

American Knife & Tool Institute
Board of Regents Meeting
April 25-26, 2011
Holiday Inn Express, Denver, CO

The Board of Regents meeting of the American Knife & Tool Institute on Monday, April 25, 2011 was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by AKTI President Goldie Russell (A.G. Russell Knives). Regents present: CJ Buck (Buck Knives), AKTI Vice President Bill Raczkowski (Gerber), Rod Bremer (CRKT), Mike Manrose (Meyerco), Chris Keller for Clint Kadel (United) and Craig Green (Kershaw). Regent absent: Les de Asis (Benchmark) proxy to Goldie Russell, Gil Hibben (KMG) proxy to Goldie Russell. Others: Thomas Welk (Kershaw) and AKTI Executive Director Jan Billeb.

The meeting was recessed at 5:45 p.m., reconvened Tuesday, April 26, 2011 at 8:30 a.m., with a recess for lunch from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., and adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

These minutes are formatted on a per-subject basis, not the chronological discussion.

Discussion of AKTI's Direction – Goldie Russell, President

Time was spent in a review of each Regent's impression of how the organization is doing and what plans should be for the upcoming year. It was generally felt that AKTI has made good progress in the last year or two with organizational issues and increased visibility. Comments included:

- need to be more proactive;
- AKTI's subject matter is not provocative to draw attention, perhaps a headliner or celebrity would create that;
- visibility versus just being there and staying under the radar;
- need to work more closely with the NRA and other groups for when the next big problem occurs;
- a lack of individual time available for follow through;
- need to increase free grassroots list for when numbers are needed for responses;
- increase focus on retailers and how to approach;
- more education is needed within the industry as to what AKTI is and its relevance to their business.

Jan Billeb asked for either individual feedback or a Board evaluation on her performance since taking on additional responsibilities the last year.

Action: Regents should email Goldie Russell with any feedback they would like shared. Comments due in 2 weeks, May 10th, 2011

Administrative – Jan Billeb, Executive Director

Bill Raczkowski moved, CJ Buck seconded, to approve the minutes of the Board of Regents and Advisory Members SHOT Show meeting January 17, 2011. Motion carried unanimously.

Jan Billeb noted that the accounting firm is working on the 2010 review and taxes and provided a copy of the arrangement letter.

Action: Jan will email an electronic copy of the McGladrey arrangement letter.

New officers with two year terms will be elected at the Blade Show meeting. AKTI's policy has been for the vice president to step up into the president's position and Bill Raczkowski agreed to accept nomination for president. CJ Buck, Goldie Russell and Jan Billeb agreed to serve on a Nominating Committee.

Action: The Nominating Committee will begin discussion in one week to find a nominee for vice president.

Blade Show Meeting - The Board of Regents and Advisory Members meeting will be Thursday, June 9th at 1 p.m.

Financial – Bill Raczkowski, Vice President

The first quarter 2011 financials were reviewed by Bill Raczkowski, noting that we are ahead of budget on income and doing very well compared to 2010, noting that spending is up 87%, primarily due to non-budgeted expense of NACS & Governor's Caucus approved spending at SHOT meeting; income is up 68%

Action: Jan Billeb will reclassify the NACS and Governor's Caucus membership from the membership category to a new Dues category.

Publicity – Jan Billeb

Jan Billeb reported that her goal for 2011 had been to do a monthly email to the membership and grassroots, but so far had only done two: one regarding the revised knife definitions and the other a legislative update. After discussion it was agreed that a monthly silent auction would help draw more people to the website and that all Regents would be willing to donate an off-the-shelf item, provide a photo for the website, and ship the knife to the winning bidder.

Action: Jan Billeb will work out details on how the silent auction will work, provide a tentative schedule of who will donate knives each month, and other possible email topics.

Participation at various shows where AKTI has been offered free space was discussed and the need to support volunteers in a more effective way.

Action: Jan Billeb will revise the checklist she created to include information about accepting memberships online.

Action: Mike Manrose will contact Darrel Ralph, who eagerly represents AKTI at Steve D'Lack's New Jersey shows, about using his computer at the events and possible AKTI reimbursement for internet connection.

Action: Goldie Russell will research cost and design for pop-up signs.

AKTI Newsletter – The AKTI revised Knife Definitions will be the centerpiece of the next AKTI newsletter which had been put on hold due to Knife Rights' questioning the document. Jan Billeb briefly described the other content to include: an article from AKTI's president, a full page announcement of the next membership knife giveaway, a brief legislative update, announcement about the Blade Show meeting, and possibly a brief article about the drawing at the SHOT Show.

Action: Goldie Russell will provide an article for the front page of the newsletter and contact Ontario Knife for more details on the giveaway knife.

Action: Jan Billeb also plans to send the Knife Definitions to all state Attorneys General.

