



The May Board of Governors meeting was held virtually via Zoom on May 16, 2021.

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## **Upcoming National Events**

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USPC Festival 2021 July 19 - 26, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington, KY.

USPC Equine Symposium & Convention 2022 – January 26-30, 2022 – Norfolk, VA, at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel.

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## **General Comments**

*Comments from President Ben Duke*

While COVID-19 is not entirely behind us, it is gratifying to see things at Pony Club moving forward in so many innovative and expansive ways. The team of the many volunteers, along with the exceptional professional staff in Lexington continue to bring great programs, opportunities, and fun to our members everywhere.

The virtual Equine Symposium and Convention in January was nothing short of amazing. The many recorded and live sessions were well attended, and in many ways, Pony Club was able to share its magic with those who never have been able to attend a symposium/convention before...including members in the Virgin Islands, Alaska, Hawaii, and even Hong Kong! The breadth of options was impressive, offering many practical opportunities for all, both educationally, and with an eye to providing enhanced programming this year.

Perhaps the most ambitious undertaking ever, was the virtual Quiz that took place in February. With 894 participants and hundreds of volunteers, this competition exceeded every conceivable expectation.

Several things have become very apparent. While COVID-19 certainly has hindered many Pony Club activities as we have experienced them in the past, these interesting times also have opened many new doors and methods by which we are able to reach our diverse and far-flung membership. We all look forward to returning to “normal,” whatever that really means, but we now also look forward to continuing some of the many practices, techniques, and unique opportunities that have emerged over the past year. It is interesting how the pandemic has enhanced Pony Club’s ability to effectively serve its membership and its volunteers.

The entire Pony Club National Office staff has worked diligently over the past year to provide quality virtual opportunities, programs, and competitions, and I would be remiss if I did not thank them all for collectively making magic a reality when the rest of us could only scratch our heads. It has been such a tremendous team effort, involving ALL Pony Club National Office staff! And, on the volunteer side, every Board member and every USPC volunteer has contributed so much to the success of the 2020 and 2021 virtual events and programs, so I thank you all.

The Strategic Planning Committee is busy working through the many recommendations approved by the Board last October. The transformational changes, some of which already have been enacted, will firmly establish Pony Club as the leading Equestrian educational and character development organization anywhere.

### *Comments from Executive Director Teresa Woods*

Thank you to our talented staff and dedicated volunteers, and recognition of their extraordinary efforts in bringing “virtual” to life in Pony Club. Two inaugural events took place in January and February, events that pre-COVID-19 would not have been imaginable, and without the vision and determination of staff and volunteers, even possible.

The 2021 Virtual Equine Symposium and Convention, held in January, was very successful and well attended. More than 500 Pony Club members, volunteers, leaders, and friends joined together to network, learn, and enjoy a variety of live and on demand sessions and activities. The framework that is now built, and the success of the virtual symposium/convention format, opens great future opportunities and potential for participant accessibility and program flexibility.

The Virtual Quiz Rally was a monumental, and commendable effort by National Office team and numerous volunteers. Recognizing that COVID-19 caused the cancellation of Quiz rallies across the country, the Activities Department built, from the ground up, a Virtual Quiz Rally to provide an opportunity for members to become eligible for Championships. Exceeding the highest of expectations, 894 members participating in over four days of competition and across five time zones.

There is optimism and positive indicators that we are turning the curve with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact it has had on business functions and everyday life. An increase in the lists of location insurance shows more and more clubs and regions are resuming Pony Club activities. Perhaps the most encouraging news is the latest membership numbers, showing a 6.26% increase in membership compared to the same time last year. In addition, registration for Festival 2021 opened May 3, and while too early to gauge participation, the number of inquiries received at the National Office suggests there is a lot of member enthusiasm and anticipation for the event.

### **Report from the Treasurer/Finance Committee**

USPC applied for a second forgiving Payroll Protection Program loan in February and was approved for the loan in April.

The Finance Committee is focusing on Treasurer Training for 2021. A training video from the 2021 Virtual Equine Symposium & Convention is located on the Treasurer’s Resource page of the website and we are working on adding videos and content for Treasurers and other local leaders throughout the year.

### **Report of VP of Instruction**

The Instruction Department is continuing to support membership by creating online materials for use by members, leaders, and instructors. Our goal is to have pertinent, up to date information that is easy to find, has value to the members, and is also available to the parents.

The Instruction Department is working with the Activities and Marketing & Communications Departments for a fun and successful Festival 2021.

There are many projects in the works, from the National Testing Curriculum Committee; Horse Management Committee; and the D-1 through C-2 Committee; which will add value to the offerings available on the website to aid members and leaders in advancing their horse care knowledge.

Visiting Instruction Committee – The program has been cancelled for 2021. The committee is hopeful to start the program again in 2022.

