

Revised Minutes of Ouachita Mountain Hikers Executive Board Meeting

January 23, 2015

Voting Members Present: Debbie Van Veghel, Marilyn Hall, Jeannie Eichler, Rick Ericson, Anita Moore, Ralph Butler, Tom Calhoun

Attending: Pat Miller – Hike Flash Administrator, Cliff Harrison – Past President, Glenn Wortham – Fund Raising, Mike Miller – Information Technology

Call to Order: 1:10 p.m. at the Garland County Library, Hot Springs

President's Remarks

Debbie convened her first Executive Board meeting as President and furnished an agenda.

Old Business

As a matter of old business Debbie pursued with Glenn an earlier suggestion that the club reduce the selling price of logo T-shirts in order to reduce inventory. Glenn stated that he had a significant inventory of wicking T's, both long and short sleeved, in all sizes and colors. Glenn initially suggested a \$4 reduction, but following discussion, the Board reached consensus that the short sleeves should sell at \$10, and the long sleeves at \$16. The objective, besides reducing inventory, is to sell all of the current style, and then seek a new vendor that might provide product at a better price and in more colors.

The subject of trail maintenance award shirts arose again. Glenn stated he still had 17 shirts in inventory, in most sizes. The Board resolved to remind members that once awarded a shirt they may then purchase additional shirts.

New Business

Debbie then asked each Board member to offer an observation or two of practices or procedures that might be changed so as to improve club operation or administration.

Rick spoke first indicating that it might be time to separate the duties of Secretary and Historian. Rick indicated he would not accept nomination in 2016 for a sixth year as Secretary, but may be interested in continuing (if elected) as Historian. Separation of the duties would reduce some of the time obligation associated with the combined positions, and make it easier, perhaps, to eventually recruit nominees for both. The Board agreed, resolving that effective 2016, the positions of Secretary and Historian would be filled by two persons. No vote was taken until research could determine if this action required a change in the Bylaws. Additionally, a new job description(s) would have to be drafted.

Tom Calhoun made additional suggestions. He noted that recently, when Thursday hikes were cancelled due to inclement weather, effort had been made to reschedule those hikes on the next, or some subsequent Tuesday. He thought this development was a favorable one and suggested, provided the assigned Hike Leader agreed, that we should incorporate this as informal policy. The Board agreed.

Tom went on to observe that OMH club history on the website had not been updated in the last 10 years. He suggested that at a minimum, a few highlights should appear for each year, such as the names of the Executive Board members, and key events. The Board agreed and resolved to proceed with updating club history on the website. Rick suggested that a review of the OMH Photo Album for each of those years would provide the needed information. He suggested that he would ask each member present to review one album, and provide a summary to him, which he would put into suitable form for the update.

Trail Maintenance Chair

Ralph recently delivered a full report during the OMH Membership meeting earlier in the month, and had nothing further to offer. However, the subject of moving Thursday OT trail maintenance days to Saturday arose, a discussion that had been previously tabled. The rationale for changing days was three-fold: it might generate more participation; it opens that Thursday to additional hiking; and, it takes the pressure off, time-wise, of those members responsible for conducting and participating in the OMH membership meetings, who often also turn out for trail maintenance. It was acknowledged that such a move would reduce the number of Saturday hikes, insofar as the club already participated in quarterly trail service in the Hot Springs National Park. It was suggested we could do both, that is, work on the OT, perhaps in the morning, and continue the day with an abbreviated hike in that area. It was resolved that beginning with the fall hiking season, a trial period would be conducted wherein Thursday OT maintenance would be scheduled once a month on Saturday. No vote was taken.

Webmaster - Publicity Chair

Webmaster

Tom reported that the new website was up and running, noting that it pretty much duplicates the categories of information found in the old site, and provides links to the same data bases. He acknowledged that he has received good ideas from Mike Miller regarding ways he can continue to enhance operation and appearance. He made a number of points and observations:

- Tom said that he could create a data base that contained published Hike Flashes. The rationale would be that Hike Leaders would not have to recreate a Flash from scratch if the hike had been done in the past.
- He will research how Hike Leaders might post hike reports directly to the website without having to go through (though still reviewed by) the Hike Chair.

