CALIFORNIA GOURD SOCIETY
Board Meeting Highlights - January 10, 2015

Board Members Present: Barbara Rippetoe, President; Pamela Argo, Director at Large; Peggy Blessing, Secretary; Christina Ch rivia, Treasurer; Sue Gouig, Director of Northern Programs; Janet Greene, Vice President; Sherry Hunga-Moore, Director of Southern Programs; Susan Sullivan, Director at Large   Others Present: Mary Bliss, Editor/Golden Gourd; Olive Moore, Secretary Candidate; and Sylvia Nelson, Past President

Board Members Absent: JoAnn Clark, Vice President/Membership

With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 9:20am by President Barbara Rippetoe at the Lamp Liter Inn meeting room in Visalia, California. After reading the CGS mission statement, Barbara welcomed Secretary candidate Olive Moore.

Secretary’s Report
There being no objections or changes, the Minutes of the January 4 and 5, 2014, board meetings will be filed as distributed. It was noted that, although authorized during the 2014 meeting, Sue Gouig and Janet Green declined the option to be signors on the CGS bank account and receive bank cards.

Treasurer’s Report
Christina Ch rivia distributed and reviewed the 2014 financial statements. Sherry Hunga-Moore explained the need to place a deposit for the proposed CGS retreat in October at Highland Springs Resort prior to the board meeting ($4,522). She assured the board that the San Diego County Gourd Artists group would reimburse CGS if, later in this meeting, the Board decided not to authorize a CGS member retreat.

The Profit & Loss schedule showed that total income of $10,263 was reduced by $3,103 to adjust for the actual vs. estimated value of the McClelland estate, which was closed out during 2014. This resulted in gross profit of $7,160. Total expenses were $11,902; and, discounting the estate adjustment, the actual spending loss was approximately $1,500. The budget vs. actual schedule showed unfavorable net income of $3,576; but the year would have ended with only a $464 unfavorable variance to budget if not for the McClelland estate adjustment,. The group reviewed the top expenses which included the Golden Gourd, insurance and meeting expense. It was noted that $650 advertising revenue was expected in early 2015. A motion was made and carried to accept the report of the Treasurer.

Programs/Regional Group Report
Patch Leader Meetings. Sherry reported on the combined northern and southern patch leader meeting last April at the Lamp Liter Inn, at which the CGS budget was reviewed and a brainstorming session was held. This year, there will be separate meetings and held at a time after tickets are produced for the proposed fundraising project. In 2016, the patch leader meetings will be combined in Visalia.

2015 CGS Retreat. Sherry Hunga-Moore distributed and explained a schedule showing different expense and income scenarios for the proposed CGS retreat, October 1 through 4, 2015. She said the goal would be for it to be a self-funded event. However, if 80 people attended it would be more difficult to self-fund. Fees paid by attendees included rooms Thursday night through Sunday at 4pm, meals, classes and workshop kits. Proceeds from a raffle during the event will be used to generate a reserve fund for future retreats. If there were 40 attendees, incidental costs borne by CGS were estimated at $2,500 ($45 per person). Incidental expenses included: $15 for a goodie bag, $20 for workshops & kit materials; $10 for 2 teacher workshop fees. Incidental costs could be reduced with the assistance of donated items.

Discussion followed as to the rationale behind holding the retreat to create a relaxing, enjoyable and classy event for our members. At the 2014 board meeting, there was a discussion as to what would be the appropriate use of our excess funds to benefit CGS members. This was a question asked of our patch leaders during the April 2014 leader meeting, and a retreat for 80 to 125 people was the brainstorm item that received the most support during that meeting. Each member would receive a written invitation to participate. Compared to the Asilomar conference, the proposed retreat was expected to be an excellent value for members and less expensive for CGS.

Pam Argo handed out information on a potential CGS cruise that included a raffle for accommodations where all CGS costs could potentially be covered. It was agreed this might be a great future retreat. She will research cabin costs/cruise ship options and said the point of departure could be out of San Francisco, offering a retreat option closer to the northern regional groups. A motion was made and carried to authorize the CGS member retreat at the Highland Springs Resort on October 1 through 4, 2015.

There was discussion about of the retreat's financial impact on CGS. Estimating incidental costs of $45 per person, expenses would be $2,500 for 40 attendees and $5,000 for 80 attendees. At the patch leader meetings, they will talk about the retreat, letting the leaders know the goal is to make it self-funded.
Membership Report
An email from JoAnn Clark was read and below are the questions posed with the Board’s answers in italics:
1) How many families are eligible for the ‘family plan’? Peggy responded and said that it was documented that ‘family memberships need not be restricted to 2 people’, ok.
2) If there is a family plan membership, I currently record only 2 family names, the primary and the secondary. If there are 3 or 4 members, am I required to record all names on the roster? The roster might get a tad busy and harder to manage. Continue to record only two names.
3) Are all family members eligible for a free membership if their patch has 100% membership compliance? Yes all family members are eligible to win free membership if their patch is compliant with 100% CGS membership; however they only win one family membership.
4) What other benefits are family members eligible for: can they vote?, access to website “members only” section?, expect a newsletter?, etc. Family member benefits: 1 newsletter; 1 email address; all vote; all enter competitions; all quality to attend retreat.
5) Should we charge $5 more for a family plan: $20 for single, $25 for family? Mary read Bylaws which state we have one class of membership. Agreed to keep the family membership fee the same as individual membership.
6) Are all family members eligible for a membership card?* One card issued to the family.