Blade Show Booth – Goldie Russell announced that Blade will shortly be announcing the donation of a knife from William Henry for Blade's 30th Anniversary that will be used in a drawing to bring people to the AKTI, Knife Rights, and the Custom Knife Collectors Association (CKCA) booths. There will be a drawing at each organization's booth for one name that will be included in a drawing on Saturday at noon at the William Henry booth. Due to Georgia gaming laws there can be no requirement that anyone join or make a donation.

Jan Billeb showed an example of the wristbands Ray Thibault of Northern Knives had made to sell for \$3 each to raise money for AKTI. She has a quantity of 300 for the Blade Show. In addition to being available for sale, anyone who joins or renews will be given one.

Jan reported that Northern Knives also donated two knives: (1) a William Henry E6-5 (estimated retail value \$250) will be used in an AKTI drawing from everyone who signs up either as a free Grassroots member, joins, renews, or signs up for the 30th Anniversary William Henry knife and (2) a Randall 5-4 (approximate retail value \$500) which will be a silent auction item at the AKTI booth.

A.G. Russell staff will again distribute flyers to all exhibitors regarding AKTI's events. Blade Magazine will provide a full page ad for AKTI in the show program.

Regents will again participate in the AKTI booth, and Advisory members will be asked to sign up also for a time.

Rep. Jenn Coffey will present a seminar at 2:15 p.m. on Saturday and then do a book signing in the AKTI booth from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Craig Green moved to approve a \$400 donation to Rep. Jenn Coffey to help defray printing costs for her book and support Camp Constitution. Rod Bremer seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Action: Goldie Russell will contact Rep. Jenn Coffey regarding an advance copy of her book.

Action: Jan Billeb will contact Rep. Jenn Coffey regarding the \$400 donation payment.

Action: Bill Raczkowski agreed Gerber will donate more Member signs for corporate booths and tent signs for individual exhibitors.

Action: Bill Raczkowski will help Jan Billeb figure out possible credit card processing using a cell phone scanner.

Blade Show Annual Meeting

Jan Billeb announced that time is reserved in Room 108 at Blade for AKTI's annual meeting and legislative update Sunday, June 12th from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. She suggested that the annual meeting be a closed meeting and that as many corporate members as possible be encouraged to attend in order to better engage them in AKTI's activities. It could be followed by an open legislative update meeting. It was agreed this format would be tried and it was suggested that the corporate members be given a survey to complete of what their expectations are of AKTI, how they feel AKTI is doing, and how they could better contribute to AKTI projects.

Action: Goldie Russell will contact Doug Ritter of Knife Rights again regarding a possible meeting Sunday morning so that timing of the annual meeting can be determined and announced.

Action: Jan Billeb will create email notices once the timing is confirmed.

Action: Need to decide and develop if survey if to be done.

State of the Industry Report - Jan Billeb

Jan Billeb reported that McGladrey provided a verbal quote of \$1500 to conduct the survey for an updated State of the Industry Report (approved to do every 3 years). The basic plan would be that AKTI provide a list of contacts including emails and phone numbers, a series of emails would be developed and the questions would be completed online. McGladrey believes that AKTI should generate any written documentation.

It was agreed to add Question 2: What do you estimate was your 2010 gross payroll?

Action: Jan Billeb will request a written quote from McGladrey within two weeks. Jan will create a spreadsheet of potential contacts for the board to update and approve.

Membership Committee - Bill Raczkowski, chair, Clint Kadel, CJ Buck

Discussion focused on encouraging retail members who could in turn generate additional individual or free grassroots members. It was agreed that using the major buying groups (Nation's Best Sports (NBS), Sports, Inc., and Worldwide – listed by size of membership) that represent several retailers and hold shows would be the best approach to generating retail memberships.

Action: Bill Raczkowski will contact Steve Baker Jr. of NBS within two weeks to discuss ideas such as offering free \$100 retailer memberships, having an informational table, or doing an AKTI presentation. The Membership Committee will have a plan to report at the Blade Show meeting.

A prospective membership list was reviewed and volunteers assigned to contact them within a month by either phone, email or in person.

Action: Bill Raczkowski will update the prospect list and distribute it by April 27th. Advisory members will be asked to participate in recruiting and the list will be reviewed at the Blade Show meeting for progress reports.

Education Committee - Mike Manrose, chair, Rod Bremer, Morgan Taylor

It was agreed that creating U-Tube videos as an educational tool and way of getting more free grassroots members would be effective, fairly easily and inexpensive to accomplish and should be the priority of the Education Committee. Topics to include: what is a legal knife, AKTI's definitions as individual clips, what to do if stopped and you have a knife, how to measure a knife, etc.

Action: Mike Manrose will contact Mike Janusz and Troney Troler for assistance. He and Rod Bremer will work on a plan and report for the Blade Show meeting.

