

**H.C.S.C. Alumni Club Annual Meeting Minutes**  
**December 7, 2023**

The meeting, via Zoom video conferencing, was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by President Bill Kruder.

**The following Board Members participated:**

Bill Kruder, Steve Strom, John Gresham, Robin Caldwell, Bob Cote, Dave Kloose, Larry Noble, Phil Shama, Jeannette Siegel, Bill Watson, Karen Witt, Sharon Winkle.

**Emeritus Board:**

Al Bell, Tom Clarke, Phil Esch

**Representing the Regional Meeting Groups:**

<b>Deep South</b>	Manny Fernandez
<b>Heart of America</b>	Rod Schweitzer
<b>Indiana</b>	Deryl Benz
<b>Mason Dixon</b>	None
<b>Mile High Denver/Rocky Mountain</b>	Royce Bervig
<b>Northern CA/Nevada</b>	Dave Kloose & Hal Monroe
<b>North Central</b>	Glen Thompson & Tom Clarke
<b>Northwest</b>	Phil Shama
<b>Ohio</b>	Ben Preston & Tim DeMuth
<b>Southern CA</b>	Ron Salzetti
<b>Southeastern</b>	Cecil Naftel & Bob Cote
<b>Southwest</b>	Bill Kruder

**Welcome**

After Secretary, Sharon Winkle, called the roll, Bill Kruder welcomed Board members to the meeting. Bill then recognized former Director Harry Smart who had joined the call and thanked him for all he did over the years as an HCSC National Board Member and Mason Dixon RMG Officer. He advised Harry that a certificate of appreciation was in the mail to him. Harry thanked the Board for this honor and then signed off from the call.

### **Approval of the Minutes from the September 6, 2023 Board Meeting**

The minutes from the September 6, 2023 Board Meeting which had been sent as a pre-read were discussed and no corrections were suggested. Action: Motion to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2023 Board Meeting was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

### **Special Honorary Member Presentation for David Kruger**

Bill Kruder advised Board members that author and JCPenney historian, David Kruger, is being recognized as an Honorary HCSC member for all he has done to celebrate James Cash Penney's legacy and the HCSC Alumni Club through his books and participation in "The Golden Rule Days" event in Kemmerer, WY over several years. As a Club member, he will now receive Partners magazine. Steve Strom also mentioned that he and David have become good friends through their participation in the annual Kemmerer Golden Rule Days. David (whose mother was also on the call) thanked HCSC Board members for this honor. He and his mother then signed off from the Zoom call.

### **HCSC Partner of the Quarter**

John Gresham announced that Emeritus Board member, Tom Clarke, has been selected as the latest "Partner of the Quarter" in recognition of the countless hours Tom spends on Membership and other HCSC business issues. A certificate of appreciation and a \$75 gift card (funded by CD Wealth Management in Dallas) has been sent to Tom, and he will be recognized in a future Partners issue. Tom thanked the Board and said he was honored to receive this recognition. John then advised the Board that the program has been renamed "The Partner of the Season", effective in 2024, in line with the three times per year that Partners Magazine is published.

### **Election of Officers and ByLaws Modifications**

#### **1 – Elections of Officers:**

Bill Kruder and Sharon Winkle advised Board members of the proposed election or re-election of the following members as Officers and/or Directors:

- Steve Strom for a 1 year term as President and a 4 year term as Director

- John Gresham for a 1 year term as 1<sup>st</sup> VP and continuation of his 4 year term as Director which ends in 2024
- Manny Fernandez for a 1 year term as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP and a 4 year term as Director
- Karen Bell as Director for a 4 year term
- Royce Bervig as Director for a 4 year term
- Sharon Winkle (who is currently serving a 4 year term as Director) as Secretary for a 1 year term
- Bill Kruder will continue on the Board for another year as his 4 year term as Director doesn't end until December 2024.

Action: Motion to approve the above Officer/Director elections was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

## **2 – ByLaws Modifications:**

Steve Strom and Sharon Winkle reviewed the two proposed HCSC Alumni Club ByLaws modifications that had been sent as a meeting pre-read a couple of weeks prior to the meeting:

- a) Allowing the RMG President to vote if the RMG National Representative is not in attendance, or available, with only one vote per RMG allowed, and
- b) Creating a new Associate Member classification whereby the Associate Member will pay dues and receive Partners magazine.

