

## Report from the Board of Directors, 2015

It is with great pleasure that the Board submits a summary of our activities to the membership. The Board may have looked quiet on the surface, but it was working very hard behind the scenes.

We conducted routine business, of course, such as reviewing a proposal for a dues increase. After consideration, we did approve increasing the annual dues by \$5 for individuals and families, while leaving all other fees the same. This is the first dues increase in a very long time, and our belief is that this will contribute to sound financial footing for the organization.

We also opted to not conduct a year-end audit of the books this year, due to the very thorough audit and review conducted after the untimely passing of Ellen Rusconi-Black and the transition to a subsequent treasurer. For this coming year, however, expect a very detailed audit to occur in the first half.

One of the most enjoyable moments we had was approving new Life Members, which Chris will announce on our behalf at an appropriate moment.

And then....there was the work.

We started reviewing the By-Laws in May. While there are a few minor suggestions we have for the membership for future consideration in 2016, our attention was captured by some gaps in the rules and general operating procedures.

These gaps led the Board to team up with NEBCA Executive (aka "officers") for several months of hard work.

As a result, four new rule areas and processes have been developed. We believe that these essentially document our already existing best practices, but now make them clear for everyone. We also believe that there is little or no extra burden on participants or trail hosts.

You'll notice that these documents are aligned with the USBCHA Rules and have similar wording, but realize that they are not identical. The language and processes are greatly simplified and worded to fit our regional organization.

There are copies of these documents available here at the annual meeting for you. However, in summary:

--- Humane Rules for Trials. Five statements concerning livestock management and having cooling water available for dogs.

--- Standard of Conduct. Four statements describing the expected conduct for participants in NEBCA events. In essence, respectful and polite behavior and good sportsmanship is expected.

--- Grievance Process. This one is a bit longer, and reflects an area where NEBCA had no guidelines. The Board will be honest and say that this gap left us in a bind this year, and it also left the membership in a confusing situation. With this process in place, it will be clear who does

what, when, and how. Rest assured, this will not usurp the authority of the Trial Manager, the Novice Committee, or the Open Committee. --- Lastly, a broad Release and Waiver has been created for all NEBCA events. This is the one area that is almost a direct copy from the USBCHA Rules. It does NOT need to be added to any trial entry form, but it will exist on our web site. One of the biggest benefits of this document is that it describes what NEBCA sanctioned trials and events are, and who participants are.....definitions which support the Standard of Conduct, the Grievance Process, and other NEBCA documents.

The Board, with the support of the executive, has unanimously concurred to adopt these rules in order to support the business and operation of NEBCA (which is one of the Board's purposes). These documents will be added to our web page shortly, and will be available to both members and non---members to refer to and use.

And, despite the work that has gone into these and our confidence that they are very workable.....they probably aren't perfect. If, after studying them for a bit, you have suggestions for improvement => by all means drop a note to the Board Chairman for the Board to consider.

With that, the Board would like to thank all of the members for the opportunity to serve them. We look forward to another good year!

Best regards,

Joyce Geier, Chairman, on behalf of the Board