

**FRIENDS OF THE ELEPHANT SEAL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JANUARY 15, 2014**

PRESENT: Donovan Marley, Kathy Hurre, Bette Bardeen, Tim Postiff, Sharkey Warrick, Bill Goodger, Brandt Kehoe, Christel Chesney, Dave Bauer

Also present: Marcella Boteilho, Ellen Stoner, Michele Roust, Megg McNamee and Terri Dunivant from Gaia Graphics.

Terri Dunivant from Gaia Graphics presented several different graphic ideas for potential updates to the current FES logo. None of the ideas she presented were 100% approved by board members but several ideas were discussed; it was agreed that the logo should be simple and memorable, the font should be larger, the words “central coast” should be removed and replaced with “piedras blancas” and that the dots should be removed. There was also talk about adding a baby to the image. It was agreed that Brandt, Marcella, Michele and Megg will work together with Teri to refigure a new logo and report back to the Board.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Bill reported that the Balance Sheet shows a money market account balance of \$59,308, a CD balance of \$50,000 and a checking account balance of \$21,513. Sharkey pointed out that the SLO Community Foundation (endowment fund) is listed as an asset and shouldn’t be (it is not an asset). Marcella will ask our accountant how to list that money. Bill also mentioned that there are 2 new interns; Craig Brown and Brenda Barcelon. Both are biology students at Cal Poly. Tim suggested the interns may research how much food weaners actually eats on a daily basis. Data is available from rescue operations in Sausalito. Other questions for the interns may include how much does any elephant seal eat daily, how much does a male have to eat to do what he does (docents have been told 100 lbs/day). Bill has also emailed Barbara Black to see if the interns can do anything regarding the shark monitor. Bill has also arranged a meeting with Nicky Adams (Cal Poly) and Dean Went (Director for the Center for Coastal Marine sciences) to discuss the endowment fund that may be available at some level to help support their department (sometime down the road). Bette mentioned that Benjamin Ruttenberg is new assistant professor at Cal Poly who is teaching Marine Conservation Policy. Bette said that he is interested in projects for students. Bette will supply Bill with the contact information.

ENDOWMENT FUND: Donovan, Sharkey, Brandt, Christel and Bill met last week to consider ideas for raising money to fund the endowment. A few of the ideas they discussed were “naming opportunities” such as boardwalk planks and adopt a seal using tagged weaners. They talked about how to solicit bequests. Barry pointed out that the average bequest is \$50,000. Discussions will continue. Donovan and Brandt met with Barry to discuss historical donation amounts and patterns since 2000 (5,188 donations for a total of \$314,746 which averages \$60.67 per gift). Barry commented that the important thing is not how much money people have given but the consistency of giving yearly and that that is how the list of people to talk to about an endowment gift is determined. Using our database Barry came up with 178 prospects. That list will be printed and given to Board members and is to be kept confidential.

Sharkey announced that there was a profit of over \$30,000 at the end of 2013. A motion was presented to deposit \$30,000 into the endowment fund. Motion was withdrawn. Further discussion will happen in March at the Board Retreat.

Sharkey also plans to re-visit with the attorney to review the agreement FES has with State Parks as it pertains to monies raised by FES now and in the future.

OFFICE REPORT: Marcella reported getting docents for the school groups continues to be a problem. She also told the Board that an already booked school from Paso needed to change as they had a special needs student that required a specially outfitted bus that the school didn't have money for. Marcella asked how much they needed to stay on the same date and was told they needed an additional \$400. After consulting with Kathy and Brandt and telling them how difficult it was to get and/or reschedule the docents they decided to send the money so that they could stay on the same schedule. It was suggested and agreed that the docent appreciation dinner needs to move to mid or late February next year. Help is needed at docent appreciation dinner in the kitchen, serving and setting up. Board members will be there early to help.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Brandt will bring the new tube so that people become familiar with it. He promises that it will be much lighter and much easier to hang/install. To date the web site has passed 1 million hits; there are usually 700 per day in January and a little less in February and August/September is usually 250. Webcam numbers in November were approx. 150 per day until the beginning of December when that number increased to 420 per day. It was also reported that 2 births were seen via the webcam. Babs Mondschein has been monitoring the camera but is soon moving to Arizona. Brandt will ask if she would be interested in continuing her job from her new location by monitoring and controlling the web cam.

TRAINING COMMITTEE: Bette reported that only one person submitted an application for Spring Training. The training committee has considered dropping the Spring Training this year and perhaps in future years. This issue will be discussed in depth at the Board Retreat in March. The training committee also discussed the need for further school group training as many new docents feel unprepared to handle a group. Marcella and Ellen plan to meet to discuss organization, scheduling and logistics ideas for the school groups and then meet with the school group committee for further discussion.

Bette also discussed the fact Camp Keep has previously declined any educational opportunities offered by FES. According to Michele, their curriculum deals with science based concepts using the marine environment as a theme. It might be a good idea to let Camp Keep know that FES has developed a school program that is available for review on line. Michele will follow up.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Donovan presented the final 2013 membership report stating that membership income for acquisitions and renewals of docents, individuals and businesses was \$52,197 and there was a total of 585 members. The total 2012 membership income was \$53,873 with 594 members. In 2013, 630 *FES Friends* donated \$57,180. 45 of these asked that their 2013 year-end donation be credited as their 2014 membership dues. These donations, credited in 2014, totaled \$4,983 leaving \$52,197 donated by 585 *FES Friends* credited in 2013. The average 2013 donation was \$89.23.

25% of the donations were from newly acquired *FES Friends*; 75% of the donations were renewals by 2012 *FES Friends*. For the third year, *FES Docents* led individual giving; 66 docents donated \$6,870--an average donation of \$104.09. Donations from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2013 total \$160,900. Including 2014 donations made in December, 2013, Year-To-Date donations through January 13, 2014 total \$7,437 and were made by 80 *FES Friends* at an average donation of \$92.96. Total donations from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014 total \$165,883. The decision to suspend printing the color acquisition brochures will save FES approximately \$7,000 in 2014. The information that was in that brochure now appears on the back page of the Bluff News. It will take some time to realize whether or not this is a cost effective savings as far as acquiring new memberships.

DOCENT COORDINATOR: Ellen reported that she has been working with David Cooper (a volunteer with the Light Station helping with various reconstruction projects). With design assistance from Phil Adams, Tim Postiff, Jim Boucher, and Dan Murphy who is doing a lot of the work at the light station, David has created a mock up support system for the seal length display that is currently installed near the entrance of the northern part of VP4. The plan is to use the current "length" boards and add weight and length information and mount them on 2x4s that will support the boards. There will be 3 displays (south and north of vp3 and 1 at vp4). Progress is ongoing.

Ellen also suggested a docent field trip to the Elkhorn Slough on March 12th. The cost will be \$120 per person and will be limited to 44 participants. Docents who want to go but are not able to pay that much will be underwritten by FES. Board unanimously approved. She will follow up with information for the docents. Spouses will be invited on a space available basis once the docents have had a chance to sign up.

OTHER BUSINESS: Dave Bauer asked if there was any way for the table people to park their vehicles in a "reserved spot" for loading and unloading. No decision was reached.

Bette reported that Ana Nuevo had their first birth on December 15th and that there were no males present on the beach at that time. Other Board members mentioned that there has been some unusual behavior this season among many of the females, i.e. aggressive behavior to one another (including chest butting) and an increase in baby stealing especially on the North beach.

It was also announced that the first pup has been born on San Simeon beach south of the pier. This information was documented by State Parks.

Respectfully submitted by Megg McNamee

Next Board meeting will be on February 19th.