

**Western Field Ornithologists Board of Directors
Board of Directors Conference Call
Wednesday, May 3, 2017 1pm – 3:52pm**

Minutes prepared by Liga Auzins Wurster, *Rec. Sec'y*.

Board Members present: Tom Blackman, *Pres.*; Kurt Leuschner, *Vice Pres.*; Suzanne Carota, *Treas./Membership Sec'y*; Liga Auzins Wurster, *Rec. Sec'y*; Dave Quady, *Past Pres.*; Jon Dunn, Kimball Garrett, Daniel D. Gibson, Karen Havlena, Larry Modesitt, Diane Rose, Frances Oliver, Steve Rottenborn, Dave Shuford

Guest: Phil Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds, WB*

Board Members absent: John Garrett, Homer Hansen, Susan Kelly

MINUTES

1:04pm Meeting called to order, welcome, roll.

Minutes from 8 February 2017 Conference Call accepted unanimously via motion to approve by Kimball and seconded by Frances.

Our Annual Board Meeting in Pueblo, CO will be on Thursday, August 17, 2017 from 11:00am to 4pm in the Marriott Hotel Board Room.

LIST OF WFO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MOTIONS (2007 – 2017)

As per Tom's request Liga put together the WFO Board of Directors Motions (2007 – 2017) which was distributed to the Board. The possibility of listing this on our website was discussed and was tabled until the annual board meeting in Pueblo, CO held on August 17th.

1:14pm **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Budget Report: The financial reports have been sent to board members. The March 2017 report shows that in the first 3 months we were quiet financially. We are ahead of budget due to membership renewals. Everything looks good. Nothing of significance happened in April.

Membership Report: We decided at the last board meeting that we were not going to send copies of issue one of **WB** to anyone who had not renewed and had been a member for less than 5 years. There were 200 people at the end of March who had not renewed. About a third were members for more than 5 years so they got an envelope with a renewal form. The other two-thirds did not get a copy of **WB**. Of the 200 currently about 20 have decided to renew so we are still down about 180 members at year end which continues to be a concern. Since January 1st, we have had 74 new members, but of this number 34 were gifts from WFO members so the question is how long will they be members; 20 of the 74 were students who joined at a \$10 level, which makes them eligible to apply for scholarships; 54 of the 74 were all reduced rate memberships. Gifts pay \$20 and students pay \$10. There were actually 20 who paid full price to join in the first quarter. It is a considerable drop in membership. Suzanne will send the confidential list of non-renewals around again so members of the Board can call some of these people. Two of our existing members decided to become Life members. Tom thanks Kurt for giving out a great number of gift memberships. Homer has a good list of scholarship applicants and they all have memberships.

Suzanne requests that everyone do their gift memberships in December, January or February, if possible, so we can cut down on mailing costs. It would be helpful if the person giving the gift membership could get a verbal agreement that the recipient would commit to renewing the membership after the initial year is completed.

The scholarship recipients have put together a website, California Young Birders Group by Elisa Yang, Ryan and Diego. They are getting together and going on field trips from which they post results including pictures. They visited Phil at the San Diego Museum of Natural History as one of their field trips. Maybe WFO can outreach to them and help them in some way. Perhaps they can be volunteers for WFO. It would be nice to outreach to other states to seek out other young birder groups.

Action Item: Tom will send Elisa a note asking if they can meet in Pueblo (if she is attending). Or ask her to make a presentation in front of the Board in Pueblo. Tom will also send out their links so the Board can look at it.

Investments Report: We have a Cal First CD of about \$10,000 that will mature on June 9th and Suzanne would like to roll it over and combine. She would like to continue our laddering process project. We have three accounts all over \$40,000 that will come due in 3 successive years.

Motion to roll over CD #100005 made by Larry, seconded by Jon and passes unanimously.

