

HMKC PAWPRINT NEWSLETTER

HELENA MONTANA KENNEL CLUB

President: Marion Erp

Vice President: Desiree Moffett

Newsletter Editor: Nancy Nicholson

NOVEMBER ISSUE 2017

Treasurer: Kathy Shuck

Secretary: Caroline Hudnall

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am hoping that as MANY of you as possible can make it to the Tuesday, Dec. 5th meeting at 6:30pm. I would like to set a time limit from 6:30-8:00pm.

I have abbreviated the Agenda so that we can have the majority of time to talk about the Final Survey results (below and sent separately) and I sincerely hope you can participate with your thoughts—and most importantly, your priorities for our Club's future.

Please look the Survey document over, notate what you would like to discuss, print it out and make a copy to bring with you and maybe we can get started on improving our Club morale and functions for 2018.

Marion, President

SECRETARY'S MINUTES

(Subject to approval)

HELENA MONTANA KENNEL CLUB

MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF NOVEMBER 7, 2017

Those present: Mary Blake, Jeannine Blaner, Adele Delp, Peggy Duezabou, Alice Elliott, Marion Erp, Janice Frisch, Caroline Hudnall, Deirde Kane, Catherine LeCours, Chris McGonigle, Desiree Moffett, Jean Norderud, Linda Owen, Jeanette Prevel, Kathy Shuck, and Judith Bohr as guest.

President opened the meeting with a call for approval of the October minutes.

Catherine moved and Mary 2nd and all approved.

Treasurer's report, Catherine gave the profit and loss statement. Mary Blake questioned the report and a discussion was held.

Vice President report: none

Secretary report: none

President's report: Marion gave a short summary of her report that was in the newsletter.

Photo Day, Marion gave the details and asked that members please distribute the flyer to people and places. A few people will be needed at 9AM to help. Marion read a report from Patty Mott regarding the use of the deposit and reimbursement forms.

Cluster meeting: Jeanette gave a report and advised because the profit was so small that there would be no split going to either club this year.

* Jeanette advised that she heard that the lack of entries was because of the fires and smoke plus the canine flu.

* Discussion was on the suggestion that we try to get a specialty for each year.

* Next year Connie will be the obedience chair and we need chairs for all the others.

* Caroline advised the members that former County Commissioner Mike Murray as a member of the Fairgrounds Board will work with the various organizations to help them with publicity.

* Jeanette advised that Gallatin Club will take on the conformation for the first two days. Obedience and Rally will stay the same.

Obedience: Caroline reported on the upcoming classes.

Diane will run the run thrus and the following are the dates: 1/13, 2/10, 3/10, and probably in April. We will need stewards and people from out of town help out most of the time.

Rally: Connie and Steve are doing Wednesday nights and the practices are with the new signs.

Agility Trials: We made over \$ 3,000., had great entries and had great feedback.

* The Judge for the next two years have been hired, the other big expense items are the fairgrounds expenses and AKC fees.

* Practices for Agility are on going at this time,

* New Jumps have been ordered .

Grant Committee: A grant of \$ 500.00 has been recommended to the Military and Canines Group in the Bitterroot area. It was suggested that we need some PR on this Grant. Jean moved and Alice 2nd, the motion was approved with one not approving.

Nominating Committee: Alice reported on the nominations: No one for President, Secretary, Susie Morley and Board member Janet Kosnik.

There was a discussion on the President position as Marion does not want to continue in that position.

Holiday party was discussed, Caroline will try to get ahold of Erik Sundquist who is the Ex. Chef at Carroll College and has been a prospective member of the club. Last year we had 60 people for dinner. Jean moved to spend \$ 1,000 for dinner, Catherine 2nd and it was approved with one that was against the motion.

New Business: Catherine advised that the 4-H Dog project would like the use of our building on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, from 3:30 to 6PM, January thru March for Agility, No April classes and the May class would be held outdoors.

Question came up about the 4-H bldg. and Jeanette gave a brief history of the bldg. and our Cluster, it has not been a good situation.

Alice moved to let Catherine hold the 4-H classes in our bldg., Catherine 2nd, this will be voted on at the December meeting.

