

AMERICAN KNIFE AND TOOL INSTITUTE
Minutes of the Board of Regents Meeting
October 6 and 7, 1999
Las Vegas, NV, Bally's Hotel

Wednesday, October 6, 1999 Meeting was called to order approximately 1 p.m. by president Les de Asis. Meeting was recessed at 6:30 p.m. and reconvened Thursday morning at 8 a.m. until 12 p.m. Meeting facilitator: D' Holder. Regents present: Les de Asis, D'Holder, Sal Glesser, Bob Miller, Jim Wehrs. Others: Jan Billeb, Executive Director. Regents absent: CJ Buck, Wally Gardiner.

These minutes are presented on a per subject basis, not chronologically.

Financial Update - Wehrs

Jim Wehrs distributed the accountant's compilation for 1998, financial statements comparison through September, 1999, and separate cash flow projections for 1999 and 2000. He emphasized the shortages projected for 2000 based on current membership figures. Current checking account balance is \$12,352.80. Sal Glesser acknowledged that Spyderco has not paid dues yet, but would as soon as possible and probably in partial payments. D' Holder moved, Bob Miller seconded to approve the accountant's report and the current statement. Passed unanimously.

Discussion of AKTI's Focus and Role

The financial situation and membership issues resulted in a discussion of AKTI's focus and where AKTI should concentrate its efforts. A focus mission was discussed, including the idea of a questionnaire to determine the role industry people believe AKTI should play. It was agreed that the current mission and the four goals really are well defined and accurate for the Board's intentions, but that the main focus needs to be redirected on manufacturers, suppliers and other industry companies with a common denominator of assuring businesses survive and away from efforts to develop a broad base grassroots of individuals.

The major emphasis will be placed on being pro-active in the legislative area and providing information. Part of this effort will include the development of a "reasonableness document" which will be a framework of preventative measures and reasonable laws. It will be the American Knife and Tool Institute's recommendation of rules for responsible knife laws. A committee will be formed to write this and D' will ask Judge Bray to participate.

The AKTI BOR will represent the knife industry to the legislators as a voice of reason. AKTI may not change any laws but will work to be instrumental in the formation of laws.

Membership - Billeb

Current membership report: 952 Ambassadors (of which 416 are Knifemakers Guild); 12 Bronze Associate; 3 Gold Associate; and 12 Premier. The contest challenge by Spyderco resulted in 30 Spyderco employees, 1 Procut and 1 Gerber. It was noted again that encouraging employees to join presented some problems. Memberships are still coming in from the box stuffer, but just as many are from the web site.

Jan expressed two membership concerns: 1) that AKTI do what we have said we would

for the members; and 2) recruiting plans be developed using the “M” list previously assigned to Regents to contact. She presented some ideas to address these concerns.

Letters and plaques to members: Jim apologized that the letters addressed to go with premier plaques had been misplaced at Gerber. It was decided that on future letters the Regent’s signatures will be electronically scanned to save delays. Jan will redo the letters with a current date and forward to Wally for mailing.

AKTI gifts to Associates: It was decided both the Silver and Gold Associates would get an AKTI medallion. Jim will work on this item as soon as possible.

AKTI decal for Bronze Associates: It was decided there would be no special decal for this category. They will be mailed the same window cling as the Ambassadors.

Decal for 2000: The proposed 2000 window cling was approved in the quantity of 2,000 for approximately \$470.

Renewals: Jan noted that return envelopes and renewal forms need to be printed, but she did not have quotes available. She’ll proceed with ordering a necessary supply.

Newsletter: The suggestion was to proceed with a newsletter, mailing it to all current members and to new members until the next newsletter was discussed. The draft Jan started was reviewed and additional suggestions included: mentioning the forum and how to get there and using photos of the Regents doing something. It was agreed to proceed as quickly as possible with a newsletter as outlined. Jan indicated it will then be converted to a PDF file and made available on the web site in a members’ only section.

Membership Dues: Bob moved, Les seconded that Ambassador membership dues be increased to \$35 per year and include receiving any newsletters. Any new memberships will be honored at \$15, but renewals will be \$35 per year. Members will be told the increase is due to committing to offering more.

Logo: It was decided that Jan add the word “Member” to the AKTI logo. This logo will be available for all members’ (including Ambassadors) use. The FAQs on the web site will be changed to reflect this.

Advisory Board: After discussion of how to involve other select industry leaders in AKTI, Les De Asis moved, and Jim Wehrs seconded to approve a category of “Advisory Board Member” based on the following outline: Purpose: The advisory board will make recommendations to the Board of Regents regarding direction and activities and provide a network to the knife-making world. They will meet twice a year for discussion of an agenda developed by the Regents. The first meeting will include a presentation by the Regents of AKTI’s position and status. This membership category will be by invitation. It will not be added to the membership form. The invited organization can designate someone from their company to be the representative. Criteria: someone with long vision and reputable. Dues will be \$5,000 per year. Passed unanimously. It was suggested that Las Vegas will make a good choice for meeting location for those two meetings per year.