Action: Motion to approve the ByLaws amendments was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

## **President Transition**

Former President, Bill Kruder, then turned the meeting over to newly-elected President, Steve Strom.

## **Mission Statement**

Steve Strom advised the Board that the Executive Officers felt that developing a JCPenney National H.C.S.C. Alumni Club “Mission Statement” was appropriate to clarify for potential new members and others what HCSC was all about. He then read the Mission Statement that had been sent as a meeting pre-read. Action: the new JCPenney National H.C.S.C. Alumni Club Mission Statement was adopted at this meeting.

## **2024 HCSC Alumni Club Goals**

Steve Strom discussed the 2024 HCSC Alumni Club Goals that had been developed by the Executive Officers and sent as a meeting pre-read. He announced that, in furtherance of the 4<sup>th</sup> Goal about the future of the HCSC Alumni Club, Bill Kruder will head up a special committee to gather member input and project where the Club will be in 3, 5 and 10 years. A general discussion followed with members noting the importance of continuing the Club's positive relationship with the JCPenney Company.

## **Partners Magazine**

Jeannette Siegel advised the Board that the interview that Bill Kruder conducted with JCPenney CEO, Marc Rosen, at the recent HCSC SW RMG holiday party was recorded, and that this interview and Marc's confidence in JCPenney's future will be highlighted in the next Partners magazine issue. Jeannette also shared that the due date for the next Partners issue is February 1, 2024. She encouraged Board members to submit profiles of their RMG members to be included in future Partners issues.

## **Golden Rule Award for Community Service**

Steve Strom reviewed information about this new HCSC Alumni Club program, effective in 2024, that had been sent as a meeting pre-read. There will be a consistent Nomination Form and RMG Presidents will receive a certificate that can be framed and given to winners at one of their meetings. A suggestion was made, and agreed to, to change the Nomination due date to April 15<sup>th</sup>. The estimated \$700 expense for the program is included in the proposed 2023-2024 HCSC Alumni Club budget. (Robin Caldwell and Jeannette Siegel will get some information about the current Company program, "the JCP Award for Community Service", and share it at a future Board meeting.)

Action: Motion to approve the \$700 expense for the Golden Rule Award for Community Service was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

## **Annual Meeting Financial Reports and Fiscal 2023-2024 Alumni Club Budget**

In Treasurer Karen Bell's absence, Steve Strom reviewed the HCSC Alumni Club financial reports as of October 31, 2023 and the proposed fiscal 2023-2024 HCSC Alumni Club budget that had been sent as a meeting pre-read. He highlighted some new budget items such as the \$5,000 expense for a new bookkeeper and the fact that the budget projects a \$910 increase in Revenue over Expenses. Steve said that the Executive Officers will be reviewing options regarding the interest rate the Club's CDs are now earning.

Action: Motion to approve the HCSC Alumni Club financial reports ending October 31, 2023 and the fiscal 2023-2024 HCSC Alumni Club budget was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

### **2023 YTD Membership Dues Payment Update**

Bill Kruder advised Board members that, to date, 450 members have not yet paid their annual dues for this year (\$7,314). After Bill contacted the delinquent members of the SW RMG, approximately 50-56 paid the dues they owed. Bill then said that, in 2024, Quick Books will have an automatic dues reminder feature.

### **2024 Member Dues Payment Objective**

Steve Strom reviewed the information on this objective which had been sent as a meeting pre-read noting also that it had been included in the Fall/Winter Partners issue. The stated objective is to have 100% of all dues for the year paid by June 30, 2024 with Partners' mailing suspended until dues are paid. Lists of members who are behind in their dues will be provided to RMG Presidents on April 1st for their follow up with these members.

### **Bookkeeper Update**

Bill Kruder advised the Board that Julie Gilmore, who does this for a living, is interested in taking on this job for the HCSC Alumni Club in 2024. Bill is trying to schedule a meeting with Julie, Karen Bell, and himself to discuss the steps that would be involved.

### **2023 Membership Report and Drive**

Tom Clarke reviewed the Membership Report that had been sent as a meeting pre-read focusing on the membership numbers in the top-left section of the report. He noted that Total Members as of 12/7/2023 were 1,795, an increase of 28 members since 12/8/2022.

