

**OUR FAIR CAROUSEL, INC.**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
April 24, 2008

**Present:** Peter Boehm, Arthur Curtze, Barbara Deneen, Mike Hahm, Trude Harmon, Bob Herskovitz, Herb Karow, Lorraine Kenfield, Bob Marabella, Kerry McCartney, Linda McDonald, Mike Merrick, Ed Mishmash, Bill Nunn, Nancy Peterson, Helen Warren, Jim Weichert. Guest, Tamara Beckley

The meeting came to order at 7:05 at the Como Park Visitors Center. Boehm presented framed certificates to Art Curtze, Barbara Deneen, Lorraine Kenfield, and Mike Merrick to honor their adoptions of horses and, in Merrick's case, the band organ.

Minutes of the meeting of January 10, 2008, were approved as distributed.

**Bylaw amendment.** Members voted on a proposed amendment to change officer terms from one year to two, to coincide with membership terms. The motion carried without dissent.

**Finance report.** Jim Weichert pointed out that the fiscal 2007 financial statement and auditors report that he distributed had not changed from the unaudited version he had distributed in January. The board approved the statement. Weichert said all filings are current; he got an extension on the income tax filing. Boehm reported that OFC's cash balance was approximately \$147,000 on March 31, 2008. Boehm said that in keeping with discussion at previous meetings, OFC has terminated its relationship with Associated Bank and has moved its account to Park Midway Bank, which has given us a \$50,000 line of credit. Moving some of the cash balance into a certificate of deposit, as previously recommended by Weichert, would be a next step, Boehm said.

**Volunteer committee.** McCartney reported that about 60 volunteers had attended the volunteer event the previous weekend. At the event, the committee announced a number of initiatives, including a display of hours worked in order to spur competition, incentives for weekend shifts, a sweatshirt that volunteers can purchase at cost, and a water cooler to cut down on waste from water bottles. At the volunteer event and in the newsletter, announcements were made that this year we are insisting on doing every job by the book, every shift. Announcements are underscoring that this year we are more serious than ever, and if an individual cannot follow prescribed procedures, they should sign up for a different job. The shift supervisor will observe the first few rides and then gather volunteers together for feedback.

The committee sent volunteer thank-you cards before the season, and reported that since the last meeting there have been no contacts from volunteers indicating problems or concerns.

**Gift shop.** Tammy Beckley reported that the gift shop will have a mix of familiar and new merchandise; about \$8,000 has been spent on new stock for the season. Audrey Clasemann is setting up and will coordinate the shop.

**Band organ.** The band organ spent the winter in Mike Merrick's basement, he reported. He rebuilt valves and pneumatics and reduced wind pressure, which may drop the sound level

slightly. Boehm asked Merrick to investigate potential forms of sound abatement in the building itself, and Merrick agreed to do that.

Art Curtze said that carousel music compact disc Volume 2 will be ready May 1, 2009.

**Carousel.** Curtze reported that the carousel is running even better than it did at the Fair in 1988. New slip rings were installed in early April. He said some minor items needed attention while he was in town for spring maintenance. A newly rebuilt gear reducer was shimmed too high when it was installed, and he has fixed it. One horse rod and telescope are not safe because the rod is too short; he planned to install a new rod the next day.

Discussion turned to the carousel platform. Boehm said the wood is old and dry and weak and will need to be replaced; he hopes to do that by 2014, the carousel's 100th birthday. The platform is tongue-in-groove fir and the pieces have dried out and split over the years. Several years ago Dick Kenfield braced it with oak pieces underneath, but that was meant to be a temporary fix. Boehm plans to get estimates over the coming year or so in order to decide how and when to do it.

The board discussed the possibility of a hydraulic lift for wheelchair access, to replace the ramp currently in use. The lift would be installed in the concrete platform flush with the surface. A chair would roll into place on the flat surface, then sides would lift and the platform would rise to the level of the carousel platform. It requires that the chariot stop in the same place each time, and that could be arranged. Using a hydraulic lift would be faster and more convenient for volunteers and riders, although it would require frequent and substantial maintenance. Boehm said we will investigate the idea, and look into whether a new platform should be installed before the lift is created.

**Restoration.** Herskovitz reported that he repaired two broken legs and Linda McDonald was going to paint the pinto repair the next day. We are continuing to refine the materials used in repairs. We also have an extra black metal step now that two have been repaired. We have not made progress in manufacturing new steps; Herskovitz will talk with Clyde Boysen about various possible casting methods. Herskovitz showed a step that had been reinforced with extra metal at the bend, and Curtze asked whether we should make the same repair to all of the steps. Herskovitz said he can get one or two at a time free of charge, but doing all of them would have a significant cost and would mean taking all of the horses off the carousel. If we want to repair or replace all the steps, the ideal time would be when we take the horses off to replace the platform. Curtze said at that time we should also replace all the felt in the horse hangers and jumper shaft bearings.

**Communication.** Nancy Peterson reported the successful migration of the website, [ourfaircarousel.org](http://ourfaircarousel.org), to a new internet service provider. This means we no longer have to pay the previous provider, and e-mail is once again working through the site.

**Fundraising.** Boehm reported that Francy Reitz, a former long-time volunteer, came to ride the carousel last fall, decided to volunteer again, and then decided to adopt a horse as a birthday gift to herself. She has adopted the outside row horse that was dubbed "King Arthur's Charger" during the 1989 State Fair when she began volunteering.

