

**2011 AFS-USA National Volunteer Assembly  
Third Annual  
St. Louis, MO  
Minutes/Highlights**

**Friday, April 8, 2011**

General Session opened at 6:00 p.m. National Council Chair, Mary Porterfield welcomed the assembly. St Louis hosts – Missouri Gateway Team – introduced their 17 AFS participants from around the world. AFS participants welcomed the assembly with a greeting in their home languages. Mary Porterfield and Jorge Castro, President of AFS-USA gave a report on the Status of the AFS-USA House building, begun in 2009. AFS-USA has been adding to the foundation each year. President Castro said that AFS looks forward to the housewarming in 2012, as new programs are being implemented.

President Castro reported that AFS-International President, Tachi Cazal, will be leaving his position during 2011. President Castro recognized the many accomplishments of Tachi Cazal and presented him with a gift from AFS-USA.

President Cazal presented the annual Galatti Award to Larry Ralph (posthumously) for his many years of service to AFS in a variety of roles.

Jose Ruiz-Salas and Al Russell, on behalf of the Nominations and Governance Committee, introduced the AFS-USA National Council candidates – Emily Betz Close, Deb Dahlberg, Susan Lewis, Kathleen McNabb, Nancy Satola, Elmer Woods – and Board of Directors candidates – Gerry Bair, Jeannie Frazier, Susan Moon. Each candidate gave a two-minute presentation their experience and their interest in an elected position. Their presentations were followed by a Question and Answer (Q&A) session with the assembly.

**Saturday 9, 2011**

Mary Porterfield called the business meeting of the National Volunteer Assembly to order at 8:20 a.m.

- Anne Sweet made a motion to approve the minutes of the 2010 NVA business meeting. Cassandra Babbitt seconded the motion. The members of the assembly unanimously approved the motion.
- Jane Howard, by direction of the NC, moved approval of the amendments to the bylaws, as presented to the NVA (published to AFSwiki.org, with a date of March 4, 2011). Jane noted that the last page of the bylaw document (page 10) included an explanation of changes.

The chair asked the NVA to vote on the four substantive bylaw changes individually plus a general change for “housekeeping” purposes.

First Change (underlined portions):

Section VII A. Standing Committees

The National Volunteer Assembly may establish standing committees as deemed appropriate. These committees shall be comprised of Assembly delegates, National Council representatives and other volunteers and staff, as necessary.

**There shall be the following standing committee: The Diversity Committee. The Diversity Committee is charged with the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of diversity initiatives across the organization**

Members of the Assembly voted unanimously to accept this bylaw change.

Second Change:

**VIII. Parliamentary Authority**

**The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern this organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws.**

Members of the Assembly voted unanimously to accept this bylaw change.

Third Change:

**VIII. Amendment of Bylaws**

**These bylaws may be amended by any National Volunteer Assembly meeting by a two thirds vote of the delegates provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted to the National Council at least 90 days prior to the meeting and to all National Volunteer Assembly delegates at least 30 days prior to the meeting.**

Members of the Assembly voted unanimously to accept this bylaw change.

Fourth Change:

Section IIB: At-Large Delegates

Delegates may also represent AFS-USA at-large during the National Volunteer Assembly. **The National Volunteer Assembly Planning Committee will coordinate the process of the selection of the NVA At-Large- Delegates. The names of those selected will be forwarded to the National Council for approval.**

Members of the Assembly voted unanimously to accept this bylaw change.

Housekeeping Change

Accept other changes marked in the document. These changes were described as housekeeping; for example, sentences were moved to more appropriate sections. This vote included a change made at the NVA to Section IIB. This sentence should read **National Volunteer Assembly Planning** Committee instead of the underlined: "**Nominations and Governance** Committee shall make every attempt to select at-large delegates that will add diversity to the greater volunteer assembly." This correction is consistent with approved changes to Section IIB.

Members of the Assembly voted unanimously to accept this bylaw change.

- Representatives from potential 2012 NVA sites presented rationale for selecting their sites: Phoenix, AZ, and Charlotte, NC.
- Jose Ruiz-Salas moderated a Q&A with Board of Directors candidates.
- Al Russell moderated a Q& A with National Council candidates.

**1:15 Jorge Castro, AFS-USA President**, made a presentation to the assembly, entitled Resilience, Change, Growth.

## **2:00 Motions**

Sharon Held and Jane Howard, members of NC, thanked the Nominations and Governance Committee for moving motions forward.

### **1. Motion on Volunteer Structure:**

Audrey Pinchock (Michigan Area Team) and Bill Callahan (One World Area Team), on behalf of the Volunteer Structure Committee, moved for approval of the motion for chartering volunteer teams (published to AFSWiki with a date of March 4, 2011).