General Funding and Tracking: *Trends and Traditions: Avifaunal Change in western North America and the eastern Pacific* publication and other publications need to be tracked. After reading the 10 years of motions and approvals, we need to come up with some kind of agreement on how we are going to track funds for specific publications projects. We made some agreements in the past to combine the Mike San Miguel Fund with the general publications fund. Now we are getting contributions towards ***Trends and Traditions***. We are getting specific contributions for various publications and we have to respect the specificity of the donation. We need some agreement and it should not be buried in the greater publications fund. We do want to abide by donors' wishes but hopefully not clog up our decision making. As we discuss the letter shortly, we should take these points into consideration as to how to tell a donor to make their specific donation.

Action Item: Finance committee to decide on how tell members to to specifically donate.

1:32pm FINANCE COMMITTEE

Patron Report: We discussed this at the last meeting and there was not unanimity of views expressed then or within the Finance Committee when we discussed it. After that Dave Q. put together a couple of questions which he sent out to the Board; the answers to that were summarized subsequent to the Feb. 8th meeting in an e-mail he sent out on the 19th. There were two points on which there was no opposition. Benefits would be the same as Life Members which include early registration for conferences and trips in addition the opportunity to join the Board in social events that we schedule in the future, i.e., the gathering at Zzyzx in October 2015. The second point was that the current 5 Patrons would be grandfathered.

Discussion: Dave Q. wanted to get this motion approved and then turn it back to the Finance Committee to decide the amount.

Dan moves that "A Patron denotes a generous benefactor; it is not a membership category. One becomes a Patron by donating a substantial sum, the amount yet to be determined, to

WFO or to one of its established funds. The required amount does not depend on the donor's current membership status, i.e., member or non-member or Life member. Patrons receive the same benefits as Life members, i.e., early registration for conferences or trips, and will be invited to special social events organized by the Board normally exclusive to the Board. The current Patrons are grandfathered into these benefits." This motion was seconded by Karen and passes unanimously.

Jon would like this to be part of the minutes. 'This Patron thing is a pretty special status and it indicates a degree of interest in the organization. I would like that people who decide to become Patrons have a conversation with our President and ask them things, i.e., like would you like a copy of our minutes? This might encourage them to become players even though they are not on the Board. I would like for there to be an outreach that we are really interested in their opinions of things. This doesn't have to be part of the motion, but there should be an understanding by the Board. Follow-up interactions are very important. It should be the President or someone that he designates. At the August meeting there should be some protocols on how to follow up on it.' Perhaps Tom with others can draft such a communication and send it out. Except for an acknowledgment from the membership Sec'y., that is all that the Patrons have ever received, so receiving a letter from the President is a nice idea.'

Jon moved that the amount to become a Patron is a minimum of \$1500. Motion seconded by Diane and passes unanimously.

Per Jon: 'The President and others should keep being involved with these people and tell them what WFO is up to. If people drop \$1500 that they get very little for, keeping them informed about fundraising and things, becomes very important because these people are potentially big donors for some other project. Keeping them involved in Board business is an important concern. We need to get this on the website properly.'

Action Item: Dave Q. volunteers to write up the information for the website and the newsletter that goes out with the next **WB**.

Dan wonders if it would be helpful if on the last page of **WB** where we say 'Membership dues for individual institutions including subscription, Life, etc.' If we remove Patron \$1000 and replace with 'Enquire if you are interested in becoming a Patron.' so that it is completely segregated from the list of dues of the other categories. We will have to change that last page.

Action Item: Revision of Patron description in **WB**. by Dan and Suzanne.

Jon made a motion that payments for the Patron level can be done in one or two payments as long as they are within twelve months and benefits do not realize until the last payment is made. If they never complete their payments, ultimately you would thank them for their donation. Kimball seconds the motion which passes unanimously.

Fundraising for *Trends and Traditions: Avifaunal change in western North America and the eastern Pacific* and future monographs:

Report: Report on what we have accomplished and what we hope to accomplish. We are doing well, even though we are moving slowly. It takes time to develop just one particular possible donor, i.e. organization or company. We will be getting our money but it takes longer than one thinks. Suzanne has been receiving some donations. After Dave S. talked to Point Blue today they pledged \$2,000 towards ***Trends and Traditions***. Many organizations have not been approached, i.e. Sierra

Club, The Nature Conservancy, so if anyone has any connections that would be helpful in trying to reach them as Dave S. did with Point Blue. We have two members from the Board, Diane Rose and Tom Blackman have graciously stepped forward to help us out. Diane is going to speak tomorrow night at the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society. Tom has spoken to one or two groups and he is developing connections to a big energy company in San Diego.