Steve Strom reviewed the 2023 Membership Growth Campaign Annual Meeting Report that had been sent as a meeting pre-read noting that, as of November, the Club added 77 new and reactivated members which is 64% of our annual goal of 120 new and reactivated members. This successfully offsets the 63 members we have lost YTD. Steve encouraged all RMGs to put on a final push to add new members by bringing a friend to their holiday events in December.

### **2024 Membership Growth Campaign**

Steve Strom reviewed the information that had been sent as a meeting pre-read. For 2024, the focus months will be March and September in support of our annual goal of adding 120 new and reactivated members. RMGs will have goals for these two months, and RMG Presidents will be eligible to receive \$50-\$100 for themselves personally for exceeding these goals. Additionally, the top three RMG Presidents at year end with the highest percent over their combined March and September goals will be recognized with a Gold, Silver or Bronze medal. The \$1300 expense for this program is included in the 2023-2024 HCSC Alumni Club budget.

Action: Motion to approve the \$1300 expense for the 2024 Membership Growth Campaign was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

### **Merger of Deep South and Southeast RMGs**

John Gresham advised the Board that he and Manny Fernandez, President of the Deep South RMG, discussed the proposed merger of these two RMGs. Both RMGs agreed to this and the merger is now in progress. Manny said that the first combined event will be a cruise in June.

### **National Short-Mid-Long Term Plan for the Club**

As noted above in the section on 2024 HCSC Alumni Club Goals, Bill Kruder reiterated that he would be organizing a special committee to discuss and

recommend actions aimed at securing the future of the Club. He noted that former JCPenney associates are not always “retiring” from the Company, and we need to explore new ways to attract them to join the HCSC Alumni Club. The committee’s findings will be presented to the Board in about a year.

### **HCSC Foundation Report**

Ron Salzetti and Larry Noble reviewed the information on the HCSC Foundation Partners Campaign that had been sent as a meeting pre-read and had also been emailed to Alumni Club members earlier this month. They noted that, so far, the Foundation had received 105 donations averaging \$585 and that WR Howell was pleased with the response he had received from former Company officers he had spoken with about donating. Additionally, the Board was advised that former JCPenney Executive, Terry Prindiville, made an appeal for donations at the recent SW RMG holiday party. Ron said that another email blast will be sent out soon, and he encouraged RMG Presidents to reach out to their members about this Foundation Donation campaign. Manny Fernandez advised the Board that, as part of the transition of the Deep South RMG to the SE RMG, a \$300 contribution will be made to the Foundation.

### **Feeding America Update**

John Gresham reported that 35 people had participated at 7 locations during the recent Feeding America campaign and that additional HCSC Alumni Club events are planned for March/April and September/October 2024. At that time, the Alumni Club will coordinate with the Penney Company’s Feeding America events.

### **James Cash Penney Commemorative Stamp Update**

Steve Strom announced that the JCPenney Government Relations Department has been working with the Alumni Club in furtherance of our goal of having this stamp in honor of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of James Cash Penney’s birth approved by the USPS Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee in the near future. The collective effort by multiple groups to obtain approval for Mr. Penney’s Stamp will continue through 2024 and the Alumni Club will be kept informed of progress.

### **Old Business – None**

### **New Business**

Jeannette Siegel advised the Board that JCPenney has been polling high in USA Today's list of the 10 Best Department Stores and that the winner will be announced on Friday, December 8, 2023.

### **Special Presentation**

Steve Strom honored former President Bill Kruder by reading a certificate of appreciation for Bill's outstanding leadership as HCSC Alumni Club President in 2022-2023. He also presented a \$100 gift card to Bill for his favorite restaurant. Bill thanked the Board for this recognition and said he was happy to continue serving on the National Board for another year in 2024.

### **Shout out to Cecil Naftel**

Bill Watson recognized new SE RMG President, Cecil Naftel, who was participating in this capacity in his first Alumni Club Board meeting which was also the Annual Meeting.

### **Next Quarterly Board Meeting – Wednesday, March 6, 2024**

### **Motion to Adjourn**

Action: Motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Winkle, Secretary