Partnership Opportunities

The need for a partnership position was discussed by CJ Buck, involving the objective of getting additional exposure and potential soldiers when AKTI needs access to them for legislative initiatives. He emphasized that his experience has been that organizations quickly understand the importance of protecting the right to own, use and carry knives as it relates to their efforts to preserve hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. In addition to the Mule Deer Foundation, CJ suggested a partnership program would be beneficial with several other animal conservation organizations such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Wild Turkey Federation, and the Wild Sheep Foundation, as well as possibly the NRA.

The working agreement with the Mule Deer Foundation (which has 14,000 members) was reviewed. It was generally agreed that partnering arrangements should not include an exchange of money.

Action: CJ Buck, Bill Raczkowski, Goldie Russell, and Jan Billeb will review for revisions and forward to the Board for input. A term needs to be determined to use for designating AKTI partners.

Legislative Committee Report – CJ Buck, chair, Dan Lawson, Nick Trbovich, Les de Asis, Goldie Russell, Jan Billeb

John Larkin's activities – CJ Buck reported that due to various circumstances he and John Larkin were just connecting on plans for participation at National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucus (NASC) and Governors' Sportsmen's Caucus events. John will attend an Albany, New York breakfast on May 4th where a \$500 sponsorship would allow AKTI signature, ability to distribute materials and possibly an opportunity to discuss AKTI's purpose. The goal of having a presence would be to make initial New York legislator contacts.

Rod Bremer moved, Mike Manrose seconded, to approve \$500 plus \$100 expenses for John Larkin. Motion carried unanimously.

Action: Jan Billeb to contact John Larkin regarding terms and invoicing for services, AKTI's logo and materials for John to distribute.

Dan Lawson and Nick Trbovich joined the meeting by teleconference.

AKTI Responses – CJ Buck noted that he, Dan Lawson, and Jan Billeb were working to be more responsive to introduced knife legislation by creating letters of support or opposition.

Action: Develop possible boiler plate letters.

Pennsylvania – Dan Lawson reported that the NRA would support the effort if AKTI wanted to pursue a repeal of 18 PA C.S.A. Section 908 as preferred by the TURN organization versus the amendment language Dan had proposed to Rep. Marc Gergley. CJ Buck and Dan had plans to meet with Rep. Gergley over the next week but were having difficulty getting responses from him.

Action: Jan Billeb will contact AKTI ambassador Scott Boyer to find out the status of their efforts and report to the Legislative Committee.

New York - CJ Buck announced he and John Larkin would be working on a plan for what needs to be done in New York to get support for introducing legislation early in January 2012. Jan Billeb suggested a good goal would be to have a press announcement ready for the SHOT Show.

No additional information was available about Knife Rights' litigation efforts but AKTI has referred at least three individuals to Knife Rights.

Action: CJ Buck and John Larkin will share a plan at the Blade Show meeting and have a target of the first part of September to have a lobbyist in place.

Colorado – AKTI Ambassador Greg Hoffman has been very active contacting AKTI, Kershaw, legislators and the Attorney General (who declined to provide comment) in an effort to get clarification that assisted opening knives such as Kershaw's SpeedSafe are not switchblades. Jan Billeb had notified him that AKTI was keeping the issue on our radar, but that we had to prioritize efforts. She researched and told him that the Colorado legislative session ended in June and that the time was passed for introducing any new bills.

Action: CJ Buck will call Mr. Hoffman.

Michigan – Dan Lawson explained that an attorney named Peter O'Rourke had contacted him regarding the possibility of making changes to Michigan knife law. It would be AKTI's first attempt at legislative changes regarding dirks, daggers, and stilettos and would involve eliminating Section 226a and 227, but would leave intact the part of Section 226 that involves intent to use.

Action: Jan Billeb will contact Rep. Jenn Coffey to see if she has found a potential knife-friendly Michigan representative.

Maine – CJ Buck reported that John Larkin is following up on Maine H 1028 which would amend the name of the crime "trafficking in dangerous knives" to "possession or distribution of dangerous knives" as Jan Billeb had flagged the bill questioning if this might present an opportunity to introduce AKTI's bias toward closure language.

Preemption Laws – Discussion followed on opportunities that had been presented to support individuals and/or members interested in introducing knife preemption laws and if it made sense for AKTI to include preemptive in other legislative changes given that Knife Rights had addressed preemption in two states. It was agreed that AKTI needs to take opportunities as they exist as the ultimate goal is ensure the rights of everyone to own, use and carry knives.

Knife Rights – Concern was expressed over the reactions of organizations and individuals important to AKTI's efforts wanting to distance themselves from involvement with Knife Rights and how that could potentially cause problems for AKTI.

Action: CJ Buck and Rod Bremer offered to have a conversation with Doug Ritter.

Mike Manrose moved, and Craig Green seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Billeb
AKTI Executive Director