Discussion: We need to talk about what professional fundraisers bring up all the time. Some organizations, i.e., *Giving for Good*, are constantly saying to us, 'Make sure all of the Board members contribute monetarily to the active project.' Please support the project so when we go to somebody and ask for a donation, we can say the full Board is behind the monographs project. Suzanne is tracking these donations.

Action Item: It was requested that the entire Board send checks to the Mike San Miguel Publication Fund.

Action Item: Dave Q. and Suzanne and the Finance Committee will discuss specific language on how the donations will be monitored.

The Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett letter sent to the membership.

Report: The Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett letter soliciting donations was sent to the Board this morning with two versions, one being an older version prior to input from several people and the second letter is the current working edition.

Dave S. explains that what we did with **BSSC**, **RBC**, and **WB**, will be continued with **Trends and Traditions**. It is well worth it to get high quality copyediting. Also in the budget is for Tim Brittain to do the layout which is considerable work and we don't know where we could get that for free. These are basic costs of publishing. Phil will be doing the copyediting for **Trends and Traditions**.

The edited version of the letter will include reference to what some of the actual publications costs are, i.e. copyediting. Also it will continue to show how much money we have in the fund to show transparency to the membership and that these publications cost quite a bit. The transparency issue seems to be controversial.

Action Item: Kimball and Jon will send a final draft of the letter to Tom who will distribute it to the Board and after receiving comments send it out as an insert with the next issue of **WB**.

2:12pm PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Western Birds (WB): Report: We are very far along with 48(2) with six manuscripts online plus review of all of these which are already typeset with the exception of the book review, The expected page count will be 80. Peter LaTourrette is going out of town so we made sure the covers were finalized before he left. We should be on track for having 48(2) out by the end of May. Looking forward, we have two additional manuscripts accepted and presumably will be published in 48(3). We have six manuscripts in review and six others that have been returned to the authors for revision in the past year on which we are awaiting the author's response to the review. We have 17 manuscripts submitted in 2017 of which one was rejected and one was withdrawn by the author. That represents an uptick in our submission rate so that helps overcome last year's lull a bit, but nevertheless we should never be complacent.

Action Item: Always encourage your colleagues and anyone who is doing interesting ornithology to contribute.

State Records Committees paying page charge has been a contentious issue in the past. All of them get our standard form regardless. The Arizona Report is going to be in 48(2). Gary Rosenberg had a creative idea, which is very 21st century, was a "Go Fund Me" account on the internet. Within just a few days with about a dozen contributors he raised the \$1100. which met the page charges of \$30 a page for that Arizona Report. This could be something that could be suggested to other states when they have their reports or even other special projects of WFO.

Discussion: Steve responds that this is something they will definitely talk about in the CBRC because it is a good way to raise funds for it. For a couple of the CBRC reports we have paid all or nearly all of the page charges from contributions, from Committee members, and donors, and we would like to continue to do that to make sure we are able to cover our page charges. This is something I can look into and discuss with our members given that we have another report that we will be submitting to Phil in the next month or so. We will make sure to figure out how to best pay for all the page charges.

For the Nevada Report Phil would like some assistance from someone on the Board who is more sophisticated with social media than him. Then craft a message and send it to that State Board and they could send it out to the appropriate list server for that state. Jon thinks we really need someone from the Board to work with Phil and then work with the particular State Records Committee as these things arise.

Action Item: A volunteer from the Board is needed to help Phil with the 'Go Fund Me' project.

Although 'Go Fund Me' charges 7.9% it seems to be the hot way for everybody to raise money. It is out there and is the most visible. There will always be other things that cost less money but they do not make it easy to utilize.