The National Youth Congress Committee – The committee provided videos and content for the National Youth Congress/Academy of Achievement for the 2021 virtual Equine Symposium & Convention.

### **Report of VP of Activities**

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The Board approved new Eventing Championships Eligibility Parameters which reduce the burden of hosting an Eventing rally and streamline the eligibility process for members. The new parameters in addition to existing parameters are both in effect for the 2021 Championships year. Championships 2022 and future competitions will run according to the new Eventing rally and eligibility requirements. Updated documentation for 2022 will be available [here](#) following the closing of Championships 2021 entries. Members who earned eligibility under the prior parameters will still be eligible for Championships 2021.

The Virtual Quiz Rally was a huge success with significant volunteer and National Office Support. A total of 894 members competed over four days of competition. This allowed members to earn Championships' eligibility as many Quiz rallies were canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Additional competition dates will be added to offer members who could not participate in the early virtual rally the opportunity to attend Quiz Championships during Festival.

Championship's entries opened on May 3 and run through noon ET on Monday, June 28. This is the second time the new Championships entry process is being utilized, where regional leadership marks members as eligible and then the member (or parent) registers the member.

Festival 2021 will be held at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY, July 19 – 26. A Gymkhana and Western Trail Invitational is being held in conjunction with the event.

The Activities Council is working on the newly restructured committees. Existing committee members can serve on one of the new committees. The new committee structure will be in place by the Activities Council call in July.

### **International Exchanges**

- International Foxhunting Exchange – Is the only in-person exchange currently planned for 2021, with USPC hosting the exchange in Aiken, SC, November 18-29, 2021.
- International Games Exchange – Australia is planning to host the exchange in 2022.
- International Tetrathlon Exchange – The 2020 exchange was cancelled. The next exchange will occur in 2022.
- Virtual Dressage Exchange – The Pony Club International Alliance (PCIA) initiated a discussion

for hosting a Virtual Dressage Exchange for interested countries (see PCIA report for more details).

### **Report of VP of Regional Administration**

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Regional Administration will utilize internal online outreach as we provide leadership training in the months and years ahead. We are still determining the best way to facilitate meaningful opportunities as a supplement to preferred in-person training. Plans for virtual Leadership Training Outreach and for leadership events this summer during Festival and the 2022 Equine Symposium and Convention are underway.

The Membership Committee is the only remaining Committee of the former Regional Administration Council per Board approval of the Task Force recommendation from last fall. It is currently functioning as an “advice and sounding board” on membership topics to the VP of Regional Administration. The committee is reviewing its organization policy to determine how to best fit for the future.

### **National Youth Board Report**

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The following are our 2021 overarching goals:

- Increase USPC member engagement and interest.
- Continue to generate and develop new innovative and modern ideas.
- Connect with the USPC members at large.
- Maximize NYB recognition

The Marketing Committee is working to diversifying content posted on the NYB Facebook page and USPC Instagram by posting member spotlights, pin photos, pony of the month highlights, alumni successes, and NYB committee promotional engagement. Marketing will be gearing up in the coming months to promote Festival 2021 over the various social media platforms.

The Pin Promise Committee continues to receive monthly pin photos from members they take to our Pin Promise slack channel, which helps generate future #PinPromise and #PonyClubProud centric marketing content. Brooke DeCant, a member of the Pin Promise committee was able to attend the Land Rover Three-Day Event, where they were authorized by USPC to take photos of Pony Club Graduates in the 5\* event.

The Regional Youth Board (RYB) committee continues to update its page on the website with usable documents and information that is clear, concise, and up to date while making it more engaging and appealing to members. On May 7, the committee hosted an online Q&A live forum for regional youth boards around the country. The committee is thinking about having monthly live forums.

The Service Committee turned their efforts into individualized service projects due to the 2021 Equine Symposium & Convention being virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee is planning a Festival Service Event, while will run alongside Festival 2021. The event will be conducted as a scavenger hunt, but with a twist. Instead of items or landmarks, the “hunt” will be to get to know the volunteers around the competitors during the Championships portion of Festival. Each competitor will have the opportunity to thank volunteers through small acts of service, or just a simple hello through the program.

The USPC Upper-Level Opportunities & Networking Facebook Group page for USPC related to Upper-Level opportunities, tips, information, and an inclusive environment where information can be exchanged, gained, and learned has 564 members as of May 2021. Posts are planned through a content calendar as well as open to anyone that has an interesting topic to bring up, all posts are approved and monitored by the NYB Advisor, NYB Chair, and Upper-Level Committee Chair.

The Equine Scholars Program is ready to be reviewed for approval by the Board of Governors.

### **Pony Club International Alliance (PCIA) Report**

The Pony Club (United Kingdom) - Plans to hold Championships over 10 days to allow them to occur in a COVID safe manner.