Possible list of advisory team members developed include (designated “A” List):

- Chuck Fretwell, Cold Steel
- David Hall, United
- David Bloch, Outdoor
- A.G. Russell
- Shiraz Balolia, Gutmann
- Tim Leatherman, Leatherman
- Spencer Frazier, Sog

Marfioni, MicroTek
Mike Turber, World of Weapons
Columbia River
Kershaw
Ernie Emerson, Emerson Knives
David Brand, Coast Cutlery
Swiss Army - Victoria Knox & Wenger
Case Cutlery
Meyerco
Gatco Timberline
Boker USA Chuck Kaufmann
Paragon
Sebertech
Beretta, Claudette Head
Stuart Taylor, Taylor Cutlery
Utica
Kevin Pipes, Smoky Mtn
Les Monteng

Recruitment: The Board reviewed Jan's ideas for a series mailing to the "M" list. The list was re-categorized. Jan will update it and send to the Regents. The following recruitment plan was developed for the "M" list to request \$2,000 Premier memberships, but include Associate information:

- 1) Mail the "whistle" idea box. Jim will get approximately 100 fox whistles to use and will try to get the AKTI (only) logo put on them.
- 2) Approximately one week later, mail a letter, the newsletter, and an application form. Jim and Bob will develop a draft of the recruitment letter.
- 3) Within ten days, a follow up phone call will be made by the designated Regent.
- 4) Phone call will be followed up with a personal handwritten note. Les will forward Jan a sample to have AKTI memos printed. Regents will forward the notes to Jan to mail out if an invoice is to be enclosed.
- 5) If a commitment has been made, an invoice in window envelope to accounts payable department will be included with the personal note.

The following recruitment plan was developed for the "A" List

- 1) Mail the "whistle" idea box.
- 2) Approximately one week later, mail an invitation letter, the newsletter, an application form. Jim and Bob will develop a draft of the recruitment letter.
- 3) Within ten days, a follow up phone call by the designated Regent.
- 4) Phone call will be followed up by a personal handwritten note. Regents will forward the notes to Jan to mail out.
- 5) If a commitment has been made, an invoice to the accounts payable department will be included with the personal note.

These mailings will be staggered to space out the phone calling quantity for Regents. After payment is received, it should be followed up with a note or phone call from the

Regent.

Other ideas discussed: The possibility of a manufacturers' specific meeting at Shot Show was discussed. Bob Miller indicated a preference that Jan forward him (and possibly all regents) a regular update on who has become members to help in follow up. It was suggested we try to get recognition in *Blade Magazine* and other publications for those agreeing to be part of advisory team. The vendors list developed at a previous meeting was reviewed. It was decided to postpone any recruitment mailing until after the next meeting.

Education - D' Holder

D' reported that he had finished writing the knife safety pamphlet. He will be contacting Wally Gardiner who previously offered that Imperial Schrade would do the printing. D' will clarify with Wally how the pamphlet will be credited. He will distribute a draft of the current version for everyone's comments.

It was noted that the pamphlet will require line art graphics appropriate for youth. The suggestion was made that D' take photos using a child and that they be converted to line art. This will solve any problems of using other artwork or having the cost of an artist.

D's research regarding a video productions indicated that a 22 min. video would cost about \$20,000, a 2 minute segment would cost about \$13-14,000. He is working with an outfit in Salt Lake City, Doug Miller Productions, which specialized in outdoor videos. Once they have an outline of what is needed, they have writers to work on the script. D' will proceed with further inquiry incurring minimal cost.

Manufacturers will be approached with the plan at the Shot Show and asked for contributions to help make it happen. A method of tastefully acknowledging those contributing will be figured out. The plan is to use the video on public access channels and outdoor life channels. One suggestion was to use the same tape to run at various shows on a continual basis and either sell 30 second spots or list manufacturers at the end of the film.

The primary objective of the videotape is to show knives in a positive light. Bob commented that we will need to consider two different versions at some point with one designed for youth.

Publicity - Glessner

Sal said he had a couple minor revisions to the draft Jan wrote to legislators. It was determined that the industry value should read "in excess of a 1 billion dollars combined sales per year." Sal and Jan will proceed with mailing out the letters.

The Bladeforum.com was discussed. Sal indicated he was disappointed with the amount of activity on it so far. It was agreed to promote a give-away once a month. Sal or CJ will pose a question for discussion and a prize will be given based on a random drawing of everyone posting. Those entering do not have to be AKTI members. The first prize will be the Spyderco knife Joyce Lauranti donated back after the Blade Show. Les will donate a Benchmade 720 for the second month's prize. AKTI member's winning will also be given a one year free renewal on their membership.

Sal suggest that Drew Gleason might be helpful on the forum or for writing projects.

Lists that need to be developed yet include: scouting groups, Hollywood contacts.

Jan distributed the article by Steve Shackelford about the AKTI web site that she and Steve discussed. She has been in contact with Bud Lang and will send him a press release after this meeting with some information for him to publish.

Legislative and Web Site - Billeb

Jan reported working on several web site items including a members' only section, ordering memberships online, adding information and laws. It was suggested that all knife manufacturers be listed with a designation of those that are AKTI members.

Other suggestions to add information to the site include: interesting information on steels, parts of knives, etc.

Jan will re-mail the committee application form for regents' approval. It will then be posted to the web site with a link from the forum. She reminded regents to check to make sure their corporate sites have added information and a link to AKTI.

The pamphlet written by Dan Lawson was reviewed with a few minor revisions. Jan will format and post the pamphlet to the web site. Jim Wehrs offered to donate a knife to give Dan Lawson as a thank you gift.

Administration

Jim Wehrs moved, Sal Glesser seconded to approve the minutes of the June Board of Regents meeting. Passed unanimously.

The action list from November 1998 was reviewed and updated.

Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be a conference telephone call, probably the first part of December. A February 16th and 17th meeting was scheduled from 1 p.m. on Wednesday to 1 p.m. on Thursday in Las Vegas, subject to checking Gardiner and Buck's schedule. Bob Miller offered to check out arrangements for meeting and rooms.

De Asis asked for a motion to adjourn. Holder so moved, seconded by Miller

Minutes submitted,

Jan Billeb
AKTI Executive Director