2:38pm **Trends and Traditions: Avifaunal change in western North America and the eastern Pacific:**

Report: Dave S. has fully accepted over half of the 25 papers that have been submitted and they are ready for final copy editing. There are a number of others that are pretty close to that stage as well. There are ones that we are sending out for a second round of changes. They are going to take a bit longer but when the copyediting starts and as soon as these manuscripts are ready for layout, they can go to Tim Brittain. The few papers that are still out will not hold up our schedule. We don't have an exact publication timeline, because there are a lot of unknowns as in the the above mentioned steps. We are still on track to get published in 2017. Dan has been going over all the literature cited for all the manuscripts. Ken Able will take one final look at all of them. We have three co-editors and we have been making good progress of late. Jon and Kimball will mention the publishing date in their letter.

Status of *Studies in Western Birds*:

Report: Ken Able has been working with Jay Shepard on the LeConte's manuscript, but unfortunately he is not on this call.

California State List:

Report: Steve has a mock-up right now of the California State List. We want to provide a couple different options on how it might look. Sometime within the near future he will be able to send it to the Publications Committee and other interested folks to look over. It will reflect this year's AOU (AOS) supplement. If the AOS supplements are not until July, it would be good to have this available this summer right after the AOS supplements come out.

Discussion: Manuscripts published in **WB** will not reflect the new AOS supplements. In **WB** we start the new AOS supplements at the beginning of the year for the sake of the index.

The CBRC updates the State List on an ongoing basis. Steve does not want to wait for the new year before publishing the State List as it will be inaccurate in 7 mos.

2:47pm ANNUAL CONFERENCES

42nd Annual WFO Conference, Pueblo, Colorado, August 16 to August 20, 2017

Report: We are on schedule with the timeline that Ed P. put out. The announcement was made on May 7th that all members can sign up for field trips. The message went out to CFO members that they check in on the 7th as well. We added a vendor box to Regonline. As soon as the information goes out to membership, we will send out a note to vendors. Homer has selected the scholarship recipients. Tom and Bill put together a letter to field trip leaders. The notice explains to field trip leaders on how to register and how to sign up for what events and how they claim their piece of merchandise and the announcement that we are going to have a pre-trip meeting for those that are in town on Wednesday night at 6pm at the Brueshaus across the street from the convention center. After which we we will follow up with Kurt's 18 point field trip leader duties which is going out today. All CFO members have been notified of the link to register on Sunday. It is the same link that we passed on to WFO members.

The hotel situation in Pueblo is that we had blocked our rooms at the Marriott for \$100 per night from the 16th to the 20th. In addition, Springhill Suites are willing to stand in should the need arise which is across the street on Marriott property but has a different owner. We have oversold our block and additional rooms are available if needed. Suzanne has set aside the rooms for the scholarship folks, but in the case for rooms that we comp for workshop leaders, moderators, speakers, awards recipients, we should reimburse them for the block rate plus the POT tax. They didn't book their rooms until late and they paid 2-3 times as much as our block prices. So we should encourage them to make their reservations now. There are usually about a dozen rooms we end up paying for. When Diane sent the notices to the people doing the workshops and to moderators, Nathan Pieplow, and the keynote speaker, Lauren Benedict, she said the rooms were \$110. So we just absorb the awards people. Lauren Benedict just had a major article in *Birding*.

The silent auction proceeds were controversial last year. We agreed at the Board meeting that these monies would be split 50/50 between the Scholarship Fund and the Publications Fund. Before we go to Pueblo, Suzanne would like to resolve any controversies about where the funds go. The Publications Committee does all the work for the silent auction so they should say where the money goes, but we should get some input on that.

Dan made a motion that the monies from the silent auction go to the Publication Fund, Jon seconds, and passes unanimously.

The decision regarding the white color of the T-shirt went through at least 4-5 people. The nature of the artwork is such that it cannot be put on anything but a white background otherwise the colors get muted out. The arrangement we have with John is outstanding and we should continue to use him in the future. Tom has the painting and is going to get it framed and take it to Pueblo where it will be part of the silent auction. We will display it on the registration table so people can look at it.

