Fiber & Fiber Products Committee (FiberCom)

Meeting Minutes
January 2, 2017

Meeting: Conference Call — January 2, 2017, 8:00 p.m. EST

Members: Stacy Heydt, Chair
Launda Soper, Secretary (absent)
B-J Ellis
Ruth Fuqua (absent)
Chris Reachard
Clarissa Wisner (absent)

Board Liaison: Norm Johnson

Staff Representative: Becky Farley

1.0 Meeting Opening: Meeting opened at 8:04 p.m. EST.

1.1 Approve Minutes: Approval of December minutes, Chris made the motion to approve, B-J seconded, motion passed.

2.0 Old Business:

2.1 Survey Questions:

Norm received an e-mail from Bud Synhorst suggesting that the questions should be open-ended. Stacy updated the survey incorporating his suggestions and distributed the final draft to the committee before the meeting. The survey was approved and Norm and Becky will prepare it to send out to the membership.

2.2 2017 National Fleece Conference:

Becky said that she and Bud were going out to Sacramento to see the hotel and to meet with the hotel staff to discuss the possibility of marketing the Fiber Artists' Marketplace to the general public and to access the meeting rooms available for speakers. During that meeting, they will also meet with Charlene Smith of CALPACA to enlist help for the show.

Fleece to Shawl: this will depend on if a team can be found in the Sacramento area. Becky asked if it had to be 4-H, FFA, etc. Chris said no, that any team would be able to participate. He even suggested a Sheep to Shawl team. We would also need to have a fleece donated for this event. Becky said she would discuss with Charlene on her visit.

Becky said that she is trying to locate a keynote speaker and has reached out to Whitney Pozgay. Whitney is interested and has given Becky a list of topics that she would include in her speech. Whitney has worked with alpaca in the textile industry. Becky is waiting to hear back from her and expects to hear back after the holiday. Becky also asked the committee to suggest other options. Chris suggested Christian Siriano from Project Runway. We all agreed that he would be a good keynote speaker. Chris and B-J said that Christian is very familiar with suri alpaca. Becky has his contact information from the website. As a third option, Stacy recommended the keynote speaker, Molly Gardner, who spoke at the 2015 Suri Symposium. Stacy said she would ask Patty Hasselbring for Molly's contact information.

Becky asked the committee for a list of topics for seminars and a lively discussion ensued. This discussion produced the following list of suggested topics:

- E-Commerce 101 — how to set up an e-commerce store such as Etsy and other 3rd party e-commerce sites. The goal would be for attendees to walk away with a plan and guide to implement.
- Social media navigation 101 — what are all the social media sites, how to use them and how to link them together. Walk away with an understanding of how Pinterest, Instagram, etc., can build your on-line identity and drive people to your on-line store.
- Writing product descriptions that sell — plus how to use key words for search engines in your descriptions.
- Taking product photographs — how to take professional photos of your products and how to upload them onto e-commerce sites or on your own website.

- Facebook marketing — possibly put on by Facebook staff. How to target a specific audience for ads and marketing your farm or products.
- Business tips from the local SBA.
- How to skirt a fleece for a show.
- How to skirt a fleece for processing.
- How to keep your fleece out of the trash.
- Sorting — a class for the advanced.
- Nutrition for better fiber.
- Trait selection breeding for fiber production — commercial applications.
- Where and how to sell your fiber.
- Choose the right fleece show for each fleece — what fleeces should be entered into cottage/spin-off or the traditional fleece show.
- After show fleece discussion — at the end of the show, have the judges describe how the fleeces are judged. How to interpret the score card. Later can be edited for a promo for fleece shows.

Becky then asked for suggestions for speakers for these seminars. These are non-paid, so speakers will need to be attending the conference or be in the area.

2.3 2018 National Fleece Conference:

It was decided that the committee will wait to make any recommendations on the 2018 conference until we get the results from the survey so we can best address the needs of the AOA membership.

2.4 Project #10 Fiber as a Business Brochure:

It was decided that this discussion could wait until next month's meeting as planning the conference was a priority for this meeting.

2.5 USAFC Fiber Council:

Norm informed us that this committee was moving forward with the projects previously discussed and that the committee had taken a break over the holidays. Their next meeting will be Wednesday of this week.

3.0 Promo for the Fiber Committee: Based on Launda's comment last meeting about CABO not knowing about the AOA Fiber Committee, Stacy said she was working on a promo slide show of the Fiber Committee, who we are and what we do. She requested a photo, brief quote and short, bulleted biography from each member.

4.0 Board Update: Norm said that there was no December meeting of the Board.

5.0 New Business: No new business.

6.0 Meeting Wrap:

4.1 Next Meeting: February 6, 2017, 8:00 p.m. EST.

4.2 Adjournment: Chris made the motion to adjourn, Stacy seconded, motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m. EST.