The reading of Judith Bohr's application was held.

Jeanine reminded everyone regarding the title pins for the year.

Discussion on how many meetings per year is necessary and other questions that came up on the survey. After a lengthy discussion the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:

Caroline Hudnall, Secretary

BRAGS

NEXT MEETING AGENDA

Call the meeting to order.

Introduction of guests, if any.

No officer reports, unless there is an issue that must be cleared up.

No committee reports, but feel free to speak up if you have something important that must be taken care of.

Second reading and voting of application for membership.

Report of Nominating Committee of slate of officers, and call for nominations from the floor for President and one Board position.

Report from Alice regarding Susan Sperry's dog equipment per Janet Sperry's request for help.

Catherine's request for use of building for agility practice on alternate Sundays.

Holiday party plans, dates, times, where, when and who will be the planners

Discussion on Final Survey Results and directions for 2018. Please bring a copy to the meeting if possible.

Adjournment

Brag Box

SURVEY RESULTS

BLUEPRINT FOR 2018

Our next meeting is Tuesday, December 5. Since it is the last meeting I will preside at, we will have an abbreviated agenda specifically to discuss what's most important to us as a club. When you look at past agendas, most of the Committee Report information can be gleaned by asking someone or checking the website or checking the calendar on the website: www.helenamontanakennelclub.org .

Much of what we do at a club meeting can be taken care of via email, but that assumes everyone's email address is operational — which we update with your membership renewal application in January.

There ARE a few important items that we will have to discuss in December: voting in a new member, plans for our January Annual Meeting/Holiday Party, call for nominations from the floor for President and one Board member, and a few other odds and ends. I will have those listed on the Agenda. Hopefully in the future you will receive the agenda two weeks before the meeting (according to our bylaws), and the minutes one week before, with a revised agenda.

I am excited for the future of the club. The many excellent ideas listed here give us a direction; all we lack are the volunteers to implement some of them, one by one. The mechanics will be left to The New Administration: the new President and/or a slightly altered Board.

So, one of the main items we were trying to address was lack of attendance of current members at club meetings. There were all the usual environmental reasons: it was too cold, it was too dark, it was too difficult to get here when the weather was bad, you lived too far away to come regularly. Those things can't be changed, so we have to work on making the meetings more interesting than dirt, to overcome those negatives.

Some members have LONG memories. There were repeated comments about some of the past meetings that disintegrated into negative, disagreeable attacks that no one appreciated. I don't think that happened during the last year, because I stuck strictly to the Agenda, conducted the business of the club, got in and got out. If we manage to have opinions voiced and discussed which I hope we have in December, we MUST remain polite and listen to each other.

ON CLUB MEETINGS

Here are some of the suggestions about what would make the meetings more desirable to attend — we need to hear what YOU want:

Fewer meetings. This will be up to The New Administration, but flexible meetings 6-8 times a year is feasible, cutting out the slower summer months, or cold/dark winter months if we can move the Annual meeting. Upcoming meetings can be announced via email. This will involve a change in the by-laws, and while we are at it, we might consider a change of by-laws to change the month of our Annual Meeting to a warmer month.

Less formal meetings on occasion: set up some tables, eat pizza while we have the meeting.

Have occasional speakers/presentations/demonstrations on other types of dog events such as the new AKC scent work program, new obedience rules, tracking, barn hunt, trick training, therapy work, demonstrations on what a Novice or Rally run would look like, several very short “talks” on conformation stewarding and what the ribbons mean. We have knowledgeable people both in the club and in the community that could give a brief, half-hour overview of a variety of events we are not familiar with

. I have already found a volunteer in the community that would be happy to give a brief demonstration on scent work, and another demo on trick training, that she does at her training facility. (I’ve had varying opinions on when to have such speakers: before the meeting to be more courteous to the presenter, or after the meeting to allow those not interested in that particular topic to go home.) A program committee could decide on such logistics.

Find speakers on general dog behavior, dog psychology or health-related topics or grooming. Again, a program committee could do the searching, so that one person doesn’t have to come up with all the ideas.