Science Sessions: Steve has gotten a lot of interest from folks who want to submit abstracts. A lot of professors want their students to submit abstracts

3:05pm 43rd Annual Conference 2018, Ventura, CA, September 26-30 2018

Report: We have the contract in front of us with many revisions. Tom and Frances have been working very hard on that and Dave Q. has pitched in. In January, Frances, Karen and Tom went down to Ventura and toured three prospective hotels which were presented to us by the Con/Vis Bureau there. We got a response to our RFPs which were variable but consistent in some of the pricing. We chose the Marriott as we thought it was the best in terms of the venue itself, physical layout, proximity, number of rooms over in the Crown Plaza and the Sheraton. They came back with a very interesting contract which we had never seen before. They said all the workshop rooms and reception area, the ballroom, the place we are going to have the reception will not be charged. We negotiated the room rack rate to \$140, the starting number was well north of \$160. Some of the other competitors were at \$160 plus. We also negotiated the parking fee. The parking lot is run by a concessionaire who wants to charge \$10 plus a day, but we got it for \$10 for four days. They wanted to charge for WiFi but we got that for free. This is the pricing issue that we are struggling with: since they are not charging for the meeting rooms and ballroom, etc., they say the food has a minimum of \$20,000. If we sell banquet, box lunches, breakfast, reception, of over \$20,000 then there is no charge for the rooms. If we sell less food then we have to make up the difference. If we sell \$18,000 worth of food then we have to make up the difference of \$2,000 with management service charge and sales tax on it. Historically going back to our past conferences (2010 – 2016) which Frances put together, the most we ever paid for food is just short of \$14,000. If you look at the individual pricing for the food, it is high. The pricing for the box lunches is \$17.00 and if you add the tax it comes to \$22.00. In our opinion that is high for a box lunch. We are trying to negotiate this minimum down as far as we can. On the other side of the coin, we charge a registration fee of approximately \$110. We are looking at 250 – 275 participants, so that is \$25-27,000. We look at field trips which charge \$15.00 - \$20.00. So that will cover a lot of shortfall if our food costs are less than \$20,000. We are also looking at field trips where we are going to have the advantage of having boats on Thurs. and Sun., so instead of having the usual 12 people, we can put 50-100 on there. As in San Diego, this has a tremendous effect on the profit. Those boats are making us \$5,000 each. We are trying to get the Marriott to get their food prices down. Tom has done an outstanding job in negotiating the best price. Trying to run a conference in Southern California coastal counties just is expensive. Suzanne wanted to look at the big picture. We are projecting a break even in Pueblo this year and we really need the even year California Conferences to make money. We should be aware of this for 2018 and we also should consider it in selecting locations going forward. Prices keep going up and if you look historically, the prices are astronomical. A mention of raising registration prices has been discussed but we don't know right now. Jon asks that for people who have their meals at the Marriott who are WFO participants, is there a code that can be given or some sort of indication that would count towards our total food bill? This should be a negotiating point since if this goes through then we inform our registrants.

Action Item: Tom will contact the Marriott regarding the possibility of counting meals at the Marriott toward the food cost charge of \$22,000.

There is another point that Dave Q. brought up. The fact that when we negotiated the down payment they wanted it up front, but we said not until next year which was fine with them. The first day of the conference they want to charge you the full amount and Suzanne wants to pay with a check rather than a credit card. If we pay by credit, they charge 2.5%, which should be taken off from our bill. The Ventura contract includes a free room for every 80 rooms, so we will probably end up with 8-10 free rooms. Suzanne would like some agreement on what to do with those free rooms. We can discuss this at our next meeting in Pueblo.

Scholarship Committee: Report: Homer is unavailable today. He did send us a list of recipients. Homer is basically planning the same format as Fortuna. At the youth reception there will be a few of us on Thurs. night and we are all set for that. Thanks to Homer for graciously implementing what the Board decided.