Rationale for motion was provided in the background paper from the Volunteer Structure Team. Summary from paper: "The proposal eliminates many of the chartering requirements implemented in 2008 in favor of focusing on true needs such as compliance with DoS standards."

### **2. Equity and Inclusion Statement**

Darrin Smith-Gaddis (Sending Program Specialist, New York Office) and Elmer Woods Elmer Woods (Sponsored Programs volunteer, Miss Tennky Area Team), on behalf of the NVA Diversity Committee, moved to adopt the AFS-USA Equity and Inclusion Statement (published to the AFSWiki with a date of March 7, 2011).

Rationale for the motion, including data supporting it, was provided in the background paper from the Diversity Committee. The motion is presented as a first step in making a case for expanding footprints in new communities for hosting and sending; a strong statement to present to AFS stakeholders. Motion was not presented as a referendum on diversity, but an articulation of what AFS-USA already believes.

## **2:25 Round Robin Discussion on Motions**

### **4:00 Floor Debate and Vote on Motions**

Jane Howard moderated this session. Staff distributed fans to voting delegates. Jane explained the process for introducing amendments, speaking, and voting.

#### Equity and Inclusion Motion

Jane Howard asked whether there was discussion of the Equity and Inclusion motion. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion carried with 74 votes in favor, none opposed.

The following is the motion, unchanged from the Diversity Committee's proposal:

Move to adopt the AFS-USA Equity and Inclusion Statement:

The mission of AFS-USA is dependent on the quality of our volunteer and participant network.

The mission and the preservation and growth of this network requires that AFS-USA strive to extend opportunities to volunteers and participants regardless of their gender, race, sex, age, creed, sexual orientation, religion, veteran or marital status, national or ethnic origin, political opinion, economic and social standing or physical and mental ability.

AFS-USA is committed to providing international and intercultural learning experiences for individuals from diverse backgrounds and communities through a global volunteer partnership. We believe an inclusionary and equitable approach enriches our ability to draw from all voices, perspectives and methods. To this end, we are involved in a number of initiatives to make this a reality and further advance our mission.

AFS-USA affirms its commitment to volunteer equity and inclusion as an asset that enriches individuals, organizations, and society. We believe that international education and exchange deepens our appreciation of the complex contributions of human society as well as our understanding of the consequences of social division. We solicit and encourage each volunteer's contribution to a collaborative organization that welcomes diversity of opinion and positions in its pursuit of shared goals.

As an intercultural exchange organization, we seek in principle and in practice to make AFS-USA increasingly equitable and inclusive, to encourage participation by underrepresented groups at all levels of our organization, and to explore new opportunities to use our inclusiveness as a resource for strengthening our organization and advancing its mission. We pledge to hold ourselves accountable for the pursuit of these goals.

### Volunteer Structure Motion

Jane Howard asked whether there was discussion of the following motion on volunteer structure.

The Volunteer Structure Committee moves that distinctions between area teams and unaffiliated chapters be eliminated and that the requirements for chartering a volunteer team be limited to the following criteria:

1. Be in good standing with Compliance Standards as established by the NVA in 2010 or as amended by future NVAs, or as amended by the National Council in response to changes in the U.S. Department of State regulations or AFS-USA policies and procedures.
2. Having an elected team chair (2 year term serving no more than 2 consecutive terms)
3. Having a team treasurer not from the same household as the chair
4. Having a defined geography based on zip codes
5. Adhering to financial guidelines of AFS-USA
6. Making and keeping to the best of its ability commitments for hosting and sending numbers

7. A team may have affiliated chapters. If it does, it is responsible for ensuring that they are chartered.

Upon passage of this proposal, the moratorium on teams breaking into smaller teams will be lifted subject to the following: If a team, in existence when this proposal is passed, desires to break into multiple smaller teams, it may petition the National Council for permission to do so by providing the National Council with a detailed justification for the break up and with a plan agreed upon by 3/4 of the team's registered volunteers to maintain the same total hosting and sending commitment levels.

#### First Motion to Amend

J. Eric Lomeli, San Antonio, moved to change #4 in the list of criteria to read: "Having a defined geography (currently based on ZIP codes)." Barb Guerra, NW Ohio, seconded the motion.

The amendment would allow for different methods of defining geography as methods become available.

There was also a brief discussion of current requirements for area teams.

Hearing no further discussion, Jane called for the vote. This amendment to the main motion carried with 77 votes in favor, none opposed.

#### Second Motion to Amend

Lisa George, NE Ohio, moved to strike the parenthesis in criterion #2 of the main motion: (~~2-year term serving no more than 2 consecutive terms~~). Chris Perkins, Greater Puget Sound, seconded this motion to amend.