Asking for volunteers for a particular activity rather than arm-twisting members, and asking for names of possible people that a volunteer could contact to help her. Pick up the phone and CALL members to ask. Another suggestion: all major positions for any of our events could be run by co-chairs to spread the work and lighten the load. So if you were thinking about a particular job, think of someone you know you can work with, and ask them to co-chair.

Ask members with children and grandchildren if they would like a place for them to do their homework, or otherwise set up an activity table in the front of the building while we conduct a meeting.

Prior to each of our main events, run a series of short training sessions on stewarding for conformation, obedience, rally and agility. If members were more familiar with what was expected, they would be more inclined to volunteer.

Have a fun night of skits and funny stories. Have someone play the dog that makes intentional mistakes and have the membership find the errors. Play “can you top this” and have people tell their funniest dog story or ring experience.

Provide training for potential instructors, to include videos, etc. Many folks might like to teach but don’t know where to start. Please let us know if you would like to instruct or would be more likely to become an instructor if you had more training.

ON GETTING AND KEEPING NEW MEMBERS

Another major theme that came through loud and clear was the need for a good mentorship program, and that we needed guidelines as to what was expected if we sponsored a new member. Follow-up phone calls and emails help to keep new

members involved with the club; also asking them to help in a small way with specific events without overwhelming them, would help ease them into club activities.

Sponsors/mentors could follow up with them regularly

There were many suggestions for reaching out into the community to increase our publicity to reach individuals who would be interested in joining us. These suggestions are year-round endeavors — they don't all have to be done at once, or quickly.

Ask for a volunteer or establish a publicity committee to develop and distribute an interesting informational brochure on our club, to be placed at vet clinics, pet and feed stores, boarding kennels, grooming studios; ask the humane society to place one inside their adoption packets.

Keep the publicity going on social media like Helena Classified for Pets, the HMKC Facebook page, our on-line website. This could be accomplished by the same person or committee as above, dedicated to just this task. The bylaws allow for the Board to form a committee for specific purposes, such as membership, for example.

In terms of increasing our visibility to the community, this would take some brainstorming as to how to get the message out. One suggestion was put ourselves out on window displays, but I don't know where — perhaps we could talk about it? Other thoughts were having an Open House or conducting a fundraiser showcasing the various activities we do, sort of like the March Match we used to have? I have a volunteer who would be willing to help with a fun day for community education to show people all the things we can do with our dogs — and give discounted memberships to those interested in our classes.

Have community meet & greets and take it on the road to nursing homes — I have a volunteer interested in starting something like this.

Make more of an effort to reach out to youngsters, our future after all. Connect with 4-H, Boy and Girl Scouts and other youth groups that we know about. Discussion? Contact other kennel clubs and see what they do to attract and maintain members — this would only take a single individual dedicating themselves to contacting surrounding kennel clubs in the state.

We would have to keep in mind that other communities have greater populations than ours, which makes a difference in numbers we can recruit.

Can we host a microchip or vaccination clinic? We saw that the recent photo shoot we conducted brought into the building a fair number of people, and the same could be done for microchipping. A veterinarian would have to be contacted, of course.

How about a garage sale one weekend of all of the dog stuff we have collected over the years? One man's treasure..... and all that. This could be held with or without an invitation to the general public to come out and see what our club is about and to get cheap dog equipment.

ON ENCOURAGING MEMBERS TO WORK AT OUR EVENTS

The survey emphasized the increased help that was needed for the September cluster as our main money maker, but the same questions could be asked about our other events.

How do we get people primarily interested in conformation or obedience/rally, for that matter, to come out and help with our agility trials? The usual answer is that aside from key positions, agility runs itself via volunteer exhibitors, but new and old members might enjoy learning some of the smaller jobs as they get more comfortable with the whole scene.

And of course agility set-up and take-down requires considerable physical labor that we have addressed in the past by hiring temp workers, or recruiting Carroll College students and others. There were a few members who stressed that their backs could no longer do heavy lifting, that we were all aging out, and that if physical strength were needed for ANY of our events, it should be hired out.