Sherry said we have developed and started to distribute the membership welcome letter that included a cut-out membership card. The new 2015 Members Only user name and password will be effective 2/1/15 and printed on the card. A recess was called at 10:45 and the meeting reconvened at 10:55am.

Directors at Large Reports
Susan Sullivan reported the progress of the Orange County Gourd Patch in forging an alliance with the local woodcarvers group. She said there are additional opportunities for outreach, for example, colleges, art schools and garden groups. During her annual circuit of garden clubs in Orange County, she encourages audiences to grow gourds with seeds she hands out.

Discussion took place regarding the need for CGS members to participate more in county fair competitions, and the group reviewed a list of these and what regional groups were based in those counties. It was also suggested CGS regional groups partner with the missions and woodcarver groups in their areas.

Pam Argo said she will be working on the county fairs in the northern counties and has been helping to plan CGS member activities. She offered to donate half of her commission to the retreat fund if CGS members use her travel services and will advertise this in the upcoming Golden Gourd.

Editor Report
Mary distributed and reviewed reports on projects she completed during 2014, Golden Gourd expenses and advertising income, an outline of what will be covered in upcoming issues, and statistics on emails sent via Constant Contact. She welcomed input on Golden Gourd content. She commented on the importance of members not marking CGS emails as spam, because this could adversely affect our standing with email service providers causing problems that are difficult and time-consuming to resolve. The group complimented Mary on the excellent job that she does throughout the year.

Website Review
Janet Greene reported website information changes that have been made and items pending confirmation. Janet asked for Gourdstock, competition and Davis Ranch festival photos to be sent to her for posting. It was noted that tutorials are on the Members Only page. She commented on the CGS Facebook page, which had over 150 Likes, and encouraged board members and friends to Like us. Olive Moore agreed to take over the job of reviewing emails received through the CGS website Contact Us link. The creation of a Board Only web page was still pending. In addition to the regional patch webpage, Janet confirmed that she will take on the responsibility of updating the regional group listings on the three-fold membership brochure and the one-page member application form.

New Business
Insurance. Barbara reported her extensive review of our existing insurance policy and discussion took place regarding the possible addition of non-owned auto insurance ($100 premium) and accident insurance ($250 premium). Discussion followed regarding the potential implications of non-members performing tasks in CGS booths. Barbara agreed to be responsible for being the contact regarding all insurance matters, taking over the job formerly done by Peggy Blessing. Information was distributed relating to protections provided by California and Federal laws for volunteer directors and officers, and it was pointed out that this protection was only in effect if the organization carried a certain level of insurance.

Competitions
It was proposed a change be considered regarding the requirement that CGS competitions be members-only events, considering that other AGS state chapters do not have this requirement. Discussion followed how to implement this and;
after considering various scenarios, a motion was made a carried to establish a $10 non-member entry fee for CG Competitions. The $6 member entry fee would remain the same. Following discussion about what to do with ribbons that are no longer being used because of out-of-date artwork, it was agreed to donate them to a Special Olympics group.

Barbara Rippetoe proposed that we change our awards from ribbons to pins, similar to ones used in woodcarver competitions. After looking at an example and reviewing costs, a motion was made and carried to replace competition ribbons with pins for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and to offer ribbons for sale at a marginal profit to these winners. A recess was called at 12:45pm and the meeting reconvened at 1:15pm.

Barbara Rippetoe distributed information regarding competition opportunities and an entry form for a combined Capital Woodcarvers and CGS competition on 5/2-3/15 in the Sacramento area. Based on the woodcarvers willingness to create six gourd categories, to allow CGS to receive the $6 entry fee, to have a free information booth, and they would cover the cost of the facility. Barbara and Janet Greene felt this was a good opportunity for CGS to partner with a well-established group. CGS would award our own pins and provide AGS accredited judges. Susan Sullivan said the Orange County woodcarvers competition will be 10/10-11/15. Janet said that the woodcarvers were looking for raffle donations. A motion was made and carried to ratify the decision to participate in the Capital Woodcarvers competition within-a-competition on May 2-3, 2015. Barbara will take member mail-in entries and deliver these to the competition.

A motion was made and carried to ratify the electronic vote of the Board to approve the $100 prize payable to the California State Fair in support of the gourd competition at the 7/10-26/15, State Fair in Sacramento. Four categories have been established and an AGS judge has been assigned. Entry details have not yet been posted on the State Fair’s website. There will be an option for mail-in entries.

It was noted that the Davis Festival 9/25-27/15, was another CGS sanctioned competition. Barbara plans to have a Jim Story category at this competition. It was agreed to continue to contribute $20 to the AGS Jim Story Award.

