same question as Doug. Andrea said that if a member's horse injured someone, that liability would be insured, but if someone else came to the show who was not a member, then it's their liability. Dawn said she just can't see getting 100% Congress membership. Bernie talked about the term "spectator liability", which means that if a horse belonging to a member causes an outside person harm, then the Congress is covered. There are additional premiums charged for other specific incidents. Insurance companies "do everything for a price."

Sandie Weaver, California, wanted to make sure she was understanding this discussion correctly. She asked, if they were doing a parade, for example, and everyone in it was a Congress member and they got permission from Congress to call it a Congress event, then would our current insurance cover them? Andrea said that was her understanding.

Will Covert, California, wondered if they could post a copy of the policy, or make it available, so people who understand insurance could go over it. Andrea said that they could do that.

Andrea then returned to the previous discussion of club membership versus Congress membership. She said that the percentage of Congress members did not correlate to the size of the club. She pointed out, (for Dawn), that Cascade is not in the last place this year—that's held by Alaska.

Next, she showed a chart that showed the distribution of regional club membership, the west coast being the largest by quite a bit. She said that, hopefully, this year they will have a club started in Pennsylvania, and Katrin is looking into getting a club started in her area, in the south.

Rich Moore talked about the importance of coordinating the formation of new clubs with existing clubs in the area. He did not feel that Congress should "arbitrarily establish clubs or approve clubs within another existing club's region without any discussion." Andrea said the current policy is that if any group of people can get five Congress members and put a decent set of by-laws together, they have a club. So with that policy, if five clubs in one state spring up, Congress would approve them. She felt that is important because problems in the past have occurred when clubs were too geographically spread out and they broke apart because they just couldn't hold it together. She said the strongest clubs were usually the smallest clubs, because most people are closer together. Secondly, she referred to the fact that in the first few years of this program "we had an awful lot of fighting", and from that she learned that "people are going to be friends with who they're going to be friends with, and they're going to make clubs with who they're going to make clubs with, and we can't dictate anything about that." "If you let things settle out, peace reigns."

Rich said he had gone through the rules and had not found anything saying that was allowed, and he felt it was "an arbitrary decision that we were certainly not included in". He said he's simply asking that current clubs be informed. He felt this was "the kind of arbitrary decision-making that's given the Congress a bad reputation, and I think that's something we should avoid."

Andrea said that there is "no decision-making made by the Congress. The Congress has rules about how regional clubs are to be formed. So if a club follows those rules, there's no real decision to be made, because they met the requirements." She also explained that clubs are "not given a license" to particular areas. She suggested he could submit a proposal to change the rules. Rich said the only thing he was asking for was to be informed, "and if you think that's unreasonable, I'm sorry." Andrea replied, "No, I don't."

Asta Covert, California, shared that there are four clubs in California, and if everyone works together, the clubs can work together and do events together. Andrea then mentioned that she knows that in California there are several people who are members of more than one club.

Heidi Kline, New York, said she had wanted to make the same point; when she and her husband were in California they were members of more than one club, and there is nothing in the by-laws to prohibit that. Andrea agreed, saying that the only rule was that you can only be a voting member in one club, and she herself is a member of two different clubs.

Caryn Cantella, California, talked about how people in clubs want to be within quick driving distance of each other so they can get together more easily to ride together. Andrea said again that the focus of most of the clubs was getting together to have a good time with their horses.

Katrin, Georgia, talked about the fact that the information about clubs is readily available on the web page.

Pat Moore, Virginia, said she felt the point had been missed; that it was about communication, notification.

Katrin said communication is available on the web page, so you would assume that the people who want to form a new club had checked out the web page to see if something was already available in their area, and didn't find anything.

Andrea said Rich's point is that, when she hears from people, in this case in Pennsylvania, that she should tell the other clubs in the area that they're thinking of forming a club. Sara Conklin, New York, asked how communication about new clubs is dispersed. Andrea explained that she has her regional club committee, and they know immediately; all the pertinent information then goes up on the website.

Bernie questioned how this was done, and it was again clarified that, as soon as a club is actually formed, then all the regional clubs are informed.

Deidrie Pierce said the "big point" is that we should be promoting the formation of more clubs, rather than arguing about how many clubs. She illustrated this with her own experience of being too far from any clubs to actively participate. Andrea said again that clubs can be as much or as little, as formal or informal, as they want to be. She said she would be happy to come back on after lunch if needed.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch break.

After lunch it was announced that there was now a "secret, non-agenda event", and Caryn Cantella came to the podium to speak in this regard.

Caryn spoke, on behalf of the Congress, to recognize one of our long-term Board members, Betsy Covert. Betsy has been a part of the IIHA, which was formed prior to the Congress. She joined in 1989, and moved on from that point when the two organizations merged and joined USIHC. She has been a very important part of the foundation of this organization. Her greatest contribution has been to our sport committee, with her knowledge of sport, and her ability to show sportsmanship "like no one else I have known".

Caryn then told this story, which demonstrates Betsy's character. She said when we first started having shows, Betsy would "pound on doors" of other breeds to convince them to let us have some Icelandic classes in their shows, so we could demonstrate the Icelandics to other breed-owners, and get people out on their Icelandics in shows. Betsy had a very beautiful mare named Brunhilda, who was highly trained, and there was a young boy, learning to ride, who had a horse who really did nothing but piggy-pace. He happened to be in the same class with Betsy in this one particular show, and the piggy-pacer took first! And Betsy, even though she had a very highly-trained, expensive horse, had a great attitude—"oh well, we all had a good time, and it was fun!" She always had a smile on her face, always tried to help everybody in competition—just supported everybody. She was always riding, filling up the classes, donating money to classes so we were able to have the shows for sponsorships. She was always there for anybody and everybody. In California she was the first person to really have good trainers and good seminars. She invited everybody to her home. She would ride in a class, and then cook and clean up for the rest of us. She always made everybody feel at home and included. And we're really going to miss you.

Caryn invited Betsy to come up, amidst much applause. Caryn presented Betsy with a sculpture donated by Terry Malec. It reads: "Presented to Betsy Covert in appreciation of your many years of dedicated volunteer service, devotion, generosity, and commitment to the USIHS and the Icelandic horse."