- He would try to develop a standardized interactive Hike Flash form so that Hike Leaders could “fill in the blanks,” thereby insuring Flashes submitted for publication are complete.
- Tom suggested that he could create a file of trail maps generated by GPS, as a further aid to Hike Leaders and planners.
- Tom thought it could be valuable to be able to embed photos with data relative to trails and trail heads, enhancing location and recognition.
- He said he has already updated contact information for members of the current Executive Board.
- He will begin posting the Revised Minutes of each OMH Members meeting as well as Executive Board sessions.
- He is researching how he might remove the photo album pages currently posted on our website and posting them to a club Shutterfly account or other such website that can be accessed via a link to a specific album. Members could upload hiking photos (create an “album”) or review other members’ albums, and club photo books or calendars. (Note: creating a “photo album” is different from creating a “photo book.” A photo album is a collection of photos relating to a single subject like a hike, usually untitled and without covers or related text, but identified with the author.)
- Tom felt that the website address should be published in every Hike Flash and any other form of club written or digital communication, and that we should take every opportunity to remind members that content includes the current Flash, as well as both event calendar and the printable hike schedule.

As part of this discussion (but out of order sequentially) Mike Miller affirmed that Hike Leaders should submit their Hike Flashes to Pat (i.e., via hikersnews.com), as a Word document, attached to an email. This will relieve Mike, or Pat, from having to “cut and paste” before creating the PDF that is posted to the website. He further noted that he can produce PDF’s that are suitable not only for Desktop PC/Laptop viewing, but also for viewing on “smart phones screens.”

Publicity

Tom suggested that we get on the weekly list of clubs that is published in the *Hot Springs Village Voice*, and the Board resolved to accomplish this.

Tom noted that there was some confusion as to whether he wore both hats of the Webmaster and Publicity positions, and if not, then the president should be appointing someone to fill the Publicity position. The Board agreed and confirmed that he

shoulders both responsibilities, but receives the administrative assistance of Pat Miller as publisher of the Hike Flash. Tom is the voting member, but Pat does not vote. Debbie indicated she would review the Bylaws to insure this is in compliance.

Hike Chair

Anita noted that she will step down as Hike Chair at the end of the hiking season in June.

She reminded the Board that despite the current inventory of 38 Hike Leaders, we still need to recruit. She pointed out that many hike leaders limit their assignments to the shorter Thursday or Saturday hikes, or to hikes with which they are familiar.

She wants to support the plans of Lake Ouachita State Park to celebrate the annual Arkansas Trails Day currently scheduled for May 30. She has little information on scheduled events for National Trails Day, other than it is to be held on June 6 and will continue to monitor the plans for both events. She suggested that OMH recognize National Trails Day by at least scheduling and publicizing a hike on that day.

Anita confirmed that she would schedule a hike schedule meeting in July or August, but she raised the issue of relieving Jim Gifford of posting the schedule to the website calendar if he declined to continue doing it.

Treasurer – Membership Chair

Jeannie reported that membership stood at 293, and included 38 Hike Leaders, 81 Lifetime members, and 39 who have completed the Ouachita Trail.

The club checking account balance is currently \$3995.84, which will be reduced by the \$270 just expended on the morning's Hike Leader Luncheon.

Jeannie stated that the club calendars did not sell well this year though discounts on the remainder allowed the program to finish approximately \$9 in the black. She said they just were hard to sell this year and felt the fund raising program had run its course. She indicated she did not want to do it again next year, but acknowledged that Rick may suggest an alternative program. The Board agreed to drop the fundraiser.

Jeannie indicated that, as required, the Board needs to review club membership dues and determine if they should remain the same or be raised. A motion was offered that club dues remain at \$5 per person. It was seconded and voted affirmatively.