Those speaking in favor of this amendment stated that term limits are important but chartering should not be determined based on "no succession in place". Term limits are a best practice but a separate issue from the chartering process.

Those speaking against the motion, noted that there is nothing in the bylaws that mandates elections, frequency of elections, or prevents a person from controlling a team for an unlimited time. Also noted: removing term limits does not support AFS-USA efforts to develop capacity (recruit new people). Some individuals serving in leadership positions saw the term limit language as a tool for recruiting new leaders and allowing (requiring) them to step down.

Hearing no further discussion, Jane called for the vote. This amendment to the main motion failed with 23 votes in favor and 55 opposed.

#### Third Motion to Amend

Jeannie Frazier, San Antonio, moved to amend #2 of the main motion to read: "Having a team chair elected to a two-year term." Rebecca Shawver, Cradle of Texas, seconded this motion to amend.

There was a concern expressed that the motion was ambiguous, allowing for just one two-year term. Arnette Schultz, Greater Chicago, offered a friendly amendment which was accepted. It read: "Having a biennially elected team chair." The goal was to allow for more than one two-year term.

Those speaking in favor indicated the amendment protects teams -- during chartering process -- that do not have a succession plan currently, but it continues to encourage elections.

Those speaking against the amendment said that it did not resolve the issue of turnover and it goes against the program goal to bring more people in -- there are chairs that do not want to step down. The motion did not represent a best practice supporting the health of the team.

Hearing no further discussion, Jane called for the vote. This amendment to the main motion carried (simple majority) with 39 votes in favor and 26 opposed.

Further discussion of the main motion.

Q: Can breaking into smaller teams happen at any time of the year or only at time of chartering? A: Only happen at time of charter. The organization will only deal with it once a year.

Q: How is "best of its ability" defined in #6? A: Not clearly defined, but used as in "May not reach goals, but working to the best of ability."

Hearing no further discussion, Jane called for the vote on the main motion, as amended. The motion carried with 75 votes in favor and 5 opposed.

5:30 Balloting on NC Candidates, Board of Directors Candidates, and 2012 NVA Site. Only voting delegated cast votes.

**Sunday, April 10, 2011**

Mary Porterfield opened assembly at 8:20.

Results of Election

Jeannie Frazier was elected to the Board of Directors with orientation and term beginning at June meeting. Mary recognized Gerri Bair and Susan Moon for their willingness to run and encouraged them to run again.

Emily Betz Close, Deb Dahlberg, and Susan Lewis were elected to the National Council with terms beginning on July 1st. Kathleen McNabb is the alternate to the National Council. Mary expressed appreciation for the commitment of Nancy Satola and Elmer Woods for running and also encouraged them.

Esra Kucukciftci led the induction of three new National Council members.

Site Selection

Charlotte, NC is the site of the 2012 NVA. Mary Porterfield thanked all the volunteers for their efforts on site selection.

## 12:15 Closing Session

Anne Herendeen recognized the tireless committee that worked to deliver a successful National Assembly

These members were part of the early work, but were unable to continue the whole year: Barb Kelly, Carolyn Sharratt, Sandy Hadley White.

These members worked all year with the committee, but were unable to attend the NVA: Annie Stewart (notetaker), Nancy Howard (N&G Committee), Hanna Lee Betz (Recognition).

These committee members were at the NVA and Anne recognized them and presented them with gifts: Damian Pisanelli (last year's chair/ Board of Directors member), Jane Howard, Frank Johnson, Kristen Bates (all three National Council members), Abby Munro Proulx (Recognition), Brian Quinn (Communications/Logo Designer), Phil Duyff (local host) and Bonnie Duyff (who assisted Phil), Harry Ferrell Locke and Susan Moon (returning members from last year), Claire Gunter (parliamentarian), Carolyn Nohe and Scott Hume (staff support), Carolyn Rehn and Wendy Hyatt (senior trainers and ex officio members).

Anne gave special thanks to Jim Laden, her co-leader, who handled many details and was troubleshooter extraordinaire (very flexible). Anne gave Jim a TOAD statute for his ability to "turn on a dime."

### Great Ideas Winners

The great ideas for sending and hosting will be published. Winners for sending: Karen M Nelson, Barb Light Casey, J Eric Lomeli. Winners for hosting: Gail Braten and J Eric Lomeli.

Keynote Speaker: Ann Stock, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State (bio online at AFSwiki).

Acknowledgement of and thank you to three National Council members who were retiring: Elizabeth Leatham, Anne Herendeen, and Mary Porterfield. A special thank you to Mary Porterfield for her leadership to and development of the National Council.

The Assembly adjourned at 2:00 p.m.