Betsy said, "Thank you. I gave up my speeches. Thank you."

Caryn wanted to again acknowledge the artist who donated this sculpture, and encouraged the members to visit her website, and said Steve has all of her contact information.

She then went on to recognize "somebody else who has donated many years of service to the Congress", and who is "just outstanding". She pointed out that Amy Goddard has run the pleasure riding program for many years, prepared this entire presentation for us, is sitting here manning the tape recorder, and has done this for several years. She has always been a person upon whom we can call when we need something done, and she always does it with a smile. I think Anne said once, "It's just completely impossible to dislike Amy Goddard," and I think that's true, and I'd like to thank her for all her service.

Amy was presented with a "beautiful piece of artwork" created and donated by Elaine; the membership was encouraged to check out her website. The inscription was: "Presented to Amy Goddard for your generous commitment of time, support, and inspiration to the USIHC and the pleasure rider program."

Amy: "I'm not going to talk because I'm crying. I love you guys! Thank you!"

After this presentation, the meeting continued with more committee reports.

Heidi Kline began her committee report by acknowledging Betsy's retirement and thanking her, saying she has "big shoes to fill". Heidi discussed changes for 2006: we recently switched from our old rules for the Congress to the FIPO, which was a huge improvement. As a result, everyone competing at sanctioned shows is now competing in the classes that they would if they were to go to the World Championships or an international competition. Another change is that the necessary paperwork for shows is now on Ictest software, which again is based from FEIF, and is easily obtained from the Congress website, where you can download blank forms, or the whole program, at no cost. It's the same thing that the international judges are using at all the international shows.

Heidi explained that we have raised the minimum score for the World Championships from 5.0 to 5.5. Previously the U.S. was the lowest country in terms of scoring, as every other country had to be 5.5. Our riders are growing and improving, and becoming more competitive. We had many sanctioned shows in 2006: three in California, two in Wisconsin; one in Pennsylvania, and one in Kentucky. We had scores ranging up into the 7s for the open competitors. We've never had scores that high before, which shows our riders are improving.

Heidi said we have made things more accessible on the website for people who are starting out to get shows going. We have revamped all of the announcer cards and judges' cards to reflect all the class changes, and they are all on the website, under the competition site. Website resources include score sheets, competition rules, show results, rules to have a sanctioned show, schooling show results, schooling show handbook, FIPO, FEIF, sport, the requirements for try-outs, and an event calendar.

We have try-outs coming up in May at four locations. The first will be at Winterhorse Park at Barb and Dan Riva's, on May 12th. Then the judge will be going to Rocking R Ranch in Idaho, the first time we've had try-outs in Idaho. It's on a competition track. Asta and Will Covert will be hosting the next try-outs in California on May 17th. The final one will be at Anne's at Helms Hill in New York on the 19th. The judge that we chose is Einar Ragnarsson. Einar is the chief judge this year at the World Championships, so we are very honored to have him.

In addition to that we have a sub-committee working on a high-point award, something Betsy has wanted for many years, and hope to present something to the committee this coming year.

For 2007 we had our first sanctioned show in California. We had 28 horses, a record number for California. Scores ranged to 7.5 overall, with one rider reaching 8.5 for extended tempo tolt. There were horses from four different clubs in California competing at the show, everyone getting along, and a really great atmosphere. We had people from the Northern California club, Kraftur, from the Los Angeles Icelandic Horse Association, from the California Icehorse Association, and from the Southern California Icelandic Riders. Heidi said they had a really good turn-out and a great judge, Thorgeir Gudlaugsson, who has come to the states many times as a judge and is always wonderful with the riders.

Heidi asked for any questions about sport.

Rich Moore, Virginia, had two questions. He asked for definition of working tolt versus slow tolt. Heidi said it is "working tempo tolt", and it is slow tolt. His second question was whether it would be possible to get any financial assistance in the form of honorariums from the Congress for judges at schooling shows. Heidi said this is an issue he would need to take up with the Board, and that if he would write it up as a proposal and send it to her, she would be happy to pass it along to the Board.

Sara Conklin, New York, asked if there had been some discussion previously related to people who are doing the judging seminar to start teaching at local schooling shows. Heidi said there are now about 12 intern judges, and they are allowed to judge at schooling shows, but they are not allowed to judge pace or open classes. She said they are all "hungry to have somewhere to go and get experience".

Stephanie Surbey, Oklahoma, questioned whether the Icelandic Horse Congress rules followed previously are still pertinent, or if everything is now strictly FIPO. Heidi replied that they are not; everything is now strictly FIPO with some exceptions, such as the shoeing inspections. Everything is on the website. The classes are now directly out

of the FIPO. Because they offer so many different classes, we're able to have things for different levels. Heidi mentioned the different versions of tolt, and ranges of difficulty levels. She said there are some mandatory classes for sanctioned shows so that there is something available for all levels. There are also recommendations for novice and green horse classes, if those are desired. Heidi reaffirmed that everything is very current on the website.

Rich Moore, Virginia, brought up a need for a judge for a May 19th show, and Heidi said she would put a notice out on this. Heidi talked about the pitfalls that have been experienced in the past when having judges of other breeds trying to judge Icelandics.

Dawn Shaw, Washington, asked if there was "some kind of packet" that could be sent to judges, as she is on the board of a committee that puts on an all-gaited horse show which includes Icelandics, and they often end up with non-Icelandic judges. She was particularly wondering about the availability of videos. Heidi referred her to the FEIF website, and said that under "sport", there is a link to "service", where you can find current materials, and directions on how to order.

With no further questions, the next committee report was on the Quarterly by Anne Elwell, Board liaison, on behalf of Judy Strehler, editor.

The Quarterly committee reformed in 2006, in time to begin production on the June 2006 issue. The significant thing about this is that it formed as a real committee, whereas before the responsibility fell on one person. Now the work can be spread out in a much more realistic way among a number of people with skills in different areas.

The page breakdown for the past four issues shows total page counts up to 52 pages per issue. The number of pages devoted to news and articles has increased with each issue. Much of the growth has come from the regional club news, as the clubs are sending more photos and information about what they're doing, and it's become a very lively part of The Quarterly. Another area of growth has come from articles submitted by the members about their varied experiences. This has increased enthusiasm for the Quarterly, and made it more interesting for people around the country. The committee is pleased with both the quality and quantity of the articles they have been able to offer.