Craig Award Recommendation: Report: The Awards Committee recommends honoring Catherine Waters with the Craig Award. The Committee had a discussion some months ago and there was uniform agreement that she deserves the award. She should receive the award when she is not currently on the Board and that is going to be the case. She richly deserves it for her contributions that go back to the Conference in Orange County many, many years ago and so many projects going forward. Ken Able sent out a real nice synopsis of her history of WFO.

Dan moves that we give the Craig Award to Catherine Waters in 2017, seconded by Diane and passes unanimously.

Tom will call Cat and tell about the Craig Award. We will bring one of the paintings for the meeting. There are other benefits that go along with the Craig Award and the Board should review them.

3:25pm Nominating Committee:

Report: We have three openings and we have five or six candidates lined up. Kurt is trying to get the bios by mid-June. Dave arranged bios from Wendy Beers and John Harris. We are working on getting a bio from Matt Baumann from New Mexico. Catherine Hamilton, we think will be nominated. Both Ken Able and Shawnee Finnegan will be nominated. We have two Board members going off, both Frances and Dan are terming out. Steve wants to come back for another term. Susan Kelly is not coming back for a second term, so we have a total of three openings. One of those openings is a half term. Technically there are four openings, including Steve's position. Last year we decided to draw straws for the half-term position. In preceding years, the person with the least number of votes got the one term opening. We favor looking at the resulting Board composition and longevity and ask yourself a number of questions and let that guide you in deciding who will get the limited term. Kurt will invite all of them to the Board meeting. If there are other people to nominate, please let Kurt know that soon.

Other Business:

As registrar on the WFO site Diane sees a lot of people frustrated because either they didn't get early notification because they are Life members or they don't know when they can because when they go to the site it doesn't allow them to register. Life members are supposed to register early. It has to do with the IPS on their individual site that does not let the message through. They have to contact their service people and have them look at it. It has nothing to do with us. We can put a message on the WFO Conference page saying, "If you are a Life Member and have not received the link by a certain date, please contact X, Y, and Z (the registration person who can send them the link.). We cannot open registration now on the registration page until we have gone through the

Life Members and regular members because that web page is open to the world and therefore if you want to give first dibs to Patrons and Life Members you have to do it on the individual e-mail system. Sometimes it gets caught in spam. We have been dealing with this for 5-6 years. Part of the problem is that the response system that Ed P. uses, the database is not consistent with Suzanne's database. Therefore, we need to reconcile that list first. The other issue is that we only have 200 Life Members. Suzanne could theoretically send them an e-mail from her e-mail list and send it through g-mail saying if you don't receive instructions by a certain date please let me know.

Action Item: Suzanne and Ed P. need to reconcile their databases so they are uniform.

Field Trips: Report: 2017: Kurt has been in contact with the various leaders, i.e., Phil with Columbia; Coachella Valley tour on on Sept. 21-24th 2017.

Report: 2018: Sierra summer trips in 2018; Cuba in November; Kimball is going to do a tour of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Raymond VanBuskirk may still do the rosy finch trip to New Mexico in January 2018.

If anyone wants to lead trips please contact Kurt. Suzanne can collect the money perhaps through Regonline.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Jon has decided that WFO needs a policy of no smoking. On the Field Trip Leaders Guidelines that we produced years ago, Rule Number 12, is No Smoking. It goes to the field trip leaders who are supposed to give that information to the participants. We need to make that plain at the registration stage, put it on our website and the sign-ups.

If agreed to, the no smoking policy would, allow us to come up with a statement on the website and on the last page of registration agreeing to a number of conditions that are imbedded in Regonline. The question is how do we put the wording on the terms of agreement that does not get us in trouble on any level, i.e. smokers who would complain.

Action Item: Send to Francis wording on how to announce no smoking policy on Regonline.

Jon made a motion that all WFO activities are completely non-smoking whether indoors or outdoors, seconded by Dan and passes unanimously.

Tom thanks everyone who have put in a lot of work in to this Pueblo meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Jon, seconded by Diane and passes unanimously.