But back to the September cluster. The same point as above pertains to the organizers of the cluster — there are so many details to take care of that they don't make a point of reaching out for help. Calls for help need to be made earlier before it becomes crisis time, so that those who work can make arrangements to take time off. And when volunteers are found, they must feel appreciated for their efforts, not rudely treated.

But the larger question remains: why are so few of our conformation members helping with our cluster show? Perhaps discussion of what the problem is and reaching out to them, can make these members part of the solution. We also need to follow up with calls when arrangements are made for individuals to help or steward. And one person mentioned she had volunteered to steward and was turned down as not needed. Another issue: could we give trial chairs gas cards for the considerable traveling to and from they have to do in order to meet with the Fairgrounds staff, get needed supplies, etc.

Opinion was pretty universal that we NOT further penalize those with key positions by restricting whether they can show their dogs. This may work in places that have frequent shows, but not in our area where qualifying legs and breed points are so much harder to come by.

There were some suggestions that perhaps we needed to limit existing privileges to those who work and volunteer. Event chairs would turn in a list of their workers at the end of the year for the following year's privileges. Use of the building, free practices, holiday dinner would only be given to those who help at the club's main events. This is a rather negative direction to take, and might only serve to drive even more members away from the club, but it was a thought that was voiced so I included it.

Most felt that members should freely volunteer their stewarding services, but we could pay non-members. Once upon a time I remember we paid non-members \$40 for half a

day, \$80/day for stewarding at our shows — whatever happened to that idea? It wouldn't do us any favors towards our bottom line financially, but would for sure get us stewarding help. Or alternatively, would the membership be willing to make a financial contribution towards one or two paid positions to make them more attractive, and so that the funds would not be taken from the general club but rather funded by private donations?

Other incentives mentioned: getting a free entry for one dog for one day, although this might become a bookkeeping nightmare. Which positions do we pay: show chairs, trial chairs, obedience chairs, rally chairs, hospitality chairs, stewarding chairs....?? How do we compensate those that work but are not showing a dog?

Another suggestion: come up with a merit system, a chart that lists the different jobs the club needs help with, where you check off what you've helped with, and turn the list in at the end of the year to earn points towards various privileges, such as reduced or free class fees, a free entry. Spokane does this, I believe, and it's an extensive list. The points are graded in importance: baking brownies would get you 1 or 2 points, being trial chair 10. It is based on an honor system, but someone would first have to make up this list.

Suggestions were made to distribute information on the cluster or anything else via quick and short emails so as to keep everybody informed about what's going on when and where. Be sure to keep the club secretary updated with your email addresses when your membership renewal comes around.

Although the question was asked on the survey about distributing this information on the website, I and others had second thoughts — the website is open to the public and the information shared here is probably better left internally amongst us. So I'm scratching that idea. I am distributing this document as an attachment via email, and ask that as many of you as possible come to the December 5 meeting to discuss as much as we can get done, and if you have a printer at home, please print out a copy and bring it with you. My hope is that you read the document and if you have strong feelings about one or two items, you notate them for discussion at the meeting.

If we have fewer meetings during the year, your Board will probably be meeting more and taking a stronger position at directing where the club is going — and remember, most Board meetings would be open to the general membership if you wanted to come. One of the Board's first tasks that we don't have to consider right at the moment is changing the bylaws to allow for fewer general meetings. Here's what the bylaws say: Subject to the approval of the American Kennel Club, these Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special meeting called for the purpose, but the proposed amendments must be embodied in the call for any such meeting and mailed to each member at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of such meeting.

Since our holiday party is in January (assuming it's a go), the Board may be able to get this process started in February — as you can see, it would take a mailing, a vote at a special or regular meeting, and then final approval of the AKC.

After THAT, if the membership is so inclined we could also change the bylaws regarding our annual meeting in January so that we don't have to conduct our business during the coldest months.

Annual meeting

The annual meeting shall be held in the month of January at which directors and officers shall be elected according to Section 3 of the Article. They shall take office immediately upon the conclusion of the election. Each retiring officer shall turn over to his/her successor in office all properties and records relating to that office within thirty (30) days after the election.

Final thoughts: good luck to The New Administration and to you. Together we can make it work, if everyone does a small part.

Marion Erp

2017 President, HMKC