To improve the process of Quarterly production, the committee has set up an online forum for committee members so they are able to participate in real time in planning and production discussions. To deal with the problem of sharing large image files, such as photographs being reviewed for publication, digital files for advertisement and files for final page proofs, they have set up a private website. This site serves as a

place to store and view photos being considered for publication, store and review page proofs prior to sending the Quarterly to the printer, and store photo and ad files where they can be retrieved as needed. The committee has also refined the process of managing advertising submissions, as they had found their file of ad materials wasn't entirely up-to-date, and some errors had been made. They have also worked to improve the quality of ad materials and the reproduction of such ads in the Quarterly. During the past year they have reviewed their accounts with advertisers. Accounts in arrears have either been brought up-to-date or discontinued. As there were no questions, this report was concluded.

(unidentified male speaker) said that someone had asked what the per-page cost was, and that it was about \$2.95-\$2.98 per page on average.

Steve Barber, New York, asked what the "stated purpose", the objective, of the Quarterly is.

(unidentified female speaker) addressed this question, saying she had been editor previously for many years. She said it began as a communication vehicle for people around the country who had Icelandic horses, and at that time it was a small collection of mimeographed pages that were circulated. It gradually evolved into a larger magazine whose primary purposes were to provide information about what's going on in different parts of the country, and to provide educational information, which is difficult to obtain in English. An enormous amount of educational material is written in Icelandic and German, but very little in English.

Next, Sandie Weaver presented the Youth report, with brief comments about the photos being displayed. Sandie said she had represented the U.S. at the FEIF annual meeting in Glasgow in February. The Youth departments were given a copy of the coloring book that's been donated, and our organization is allowed to publish it and to sell it, as long as the money earned from it goes back to our youth programs. She passed her only copy around so everyone could see it. Steve Barber has the information, which came from Iceland just a couple of days ago, and he is researching to see if we can publish it online, so that people could then go online to order.

Next, Sandie talked about a new Youth exchange program with FEIF. She explained that the way it works is that a group will commit to hosting six teen-agers and two country leaders. In FEIF, a "country leader" is synonymous with "chaperone". If a regional club or group here would like to host a group of teen-agers from Europe, with their country leaders, they would notify Sandie, give her the pertinent details, and she would forward that information to FEIF. FEIF will make a master list of different countries that want to host groups, and then coordinate those. The purpose of this is for the teen-agers to get to know each other internationally. They would be required to pay

for their airfare, and to give the hosts money for food. Their board and other expenses would be paid for by the host/regional club. It is understood that these teen-agers are not coming to *work* on a farm, but to visit and get to know people. Sandie invited any interested people to come and speak with her personally for more information.

Next, Sandie said that Germany would like to sponsor a Young Adults Championship. They feel the gap between the FEIF Youth Cup and the World Championships is too big of a step. They would like to host the very best riders from each country between the ages of 16 and 23. There definitely would be a qualification for this. As the hosting country, Germany initially wanted to have 20 riders, and every other country would have 10. We thought it would be fair to start smaller, and have each country send 5 riders. A committee was formed with two Youth leaders from Germany, the Youth leader from Great Britain, and Sandie, to talk about the details. Germany has this all ready to go, but we want to iron out details that would make it fair to all the countries. We will send our recommendations to FEIF to be approved.

Next, regarding the FEIF Youth Cup in Austria, which was held this past summer, we had five riders from the United States go: Alora Blackman, Caeli Cavanagh (Peters), Alyssa Davis, Gillian Fitzgerald, and Amber Parry. These riders were supported by many people in the U.S. in their endeavor to compete, and Sandie extended the Board's appreciation to everyone who helped them get there, followed by a round of applause.

Sandie next spoke about the Spaejari awards, a yearly essay contest sponsored by John and Marilyn Parke. There had been problems with the winners not receiving their awards in a timely manner. The Board and the Parkes worked out the following agreement: the USIHC will promote the contest and collect all the essays; John and Marilyn will choose the winners and send a \$300 check to Congress to cover the awards; and the USIHC will order the plaques and send the checks to the winners, so that they will arrive in a timely manner. This should take care of the delays that the winners have experienced, and Sandie wanted to "sincerely apologize for any disappointment that these delays have caused to any of our young people." The deadline for this year's contest is later. Sandie explained that she sends out a three-page personal letter on December 1st to every youth member in the Congress, which describes the Spaejari contest, the Youth Cup and the Youth Camp, and it has a form for them to join the pleasure rider program. Sandie didn't receive the information for the camp in Sweden this summer until February 1st, so the letters just went out about four weeks ago, which means the deadlines had to be changed. The contest deadline for Spaejari is May 31st. Sandie asked that we encourage our young people and assure them that the problems with the contest have been worked out.

This summer the FEIF Youth Camp will be held just outside of Stockholm, Sweden, July 13-20. The deadline for the applications is March 31st. She apologized for the short time to the deadline, but it was because the information came to her late. She asked that any teen-agers who would like to attend would please see her. Ages of eligibility: you need to be 12 years old by December 31st, or no older than 18 years old by December 31st. The FEIF Youth Camp 2009 will be held here in the United States. We will be welcoming teen-agers from 18 FEIF countries to the United States.

Next, referring to photos, Sandie talked about the camp in Canada. She explained that the FEIF Youth Camp is not necessarily for youth who want to compete, but for kids who ride and love the Icelandic horse, and want to get to know other teen-agers. At this camp in Canada they had a five-day camping trip on a river, and rode Icelandic horses twice, and had a fantastic time.

Still showing photos, she talked about FEIF Youth Camp in Iceland. Their trail rides consisted of 50 teen-agers in one group, and the teen-agers were the leaders of the rides.

Sandie showed other photos, including one of John Parke, who had given a benefit lecture about things he's learned about endurance riding that you can apply to your trail horse. This was two summers ago, and all the money that they collected went to all the FEIF kids that summer. She also had a picture of the award they give at every FEIF Youth Cup. We sponsor the flag race trophy, and Caryn Cantella orders it. She talked about the differences between the trophies given by different countries, and said "ours is very American".

