

SOA Board Meeting Minutes

Saturday, May 29, 2010

2010 National Gasshuku, Shintaido Farm, Deerfield, Massachusetts

Present: Bill Burtis (President), Haruyoshi Ito, Michael Thompson, Shin Aoki (NTC Chair), Linda Foss (Treasurer), Mary Coe Foran, Rob Kedoin, Byron Russell

Guests from the NTC: Jim Sterling, Joe Zawielski, Connie Borden Sheets, Bela Breslau

NTC members were invited to attend the meeting by Bill Burtis.

Not Present: Rob Gaston, David Franklin

1) Topic: By-Laws Revisions and Board Composition. Bill Burtis brought to the attention of the board the need for changes in the by-laws to reflect the current structure and function of the board, specifically the number of board members (we have one more than the by-laws allow) and having the head of the NTC as a board member. Also discussed was the function of the Honorary Board Members with the suggestion that we consider the purpose and composition of Honorary Board Members, and consider if we need new ones to help in organization and fund raising. **Action Item: Bill Burtis will send out a proposed revision of the By-Laws.**

2) Topic: Treasurer Position and Report: Linda Foss has taken over the position of Treasurer from Sandra Bengtsson. There was a general expression of thanks to Sandra for her work in this position over the past years. Linda presented a short summary of our finances. Overall, we are losing more than \$2000/year for the past 3 years. The SOA account balance as of 12/31/09 was \$10,228. Membership is down about 50% last year with a concomitant decrease in income. Expenses have been cut back already to accommodate the reduction in income, but we are still running deficits. Rob Kedoin asked if we need to continue taking credit cards, or if PayPal would suffice. Bill Burtis proposed a freeze on unnecessary expenditures until our income increases, and suggested that any new expenditures be determined to lead to an increase in income or an increase in SOA membership or new Shintaido practitioners.

[Note: After the meeting, membership numbers were clarified.]

Year	Membership total
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2008	76
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2009	42
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2010	52, with a possible increase as members continue to pay their dues.]
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A general discussion followed and it was pointed out that we have certain recurring obligations (such as the pension fund) and that most expenses have already been cut. One suggestion was to change the Body Dialogue publication to online only for the general membership, and provide an archived version on the SOA website. Bela Breslau and Mary Coe Foran suggested a fund-raising campaign to all previous

members of SOA, especially those not currently paying dues. Personalized emails would be more effective, as well as sending a Thank-you email afterwards. For specific cases, personal letters or cards may be more effective. Repetition and consistent follow-up makes a marketing campaign more successful. Another suggestion was to ask for financial contributions from the regional SOA groups to help cover the costs of items such as insurance.

Action Item: Bill Burtis will ask Sandra Bengtsson for a detailed balance sheet.

Action Item: Ask Rob Gaston to present a membership report at the next meeting.

3) Topic: International Gasshuku 2012. Connie Borden-Sheets (ISC Board Chair) presented information on the plans for the 2012 International Gasshuku. ISC dues are due in August. The ISC is willing to share responsibility for 2012 IG in so far as that is possible logistically, splitting responsibility financially and organizationally. Connie requested a proposal from the SOA Board by June 19th, 2010 if SOA is interested in organizing this event.

Cheryl Williams has volunteered to organize the event, and the Board confirmed a proposal to ask Cheryl to be the event manager. In previous SOA meetings, there had been discussion of hosting the 2012 IG in Hawaii, with David Sullivan as the local Maui contact and a YMCA camp as the site at a cost of \$17/night (\$40 with food). Jim Sterling presented Cheryl's concerns for the cost and the difficulty of long-distance organization. She plans to research locations in California. Connie reported that July or August of 2012 was the preferred time-frame.

Michael Thompson proposed that the SOA board offer to the ISC to host the 2012 International Gasshuku with Cheryl Williams as the organizer. Shin Aoki seconded the proposal and it was passed by general acclamation. Specific costs, site and dates are still to be determined. **Action Item: Bill Burtis will email Connie Borden Sheets a confirmation of SOA's offer to host the 2012 IG.**

4) Topic: NTC suggestions for promotion of membership. Rob Kedoin asked the NTC members present if they had any suggestions for promoting Shintaido and increasing SOA membership, and if there was anything the board could do to assist them in this.

Connie Borden Sheets responded with the ideas that all Shintaido class participants be required to join SOA, that we create a membership packet, and that we send out a Thank-you card when new members join. It was pointed out that we need to work on articulating the advantages of joining SOA for the new members and general membership. [Note: David Franklin in absentia commented that requiring all class participants may not be practical and suggested we encourage all participants who attend *regularly* to join SOA.] Bela Breslau pointed out the importance of consistency in on-going marketing. Rob Kedoin said that he will continue working on updating the membership database and increasing its functionality. Linda Foss asked if SOA had an Administrative position to handle these tasks and follow-up. Robert Gaston is the Membership Chairperson. Mary Coe Foran suggested we go back to the 2008 Membership List for any outreach since it is much larger than the current membership list. Bela Breslau

recommended including a donation option for those who don't wish to continue practicing, but still want to support SOA. Byron Russell brought up David Franklin's idea from a previous meeting that we create a subcommittee to help Instructors find places to teach and to support them as they try to create new classes and expand current classes. Bela asked how we currently support new Instructors when they pass their exams. Bill Burtis suggested some kind of mentorship for new Instructors, either from SOA or the NTC.

5) Topic: Next Meeting. The next meeting will be Saturday, June 26th, 12:30pm (California), 3:30 pm (Massachusetts), 9:30 pm (Italy – please confirm the time based on 3:30pm on the East Coast). The meeting will be by Skype. Action Item: Mary Coe Foran will set up a Skype Network prior to the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Byron J. Russell, June 12, 2010