Helen Warren reported that she had not made as much progress with a fundraising plan as she had hoped. She suggested a number of different models for fundraising and requested feedback. She raised the idea of a season pass; board members agreed we need to investigate the logistics of a pass in relation to the amount of money that could be raised. She talked about the idea of holding an event at the carousel for prospective donors, foundations, and people who have already adopted horses. Both the prospective individual donors and the foundation representatives would get an idea of what the carousel means to people, and foundations could see its value as both a community effort and a community asset. She said she believed that foundations would consider requests for capstone gifts that would complete the project and reward a well conceived and well executed community-wide effort.

It was agreed that OFC does not need gifts to support current operations, but does need protection against future hardship such as being closed for a long time due to a broken gear or an outbreak of bird flu. Jim Weichert suggested seeking commitments to support the carousel “in case of need” rather than outright cash gifts. Others said we should define the dollar amount that will provide protection and develop a compelling case. Boehm said if we had to disassemble the carousel for major repairs (such as a broken central bevel gear) we might have \$75,000 to \$100,000 in lost revenue and the same amount in repair costs. Boehm said if we got the remaining 19 horses adopted, we would have a reserve account of about \$400,000, which would be an appropriate amount for this purpose. It was noted that adoptions are a vehicle, but they are not the case for support.

McCartney said if we can use a donor event to promote the value of the carousel and what people love about it, we should be able to get some individual gifts, and then, as Warren had said, foundation gifts would come later. Bill Nunn spoke of an organization that struggled in the beginning but eventually got to a point where it could set up a reserve fund. With no debt, it began to have operating surpluses and was able to expand its activities and give back to the community, and it is now sponsoring a scholarship. Boehm said he sees OFC also contributing to the ability of other organizations to raise funds, as we do with Rein in Sarcoma and the Como area block nurses program.

Mike Hahm noted that as the current leadership turns over responsibilities, the organization is likely to have to pay more staff members to take over some of the roles now filled on a volunteer basis. Boehm said we need to find apprentices for several roles including Mike Merrick’s role with the band organ, Mark Carlson’s role with maintenance, and Boehm’s overall responsibility. Hahm pointed out that when an organization makes that kind of transition it usually has to create paid positions, which impacts its financial situation.

Weichert suggested creating cross-promotional events in which a company, for a significant fee, could use the carousel as a reward to employees or clients. Warren said she would work with Tammy Beckley to identify an evening in early to mid-September for a donor event.

**Operations.** Beckley reported that preparations for the season are going smoothly. She has placed volunteer recruitment notices in many outlets and has about a dozen potential volunteers who will receive training. Returning volunteers cleaned the carousel and the building interior at the event April 19. She has three returning shift supervisors as well as the gift shop manager, a person to polish brass regularly, and Mark Carlson to do regular

maintenance (he is also one of the shift supervisors). It was agreed that Beckley and the three shift supervisors will receive some training for what to do in various kinds of emergency situations.

**President's report.** Boehm said he has spoken with Tina Dumbrowski of the park staff about creating a vegetative screen across the street side of our building, which is fairly unattractive. The cost is about \$2,400 for materials, and the park staff will do the planting.

The carousel will operate free of charge for Rein in Sarcoma in July, the Como Block Nurse Program in August, and ARC of the greater Twin Cities, also in August (one hour free). There will be a volunteer potluck event in July, and a band organ event in the park in June 7. Boehm also noted that he will speak to the Golden Valley Rotary Club in early May.

State law requires a new annual inspection requirement, and Boehm is working with our insurer so that their annual inspection will meet the new requirements. We have to add some new procedures; Boehm has developed a protocol involving a new daily inspection by the shift supervisor, and he is working with the insurance company on details. We will then be able to send a copy of the annual insurance inspection report to the City to meet the new requirements.

There has been discussion of opening up one of the display windows to accommodate more carousel figures, and we need to develop a cost estimate. Trude Harmon and Bob Herskovitz were looking at a short-term solution, but various issues arose. There are complications because we need to retain as much space as possible in both the office and the studio, and because we don't want to create traffic jams in the building.

Boehm asked Mike Hahm three questions about the exterior of the building. Hahm said to deal with a hornets' nest on the face of the building, send an e-mail to Stan ... Boehm said that in the patios, the concrete is broken and heaved up and gets a little worse each year because of frost heave; Hahm said send him an e-mail about that. Boehm noted that copper thefts have been in the news with increasing frequency and that our gutters and downspouts, and even the roof, are potentially vulnerable. Hahm said Como has stronger security and is a safer location than any other park system. However, if the downspouts are stolen, it would make the newspaper, and as soon as we replaced them they would be likely to get taken again, so in such a case we might want to rethink the materials we use.

It was suggested that we might rig some sensors to the copper, and that we should check with the alarm company for suggestions about monitoring the copper. Boehm said the alarm company is coming out soon to check the motion sensors, so he will talk to them.

Bill Nunn said an individual who is writing a book is looking for PTC factory photos and also for information about McFadden, who owned the carousel from 1914 to 1939, and would welcome suggestions of a good resource person.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35. The next meeting is October 2 at the Como Streetcar Station.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy A. Peterson, board secretary