(Unidentified female speaker) asked if we know where the FEIF Youth Camp will be yet, and Sandie said that Barb Riva had volunteered to have it at her farm, which announcement was followed by applause.

Next, Katrin Sheehan, Georgia, introduced herself as the liaison to the Web-page Committee, and said that Mark Peal is the head of the committee, and that she was reading/showing his report. Katrin explained that much work is being done on the webpage, and it will eventually look quite different.

The website is growing as a news medium, as well as a repository for static information. News and announcements are being posted quickly by Asta Covert. Updates were made to many sections, including the Committee pages, the Register rules, forms, instructions, and the Frequently Asked Questions. The Board meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the bulletin board as soon as they are approved by the Board. The activity calendar is updated as soon as updated news is received. The website committee is reviewing the site's wealth of content. They have a new vision of the layout, and they need to fill in the skeleton now. They are discussing better methods of

organization, and are developing better navigation to make content easier to find and more satisfying for the user. Doug is working on their online proposal tracking and membership renewal functions. Doug will have a report about what he is doing, which will shed more light on that. As there were no questions, Katrin's report was concluded.

Amy Goddard gave a report on behalf of the election committee. She stated that Martina Gates was the chairperson; other committee members were herself, Nicki Esdorn, and Karleen Oosterwal. Martina redesigned the ballots this year to achieve better identification that the actual ballot came from the Congress; improved ability to vote anonymously; and clarification of voting instructions. She said 570 ballots were sent out in January, as well as a few sent out after that. The ballots were counted on Saturday, March 10th. She stated that 276 ballots were received, which was 47% of the eligible membership. Two junior members voted, which were not counted. Two re-votes came in after the change was made to accept ballots containing less than three votes. She said they received six ballots from non-members. One member voted twice and they counted the later-postmarked vote. Four ballots were returned because they were incorrectly addressed. Two people voted for four people and then crossed them out.

Amy said Anne had suggested they put together a "best practices and guidelines" for the next group that does this, because some problems had come up. One problem came up regarding the membership list. She said it was sometimes difficult to differentiate between members of the same family with different last names. Karleen input a Word document into Excel so they could have everyone's names in there alphabetically. Then there was the problem, admittedly an oversight from the beginning, with not allowing less than three votes.

Amy said the problem with the date was that it fell during the middle of the week, which meant those who worked couldn't count ballots on that day, so they moved it to the weekend. That was a problem because the date in the Constitution is actually March 7th, so they suggested a revision so there would be a range from the postmarked date out two weeks to the next available weekend, rather than a hard date. She said they received valid ballots up until March 5th that were postmarked on or before February 28th.

She thought the published results might have been one off, and explained why. These are the final result counts. She then opened the discussion up to questions.

Sara Conklin, New York, commented that she thought the way the ballot was redesigned was very well done, clear, and professional looking—"every year it gets better and better... as a process it keeps improving, and I'd like to thank the Election Committee for all the work they did, because I know it's not easy." (applause)

(female speaker, no name), commented that, because they had so many Constitutional issues with this election, and because the Constitution hasn't had a review

for a long time, she recently recommended to the Board that they form a Constitutional Review Committee, and Anne Elwell has agreed to chair that. If anyone is interested in becoming part of that committee, please talk to Anne about it.

Rich Moore, Virginia, also commented on the "great job" the committee did. On the point about changing the Constitution to make the date later, he said the Constitution says all the ballots must be received by February 28th, and doesn't say anything about the postmark date, so he doesn't see a need for a Constitutional change in this regard.

Gerald Oliver, Minnesota, asked if he was understanding correctly that the committee was recommending that bullet-balloting be permitted, where they could vote for less than three. He said that "really changes the statistical way that the ballots turn out. If you don't vote for three, you could bullet-ballot and very much change the way the election turns out." It could skew the balance.

Dawn Shaw, Washington, wanted to point out that she's the one on the bottom of the list, but it allows her more time to get involved.

Pat Moore, Virginia, asked if they had a final cost for this effort. Amy said she didn't.

(unnamed male speaker) said he had noted that this question had come up last year, and as he didn't see it on Martina's report, he had sent her a note suggesting she come up with a cost in case Amy needed it, and Martina had sent it to him. He shared that the cost of the printing and mailing, not including the notice of the election, was \$1,408.00. For comparison, last year the cost was \$750.00, but they did a lot of it by hand themselves, and didn't do multiple ballots. Amy added that that cost was higher because they printed a very large quantity of Congress envelopes at the same time, for future use. She didn't know what the breakdown was, but she could get it.

Pat Moore, Virginia, said she would like everyone to consider the idea of online balloting. She said there are several companies that could do this for us. I-ballot does it for about \$2.00 per vote. VoteNet does everything for you once you buy a license for \$1900.

Anne Elwell, North Carolina, wanted clarification on the anonymity of the ballots, and how that was done. Amy talked about the separate envelopes, and how they are separated when they are received. The election committee can track who has voted, but not how individuals vote. Anne felt the important issue was that the people on the election committee don't see how individual people vote.

Andrea Barber talked about certain things that were printed in larger quantities, to get a better deal, as they could be used in the future.

Bernie said the Congress is determined to improve the communication between members and Board members. They are always looking for more information in order to make the best possible decisions. To take advantage of this, they are "venturing into the electronic age for communications", and Doug, being an expert on this, is going to present us with some possibilities to enhance this understanding.

Doug Smith explained their desire for people to be able to see proposals as they come in, for everyone to have access to what the proposal is, for committee members to see what's going on, and for people to be able to effectively comment on these. He noted some things that had happened "behind the scenes". First, they now have to have the membership access online, so they know that members are the only ones submitting proposals. He shared that he and Caryn were very close to the point where people will be able to renew their memberships or register to become a Congress member online. He said he has all the membership information on his computer. He wanted to walk everyone through an existing proposal which he entered this morning, and if there's interest we could "create one on the fly".

Doug said that if you click anywhere on the proposal, it will give the full details. Doug went over the various sections of his tongue-in-cheek demo proposal for the Board to pay for his trips to Iceland, and Bernie's feedback. He also showed a page that would show "who did what to the proposal and when".