The Canadian Pony Club - The Covid restrictions and lockdown have really affected the Canadian Pony Club. They are trying to meet the membership in different ways. Virtual Programs have been a must with meeting this challenging time with virtual quiz and dressage.

New Zealand Pony Club - They have had a few mini-lockdowns only. Pony Club has continued throughout this time. National Dressage Championships occurred in January. They went paperless with scoring and results were immediately emailed to participants.

Pony Club Australia – They are planning for their National Championships in September. They have an active marketing campaign to attract members to rejoin as many did not due to COVID-19 lockdowns in the country.

Hong Kong Pony Club – Hong Kong recently came out of lockdown in April. All social distancing rules remain in force including the size of group gatherings to four people. HKPC did hold a socially distanced Easter Junior Camp for the younger members and a cross-country schooling for the older members. To make a dent in the backlog of efficiency tests they decided to allow the D and D plus to be assessed by their instructors during regular lessons. The C testing restricted the candidates into batches of four virtual competitions continue to attract a lot of entries from junior riders. Competitions include virtual dressage and a new virtual equitation jumping series.

The Irish Pony Club - Ireland just came out of a COVID-19 lockdown for the country. The Irish Pony Club has begun Pony Club meetings but is not having competitions at this time.

South African Pony Club – South Africa is currently on lockdown level one and all Pony Club activities have resumed. Branches have all health protocols in place (social distancing, sanitizing, mask worn except when riding). All rallies must have a Covid Compliance Officer in place. They ended the year with membership down 20% due to Covid. Testing down for the same reason.

PCIA Youth Council - A proposal for a PCIA youth council has been submitted for approval. The council is modeled after USPC's Youth Board and the Australian Pony Club Youth Council. The Youth Council will consist of 2 youth members from each country with one being appointed as the speaker. If approved the PCIA will use USPC National Youth Board's application.

Virtual Dressage Exchange - Will be held in June 2021. Elise McAuley, Hong Kong Pony Club;

Samantha Jones New Zealand Pony Club, and Sue Smith have been working together to create a fun exchange to include more members from each country. Videos will be submitted and four members from each age group will be drawn for the final competition of five classes.

Inter-Pacific Exchange - Is currently scheduled for January 2022. This might change as some countries are still in lockdown from COVID-19.

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## **Board Committee Highlights**

### **Safety:**

An article on Incident Reporting will be in the next issue of *Discover USPC*.

### **Strategic Planning:**

The committee reviewed USPC's current mission statement and Vision. USPC's mission should reflect the current state of USPC, and the vision should reflect where USPC should be. The Board approved USPC's new Mission Statement as follows:

*The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. is an educational organization which builds the foundations of teamwork and sportsmanship through riding, mounted sports, care of horses and ponies, while developing and enhancing leadership, confidence, responsibility, and a sense of community in its youth and adult members.*

### **Marketing & Communications:**

A branding guide has been established and the USPC logo has been reviewed so that colors accurately match the policy color Pantone 280. Updated embroidery thread recommendations will be published on the Leaders / Promote Pony Club page so that leaders will have specific threads to reference for USPC colors.

*Discover USPC* is the new trademarked name of the official publication for USPC.

Shop Pony Club – the online catalog has had some updates featuring new products and photos. A Subscription Box program will be starting just in time for Festival 2021, with plans for theme boxes to continue throughout the year.

### **Development:**

The 2021 Annual Fund goal is \$248,700, as of April we have raised \$46,264.

USPC Heritage Society - The USPC Heritage Society recognizes those individuals who have made provisions for Pony Club through their estate plans. One of our goals for 2021 is to raise awareness of and increase the number of members in The Heritage Society.

USPC College Scholarships – We received 24 applications and will notify the recipients by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Governance:**

The committee continues to review all policies to simplify and clarify the following – what are policies, what are procedures, and what can be eliminated.

The following policies, procedures and resolutions have been revised:

- 0900 Member and Volunteer Safety and Protection Policy:
- 1300 Programs Administration Council (“PAC”)
- 1350 National Youth Board (NYB)
- 5010 Standards of Proficiency-
- Resolution #9: Standing Committees of the Board of Governors

The following policies and procedures have been retired:

- 1350A National Youth Board attendance guidelines
- 4001 and 4001A Articles of Organization of Member Clubs
- 4008 Community Service
- 4901 Club Milestone Awards
- 5010 A through E
- 5020 Teaching and Testing to the Standards of Proficiency
- 8000 Regional Administration Council
- 8001 Regional Admin Council Committees and Attachments A-D
- 9100 and 9100 A Representation in Equine Organizations
- 9400 Official Publication
- 9450 Advertising and Copy in Pony Club Publications

For all updated and revised Policies/ Procedures and Resolutions, please visit the [website](#).

### **Report of the Equine Symposium & Convention Committee**

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The 2022 Equine Symposium & Convention will be held at the Norfolk Waterside Marriot, Norfolk, VA, January 26-30.