**Fundraising Ideas**
Discussion of the Amazon Smile program took place, which was a way for non-profits to receive a percent of all purchases if the buying session began from the link on the non-profit's website. A motion was made and carried to authorize Christina Chrivia to execute whatever paperwork necessary to register CGS with the Amazon Smile donation program.

A motion was made and carried to authorize Christina to executive whatever paperwork necessary to register CGS's non-profit status with Jo-Ann craft stores in order for members to qualify for a discount program.

Discussion took place regarding some merchandise ideas, e.g., a collapsible coozie to sell with a bottle of water at events or an inscribed stylus pen. Christina reported that the latest merchandise sales were not profitable; and, if we decide to pursue a product in the future, we will need to figure out a better distribution and inventory system. Mary said that we had some merchandise options via Cafe Press, an on-line web-store, but this received very little traffic. It was suggested we consider a web auction or ticket sales for special high-end raffle items, such as cruise tickets or tools.

**Scholarship Fund**
Sherry Hunga-Moore and Sue Gouig reported that they have not yet used the $1,400 that was to be split between the northern and southern regions for education purposes at festivals, but they expected to use these funds in 2015. It was noted that this was a restricted fund and had to be used for the stated fundraising purpose.

**American Gourd Society**
Barbara Rippetoe reported on her attendance at the AGS board meeting in North Carolina, saying there was a good exchange of information. They asked state chapters to encourage their members to be AGS members so that the publication of the *Gourd Magazine* could continue. Photos she submitted were published in a recent issue, and Sylvia Nelson passed around an issue containing an article she wrote. Barbara described the event hosted by the North Carolina Gourd Society.

**State Filings**
Christina Chrivia explained the process for getting the permit to conduct our state-wide raffle, saying she needed information about these before the August filing deadline. The Secretary of State update of officers was also due this year. In answer to a question, Christina clarified that CGS's non-profit status and raffle permits do not cover regional groups; the only way that this could be done was if CGS controlled their finances. She said she could advise any regional group who wished to incorporate as a non-profit, saying that filing fees could be in the $100 range, with $10 annual fees. It was suggested we consider doing silent auctions, and Christina will look into the possibility of doing this.
Peggy Blessing will remain on the Square account, and Janet Greene will be invited so that she could accept credit card payments on behalf of CGS at festivals.

**Secretary Election**

A motion was made and carried to appoint Olive Moore to serve as CGS Secretary. She was presented with a CGS name badge and thanked for her willingness to serve in this position. Peggy Blessing reported receiving 75 votes of confidence from members during the poll that was taken during November and December 2014 (The Folsom group also cast 20 votes, but Peggy did not receive their list). Although JoAnn Clark was willing to continue her service as Vice President of Membership, the position was due for re-appointment; and nominees should have been solicited last fall. It was recommended that the board decide which officers will be up for election so that a 2-year pattern could be established.

**Past Income Statements**

Christina Chrivia said that she had access to CGS financial records further back than she originally thought and was able to determine expenses and income for the 2008 Asilomar conference. Gross profit was $27,477, with $22,995 in expenses, noting there was a beginning balance of approximately $500. These figures represented registration fees, raffle and the silent auction.

**Board Meeting Schedule**

The possibility of holding a combined patch leader and board meeting was discussed. It was agreed to hold the next board meeting at the same time next year (1/9/16). Discussion took place regarding the possibility of holding short meetings via Google Plus/On Air which can be done via phone or computer. Janet Greene agreed to coordinate trainings/tests. If successful, it was suggested a board meeting be held in June using this method.

**CGS Fundraising Project**

Sherry Hunga-Moore showed examples of wreath, garland and sprays that will be tastefully decorated with small spinner gourds in a variety of themes decided upon by the regional group, e.g., fall, 4th of July, Christmas. These should be completed by February 2016 by the 9 northern groups and 8 southern groups. Details will be published in the *Golden Gourd* when available. Sherry reported 3,000 raffle tickets were printed for the charm string fundraising project, and CGS proceeds were $1,427, with the regional groups receiving an equal amount. She felt that we needed to find a better way to promote sales, suggesting the possibility of selling tickets via Paypal where photos of completed projects could be posted.

**CGS Cruise**

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of scheduling of a patch leader/board meeting on a cruise ship with an opportunity for all CGS members to participate. This topic will be brought up at the upcoming patch leader meetings. Our bylaws will be reviewed to see if there was language preventing us from holding a board meeting in such a manner. It was suggested that broadcasting via Google Plus might be an option if members wished to attend virtually. Pam Argo will investigate the financial aspects of a cruise and suggested a raffle be held on board ship where other passengers could buy tickets. Following further discussion, it was decided to pursue the creation of a CGS cruise retreat opportunity in January 2017 and combine this with a board and patch leader meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:25pm.

**2015 Budget**

Following a 2015 budget development meeting, a Board meeting was called to order at 5:15pm. There was a motion made and carried to approve the 2015 budget as developed during the previous meeting. Budgeted income totaled $23,810 and Expenses totaled $28,015, netting a budgeted loss of $4,205 (2015 retreat income was budgeted at $12,920 and expenses at $15,480). The meeting adjourned at 5:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Peggy Blessing*

*Secretary*