Stephanie Surbey, Oklahoma, asked if any member could log in and make a proposal, or do they need to go through a committee. She had a concern about junior members or someone else doing something inappropriate. Doug said any member can log in. He said the first time you want to do this, you would need to give the email address that was given for membership, and inappropriate things can be deleted.

Anne said that this is just a way of taking their present mechanism for submitting proposals, and being able to do it online. Anyone can submit a proposal to the Board. There's no requirement that it make sense, be reasonable, be founded in good faith, or anything else. And the Board may take action on it immediately if they believe it's frivolous. That's what would happen now, and will happen on this system. It's simply a way for people to track something and see what's going on.

Sara Conklin, New York, shared that it's not only a way to track it electronically, but also a way for someone who has submitted a proposal to see what's happened with it. It makes it much more transparent to the membership, which goes back to Pat Moore's discussion regarding communication.

Heidi Kline, New York, said that the way it was before, it someone proposed something, it would have to go through a committee, where it would be discussed and voted upon, and then sent to the Board, and asked how that procedure would change. Doug replied that this doesn't change that procedure at all. The only difference is that it "simply automates and exposes the existing procedure".

David Kline, "somewhere between California and New York", asked if there was going to be a "dating phase" on it, so they could look to see when a proposal was received, when it was acted upon, when the final determination was given. Doug responded that "it's all right there".

Dawn Shaw, Washington, asked if the first thing a member would see when logged on to the proposal tracking system would be a list of proposals. Doug said yes, and showed the area to click in the demo to find the current status. Dawn asked if there was a time limit. Doug said it would "stay there forever". He said you could do a key word search, and it would search "every proposal it has ever heard about." Dawn commented then that a recommendation would be to search this before making a new proposal. Doug remarked that the Board could also do this if there were duplicates. Doug showed where there is an option to "submit new".

There were no further questions.

The next section of the meeting was for proposals submitted by members. The first one was submitted by Karen Brotzman. Bernie said he thought there was a rule that the person making a proposal needed to be present to speak to it. Although Karen was not present, Dawn Shaw said she was there to speak on her behalf, and this was then allowed. Dawn said Karen is proposing an interactive bulletin board on the USIHC website, where members can post questions. The answers would also be posted, and could be seen by everyone who logs onto that site. Dawn said she had talked to Doug about it, and explained that it's not a live chat, but rather, a type of forum where questions and comments can be posted, and others can respond. You would need to be logged onto the members-only site in order to respond, although anyone could read the questions and answers.

(unnamed female speaker) asked how this would differ from the current forum list. In response, Dawn talked about the difference between this idea and the Yahoo groups. She said that with this, when you post a question, it would go directly onto a web page, which would be publicly accessible on the USIHC web site, and is not run through Yahoo. The same speaker then asked if it would be for horse-related questions, or Congress-related questions. Dawn said she would think it would be related to things that would interest the Congress as a whole.

Bernie asked what advantage there would be to this program versus the forum list on Yahoo. Dawn replied that there are many people who don't make a choice to be a

member of an email group, and this would be directly through the website, which means it would have a broader accessibility to more people.

(unnamed male speaker) addressed the issue of Yahoo groups, saying that he used to work for that company. He explained that the way such groups are set up, if you want to post, you must be willing to sign into an account with Yahoo. Once you have done that, you can post, and anyone can take a look at it. He said then, that as far as the difference between this and the proposal of an interactive bulletin board page on the USIHC website, the latter would be sanctioned by the Congress and would cost us some money to maintain, but other than that he didn't see a difference.

Dawn replied that it would be in a better known location.

Betsy, California, stated that her concern related to the amount of misinformation on the Yahoo group. If similar misinformation ended up on the Congress website, people might look at and think it's official. Dawn replied that it could be moderated, incorrect responses could be deleted, and correct answers could be posted.

(female speaker—not sure if it's Betsy again, or someone else:) asked if it wouldn't be just as easy to have a link on the USIHC website to the Yahoo forum.

Andrea Barber, New York related her concerns about the great amounts of misinformation that accumulate on these kinds of lists, with "people bickering back and forth". She talked about the difficulty of having a moderator, that it would "be a full-time job and a nightmare". She emphasized that if people have questions they should contact Board members, who try to make themselves as accessible as possible. She said they'd recently had a revision of the Frequently Asked Questions. Andrea expressed concerns about people not taking the time to look up correct information or contacting the right people before sending off emails or posting to lists, which can perpetuate false information.

Sara Conklin, New York, expressed concern about the fact that Dawn was not really familiar with Karen's proposal and it must be difficult for her to stand up and defend it. She said she agreed there were a lot of lists and misinformation, and this proposal was not something she could support. She said she thought the Congress had a rule that if a person was making a proposal, that person needed to show up at the meeting to present it, and she wasn't sure why that rule was broken in this case. She said it was nice of Dawn to present it, but that's why it's important for the person who made the proposal to show up, "otherwise you can't speak to it", which comment was met with spontaneous applause.

Rich Moore talked about how he was "always pushing things for power to the people and better communication within the Congress," and that "some people have

accused me of being misguided and naive". He expressed his feeling that when they come together for meetings, the Board "should be willing to listen to people extemporaneously share their opinions about whatever they think is important." He commented that the current meeting is very structured and controlled. Rich felt we would promote communication within the organization if the Board would adjust the agenda. His proposal is that the Board would allow some time during meetings for people to express their views on whatever they want, and that a certain amount of time would be allotted to allow people to speak their views. Secondly, he said that not everyone is familiar with the procedure for proposals. He thought that if people brought up issues at Board meetings or the annual meeting, they could be discussed at those sessions, or the Board could refer people to the correct committee. He then asked for questions or comments.

Steve Barber, New York, asked if Rich knew how long the monthly Board meetings lasted. The speaker responded he had been told they lasted for up to three hours. Steve asked how long he would allocate for people speaking. Rich said the Board would determine the length of this presentation period, and the length of time for each presentation. It could be whatever the Board decides, but would at least give people the opportunity to say something.

Jane Mears, Texas, said she had only been to a couple of meetings, but it seems like it is the way it is because when issues come up, the people who make decisions need to have some background, and have access to pertinent documents. She said she's also heard people ask questions, and have people respond to them, saying that they would take them into consideration.