Secretary – Historian

Rick acknowledged that many members may feel that the 8X11 wall calendars lacked functionality because the small day blocks didn't have much room to write it. The attractiveness lay in the club's ability to purchase at bulk pricing and offer the calendar for \$13. Larger 12X12 calendars sell for \$35 when produced on Shutterfly, and therefore, at half-off promotion price, might be purchased for \$17.50 plus tax. At least three calendars would have to be ordered to obtain free shipping.

Rick stated that he researched additional sites, such as Snap Fish and Picaboo, on which calendars could be constructed. While pricing on Snap Fish was favorable, flexibility of design was no better than Shutterfly, and it looked like the quality of the product was inferior. On the other hand, Picaboo offered quality and design flexibility, but the pricing, when purchased in quantities of 10, was equal to Shutterfly.

Rick suggested that he may, as a courtesy to members, elect to produce a 12X12 calendar next fall, but take pre-orders, at cost, so that a minimum order of 10 would guarantee the targeted \$17.50 per calendar. He further suggested that sales might increase if he offered to make sure that buyers get photos of themselves inserted.

It was suggested by the Board that if Rick decided to do calendars again, the above proposal be published in a special hike flash in September.

Vice President

Marilyn stated that Bo Lea will be the speaker for the March OMH meeting, and in May, Susan Adkins, Park Interpreter for Lake Ouachita State Park will be the featured speaker.

She stated that the Hot Springs Village Lake Cortez Pavilion has been reserved for the club's annual end of hiking season picnic on June 11. The Welcome Back picnic on September 10 will be held at Lake Ouachita State Park with the option of using their park headquarters meeting room in the event of inclement weather. Bobby Witherington will lead the hike that day.

The Garland County Library is unavailable for the OMH membership meeting scheduled for September 17. The Board agreed to hold the general meeting at Lake Ouachita State Park following the Welcome Back Hike on September 10, in lieu of September 17.

Marilyn stated she did not have a speaker for the November OMH meeting, but had leads that she would pursue.

Marilyn pointed out that the club Christmas party has been held in the Hot Springs Village Community Center for the past two years, and has generated no unfavorable comments to date. She asked if she should move to reserve the facility again. **A motion to reserve the HSV Community Center for the December 10 Christmas Party was made and seconded, and voted affirmatively.**

Marilyn stated that, as organizer, she was taking names of volunteers to man an OMH booth at the Hot Springs Village Golf and Recreation Exposition on February 23. Rick and Glenn offered to help.

New Business

A question was raised regarding who, at present, was monitoring email that goes to the hikersnews.com site. Mike Miller pointed out that in addition to Pat going into the site,

the president should be receiving the emails so that action can be taken or delegated if required.

Marilyn stated that as the assigned Hike Leader for the recently cancelled Little Blakely Flex Hike, she would take responsibility for rescheduling the hike. She will look at the next few Tuesdays in January or February as possible makeup days.

Glenn read a letter he received from the Ouachita Children's Home, Malvern, Arkansas, requesting volunteers to build a walking trail on the facility's grounds. Glenn asked the Board if this was a project it wanted to take on. The Board responded by tasking Glenn with researching the scope of the project with the Children's Home. **A motion was made and seconded to conduct inquiries to the Ouachita Children's Home regarding the scope of the requested trail construction, and voted affirmatively.** It was suggested that Glenn involve Bo Lea and Jim Gifford.

Rick noted that he and a group comprised of the Calhouns, Hills, Pat Miller and Jeannie Eichler recently traveled to Palo Duro Canyon, near Amarillo, Texas. All agreed that the canyon would make for a wonderful March overnight event for the club, but due to the day-long travel requirement, the group thought it wise to extend the event to five days. Two of the days would be for travel, two days for general hiking, and one optional day for a challenge hike. **The Board agreed and authorized the change in event format and schedule.** Rick was tasked with obtaining group rates for lodging and publishing a special hike flash as soon as possible.

Photos were taken of the newly elected Executive Board.

Conclusion

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Ericson

Rick Ericson
Secretary/Historian