Rich agreed that things can be brought up at meetings if they are tied into agenda items, but someone may want to talk about something that is totally unrelated. Regarding the first point, on decision-making, he is not proposing that anyone take a vote on what a member may bring up. It just gives a member an opportunity to express his/her view on an issue.

Anne Elwell expressed her concern about the length of Board meetings. She reiterated that all of the Board members' phone numbers and emails are available, and that people can contact them directly. She said that, with regard to the annual meeting, she thinks we have a good proposal system; proposals can be sent directly to the Board, and it's the Board's responsibility to refer them to committees. What she would like to see more of at the annual meeting is feedback on what they're doing. She said they need to know what people think about what they're doing, where do people think they should have done something differently, where are they missing things, where are they not communicating well, and to give them the opportunity to speak to those things. She

would love to see much more dialog between the members and the Board at the annual meeting, although not at the Board meetings.

Rich said he's not proposing that there be discussion on topics, but that members be given a few minutes to say something on a topic, and it can be limited to five minutes, or even shorter. He gave an example of Fairfax County in Virginia, where citizens had two minutes to say whatever they wanted to say to communicate directly to the Board.

Stephenie Surbey, Oklahoma, spoke in support of this. She didn't feel there would be "that many people" who would want to speak to the Board at every meeting. She talked about wanting Bonnie to share her thoughts. There was some background discussion.

Then Andrea spoke and said she wanted to share some information about how the monthly Board meetings are run. She explained that on the east coast, the meetings start at 9:00 p.m., so that people on the west coast and Alaska can make it on time. This means they can run very late, particularly for those who live on the east coast. Andrea said she had asked the Board to consider a limit of two hours per meeting. She said that even then, by the end of the meeting, "people are getting pretty frayed". Because of this, she thought people might not get the "listening ear" they would want, and which they would get if they called an individual Board member during the day. She agreed with Anne that the annual meeting is a "totally different story", and she would also like to see more information shared back and forth and more exchanged. So, "with due respect", she doesn't see that part of the proposal working.

Rich responded that what he's really talking about is improving communication, and however that could best be done is fine. He said it sounds like there's agreement that a question-and-answer period or open discussion would be a good idea at the annual meeting.

Will Covert, California, wondered why feedback and proposals need to be saved until there's an annual meeting, or even a monthly meeting of the Board. He thought it would be in everyone's best interest if anyone who has a question or idea could just submit it freely. He also shared that the new committees of the last few years have really been helpful with getting this feedback "talked through and then presented to the Board". He said that, although it's a work in progress, it seems to be improving, and there seems to be a committee for nearly every interest.

Dawn Shaw, Washington, said that, having sat in on a Board meeting, she understands, but she said she also understands the feeling that the Board is not accessible. Although someone could call an individual Board member, if they wanted to say something to the entire Board, and couldn't afford to fly to Texas for the annual meeting, how would that be done? She said the way she understood this idea, it would be at the

beginning of the meeting, and the number of people and amount of time allotted would be limited.

(unnamed female speaker) felt more time could be developed at the annual meeting by handing out written reports instead of going over them all orally, which would allow more time for members to speak. As far as regular Board meetings, she wondered if they could have a meeting, perhaps every six months, where members could address the Board.

Stephenie Surbey pointed out that "you'd have to be pretty passionate about what you want to talk to the Board about to stay up until one in the morning anyway, so you're talking about someone who really wants to talk to you."

Bernie shared his experience when he was chairman of the Anchorage Horse Council. He said they'd had a "pent-up amount of members" who wanted to address the council at each of its monthly meetings. They allowed five minutes, and only one person per meeting. "For the next three meetings the slots were full, and for the next year nobody cared." So they were able to alleviate that back-pressure, gave the opportunity and everyone knew it was there. It took all of 15 minutes over three months to resolve the problem. He said another way this could be addressed was an idea Andrea had shared, i.e., requiring all agenda items to be received by her on the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. This allowed the agenda to be published on the website. The regional committees could get a copy of it and arrange an observer if they wanted one. Bernie thought if they advanced that, to perhaps a week before the Board meeting, then more people would have a chance to see what was going to come up at the meeting, and could contact their Board members directly to address any subjects of concern.

Pat Moore, Virginia, said she would like to allay their fears. She said she has been present at over 300 Board of Directors meetings as part of her job. Every single one of them had a time for resident input, and you're talking about 3,000-6,000 homes. It was done at the beginning of the meeting, and there were no decisions made by the Board in response. The Board can decide to add it to the agenda should they wish. There were very few times when anyone went on "ad nauseum", and when it did, that was because the Board let it happen. Most of the time it's over in two to three minutes. "So, if you do it, you give a short time for input, you set up the rules, and it's not going to be as bad as you think."

David Kline said he thought we had two separate issues going here. On one hand, the Board needs time to discuss things amongst themselves, which is part of why outside people are allowed to audit, but not participate. The Board needs that time together. But Rich's idea is a good one, so maybe an alternative idea would be to have a meeting once a quarter for the Board to address proposals that have come up and need to be discussed publicly.

(unidentified female speaker) said she was "one of four", but "the only one here." She said, "This was a broad-based, stream-of-consciousness attempt to call for focus and organization on the youth effort. It is not a defining request. It is just to get the Board and the committees to think a little bit more. There is lots of good work that has been done by a lot of people individually, but it doesn't appear to the membership that there's any kind of coordinated, cohesive effort." She said it would also help determine terms of reference for the various committees, so people know "what they're to do, when they're to do it, how they're to do it." The second area is the creation of an operating manual for the adult members of any committee.

Deidre, Ohio, asked if what they were asking for was basically a short and simple "job description manual", and the speaker agreed.

Steve Barber, New York, asked if she could flesh the idea out a little bit more.

The speaker responded by describing the various youth camps and competitions, and talked about wanting the adults who go to these and organize them not to have to reinvent the wheel every time. There are guidelines spelled out, and international guidelines in place. The suggestion is to put them all together into a book or manual and say, "Here it is. Here's the manual. This is how you do it." Also, they have regional clubs working on Youth programs. It would be good to get the Youth Committee and regional committees together and flesh out some organizational system for the Youth activities.

Steve Barber suggested a way to implement what she's saying, which he thought is a good idea, is to start with the Youth Committee, "like you for example", and write that booklet with the Youth Committee and then duplicate that for the other committees. The speaker had no objection to that, and said, "we're just trying to get the focus on youth, really."

(break)

Sandie Weaver came to respond to the above proposal. She quoted: "Establish an ad hoc youth committee." My response is that the regional club Youth directors are the Youth Committee. Anyone else who wants to join the committee is welcome to send a paragraph about himself/herself to me, and I send it to all the Youth Committee members. Two of the members are on the Education Committee as well. It's a distribution list that's in its infancy. We are starting to share information, it's a start, but it's basically step A.

"Define the roles and responsibilities of the Youth Committee chairman and committee members." My response is that the role of the Youth Committee presently is

to send information regarding regional youth programs to the USIHC director, so that information can be promoted throughout the USIHC, and to promote USIHC programs that are already in place, which is, again, in its infancy.

Regarding the role of the Youth Committee chairperson, I personally send all USIHC youth an annual letter promoting the Spaejari essay contest, the FEIF Youth Camp or Cup, and the pleasure riding program. I promote the Spaejari essay contest, collect essays, send them to John and Marilyn Parke, collect \$300 check from the Parkes, order plaques, send checks and plaques to winners, and send winning essays to the Quarterly editor. I promote the FEIF youth camp, collect applications, send names of applicants to the FEIF Youth office, am responsible for all details... and this goes on for two whole pages in small print. I send monies that are owed to FEIF, itineraries and passport information, provide campers with a packing list, and other details regarding the camp, such as directions, etc.; remind campers they will be responsible for writing articles for the Quarterly when they return. I collect the articles and photographs and send them to the Quarterly. I promote the FEIF Youth Cup; I collect applications, along with personal references. I collect try-out videos and DVDs, bring the video/DVD player to Burbank Icelandic horse shows so the Burbank judge can judge them. I white out the names of the applicants on the copies of applications, and give them to the FEIF Youth Cup Committee, made up of Will and Asta Covert, and Dave and Heidi Kline. This committee scores the personal references and the training and showing sections of the applications. I add these scores to the riding scores given by the FEIF judge. I order the riders by points and email the results to the USIHC Board to be approved. I personally phone all applicants and tell them their spot, whether they're on the team or on the waiting list, advising them to apply for passports immediately; send list of riders to FEIF; mail packet of information to riders, including FIPO rules, required show clothes, and other pertinent information available from FEIF at the time; obtain parents' permission to set up an email distribution list including their teen-agers' email address and the parents' email addresses. I notify parents and the USIHC Board as soon as notification from FEIF comes that our waiting list riders can attend. I call Caryn Cantella and have her order the flag race trophy and have it sent to the Youth Director; send all pertinent information and answer all parents' and teen-agers' questions through distribution lists so all have the same information, including names and addresses of previous FEIF Youth Cup parents to contact to ask questions, and obtain referrals for horse leases. I personally mail USIHC horse selection policy to all riders, to be signed by parents and riders, and collect them. I collect insurance information, copies of passports, itineraries and names, addresses and phone numbers of horse owners who are loaning/leasing their horses to our teenage riders. I make sure all the riders have monies to FEIF. I send the money to FEIF from USIHC to pay for the stalls. Periodically I phone the riders to ask how things are going and to answer any questions. I buy two American flags to bring to the Cup, and secure FEIF Youth Cup jackets; order an international cell phone to call riders a couple of days before Cup starts to be sure everything is working out with the horse they are leasing, and

help them obtain a new horse if necessary. This cell phone is also necessary for any emergencies or other problems for which parents need to be contacted. I meet riders at the airport or train station the day of the Cup, remind riders that they are required to write articles for the Quarterly; collect the articles and send them to the Quarterly. And the rest of the responsibilities for the Cup are listed in the Tasks and Responsibilities paper adopted by the FEIF Youth Committee.

In Glasgow, we spent two hours in a discussion group to define the roles of the country leader and the team leader. The country leader has three pages of responsibilities; the team leaders have two pages. I think that's part of what you wanted. FEIF spent quite a bit of time developing and adopting those.

The next part was, "establishment of a National Youth program." I'm not sure if you meant a program like the riders' badge program, that's being implemented by Education, or if you had something else in mind.

Response: I think all four of us probably had different ideas, recognizing that it was for this group, or a group designated, to come up with a program, rather than any individual. This is just for people to start thinking. It was deliberately not specific.

Sandie continued, quoting from the proposal: "so the Youth and Education Committees will collaborate, etc." My response is that I personally began taking riding lessons as an adult, and I never participated in any youth riding programs at all, so I wouldn't know how to start putting a program together.

From the proposal: "The regional clubs with active Youth activities should be asked to share ideas." This is already being done. The regional clubs have Youth directors; we're all on a distribution list. They are asked to share all of their Youth activities with each other so we can promote them, so other kids from other areas can attend them.

"The committees will collaborate on a youth program handbook." I think this is a great idea. Again, I personally wouldn't know where to start to put that together. "The Youth Committee will assist regional clubs with advice." To my knowledge there was a youth camp in each area, east coast, south, Midwest and north coast, last summer. I never got the information, so I couldn't send it. I read about it in the Quarterly after it happened. If people could be forthcoming with the information, I could send it out to all the regional directors, and we could promote it more throughout the United States. Maybe it's just my perception, but I think people are tired of hearing about these things happening in Europe, and they want something in America, and they want to know about things that are happening in America, and the time is right.

"Input from leaders of well-developed youth programs." I think this is a great idea. "Further, the Youth Committee will be tasked with defining the roles." As I said, in Glasgow they spent two hours hammering that out and discussing what their roles would be, so I have them to share.

"Determining a process by which the Youth Committee will solicit and review candidates for Youth Cup camp team leaders." This is a good idea. Last spring I asked Laura Benson, Sigrun Brynjarsdottir, Asta Covert, April Johnson, Stina Sigurbjornsson, and a few others to apply for team leaders for the FEIF Youth Cup in Austria. Most of them replied to me, and none of them were able to leave their jobs to volunteer for this position. So, I have reached out to very qualified people, and we just have to move forward with that.

"The Committee should also actively reach out to qualified trainers." Yes, we desperately need this, and it is time. "The Youth Committee will draw up a list of qualifications for FEIF Youth Program leaders." I'm not sure what you mean by this. (*Response could not be heard.*) And the last one says that, "the concerns and input from all Board members for this Youth program review and development project is encouraged." I just want everyone to know that I submit every single thing I do with the Youth program to the Board for review, so this project wouldn't be any different. "I hope that answers some of your questions."

Barb Riva, Wisconsin, asked whether the letter Sandie said she sent to all of the Youth members explaining all that we offer as far as Youth, just goes to the Youth, or whether it goes to the families also. Sandie said it goes to all the Youth members, and this year she sent out over 100 letters. She said she has kept the Youth members on her list, even though they might not be current members. She said Caryn Cantella is going to update that list and send it to her in a few weeks. She said if she knows they're too old, or she knows personally that they don't have horses any more, she takes their names off the list. But aside from that, she sends the letter out to them every December so that, in case something might spark their interest and they might want to rejoin the Congress, it will give them that opportunity.

Barb said that she was wondering, though, if that letter could go to every member, whether it's family or single. Some of the members have farms where perhaps a grandchild rides, or someone they know who is a youth rider, and they could sponsor that person into these events, and promote these Youth events. I just wonder if we might be cutting ourselves short on participation if only the youth members are getting the information." Sandie said she sends all the letters to the regional directors as well, to print out and hand out to all the kids they know, even if they're not Congress members. And now the Youth letter will be on the website as well.

Andrea added that, having done several mailings over the course of the year, to minimize costs she likes to "stuff" those envelopes "as tight as we can", and one of the things she would have liked to have put in the recent mailing about the World Championship tryouts is that Youth letter. She said she thought there would be many people in the same situation she's in, people who don't have children but might pass it on to somebody who does. So, she also would like to see the Youth letter go to everyone for this reason.

Pat Moore said that sending a letter just to the youth doesn't always work. While they may be momentarily excited about the letter, it might not go beyond that if the young person is, perhaps, less than organized.

Rich Moore said he's very interested in the Youth activities in the U.S., and interested in her comment that information on Youth camps and activities is sent to the Youth directors of the regional clubs. He said he's not pointing any fingers, but he doesn't remember seeing anything forwarded to the club about such activities. He said they have heard indirectly that the Northeast club is having a Youth camp this summer, and that Barbara may be having one this summer, but they certainly haven't heard about it officially. He said it would be great if somehow the communication could be improved, and perhaps things could be put on the bulletin board or sent by email. He recognizes that the Congress doesn't like to send things by email, but in addition to stuffing envelopes, he noted that many members are used to using email and it would be nice to receive such information electronically so they could forward it to their entire club and other people as well, to get the word out. He thought if all the regional clubs who are taking the initiative to have Youth activities would extend invitations to other Youths in the state, that would be great, too.

Sandie said all of the regional club directors are on a distribution list, and any information sent to her from a club is sent out to everyone. She said again that last summer she believes there were four camps in all four areas, and she didn't get any information from any of them. She said she perhaps should be more proactive and remind people on a monthly basis to send information send on to her, so she can send it out to everybody.

Andrea Barber commented that one of the greatest failures she's seen in the regional club programs is that much of the information is not forwarded, and she finds it very disappointing that information is not passed on. The point is for this information from FEIF and the Congress to trickle down. We need to work on that from both sides, from the regional club and from our side, to make sure that information being passed on goes to everyone, goes to where it needs to be.

(unnamed female speaker) said that one other thing is that the regional club Youth directors might contact Sandie once a month to ask if there's anything they haven't heard about. It should work both ways. If you've got a question, ask it, or have them give a report if they have meetings. Have them contact Sandie, and get the communication going both ways.

Ed Hilgaertner shared an observation. He said he believes the only way the whole Congress can have effective Youth activities and participation is through the regional clubs. That's where the kids are. They're the ones that need to get the Youth activities to occur.

(unnamed female speaker) said that what we do have, that the regional clubs do not have, and what the membership doesn't have, is access to the other member countries and their youth programs—what they're doing and trying. For example, Finland is a new country, and they're really developing Youth programs. There are a lot of new countries, with which Sandie is getting acquainted now from being in Glasgow. They can give her ideas about youth programs that are successful there. She can take those ideas and send them to the regional clubs. So we do have access to some out-of-the-country ideas and information that the regional clubs are not going to have. They have the kids, we have the access.

Rich Moore, Virginia, said he believes that over the last year we've been seeing real growth in the committee system within the Congress, but his impression is that the Youth Committee has not reached that stage, and is essentially an email list rather than an active group of people working on various projects. He thought one thing we could look for as a goal, perhaps in the coming year, is to get more representatives from the regional clubs who are interested, and start developing a Youth Committee along the lines of the other committees, where you have projects, and people working on different things, and your role would be more one of coordinating what's going on, rather than trying to do it all yourself.

Steve Barber, New York, felt we should step back a moment and realize that Sandie is a volunteer. She's not a high-paid executive of the Board of Directors, and she could quit at any time. She's got a lot of experience, and has made a great contribution to this. I think it's easy to "beat up" on the person who's doing the job, but I personally think you're doing a fabulous job.

(female speaker), said this proposal was by no means meant as a "beat-up" at all. It was meant to expand the effort, and to recognize that you can't do it all by yourself, and that it's time for other people to step up and help. That was what the genesis of this was. We also recognize that this is a multi-year program. Maybe we can just take two steps

next year, and three steps the year after, but you just can't continue to do it all by yourself.

Bernie concluded by saying that this has been a very informative annual meeting, and "I appreciate all the input from each one of you as individuals, and you can see from the reaction to the various Board presentations that we have come a long way. Each year we incrementally move forward. There is still a lot to be done in many of our areas, not just Youth, but in Education, and in Sport. I love history. I've been reading about the pilgrims recently. The Indians had a feeling that the pilgrims were hiding barrels of contagion underneath the floor of their cabins. Actually, it was gunpowder. Those of us who have become involved with this unique horse have, in many ways, a contagious experience with it, and we infect others with our enthusiasm. The kids do it, we do it, and I think that's our real goal for this year: to share what we have, enjoy it ourselves, and let our friends, young and old, enjoy it with us."

He thanked everyone for coming, and adjourned the meeting.