**Minutes as corrected on 10-4-12 for the RCN fall 2012 meeting in Casper, WY, 9/21-22, 2012**

**Attendance:** Alvin Luedke, Dave Ruesink, Judy Hill, Lon Oliver, Mark Yackel-Juleen, Randy Young

**Opening Devotion** by Mark

**Executive Secretary report**: Activities included:

* Working with webmaster to set up the current website
* Requesting resources and links for the website
* Contacting membership about contribution to budget
* Sending out invoices when requested
* Contacting RCN listserv about conference call
* Working with RCN Executive Committee regarding meeting agenda
* Screening email and forwarding those with relevance to listserv
* Responding to inquiries regarding RCN
* Requesting material to post on website
* Learning how to make changes or add material on website
* Acknowledging emails received on behalf of RCN
* Keeping up with email addresses for listserv
* Being the Ecumenical representative to the United Methodist Rural Fellowship
* Meeting by TeamSpeak about once per month to assist with planning for the International Rural Church Association Conference in 2014.

**Remembering those who died during 2012**: Harold McSwaim and Brian McGarvey

**Treasurer’s report**: On 9/14/2012 there was $1,064.03 in the account with no outstanding checks. To be paid included Executive Secretary expenses for Casper of $861.91 and Webmaster expenses at $20 per hour of $155.00. Also to be paid to Executive Secretary for services since April at $200 per month is six months through September or $1,200.00 through 2012 would be an additional $600.

**Bank signatures needed**: Approved by motion of Judy seconded by Mark for signatures at the bank: Treasurer, Lon Oliver along with the President, Alvin Luedke.

**Website:** Current emphasis is to provide resources for rural church leaders about how to be most effective by finding some of the most recent articles or a place to ask questions about doing ministry in rural areas. RCN established this mission because resource development by denominations is dwindling. To attract more traffic to the website, the website needs to be more attractive. We should ask the webmaster to consider:

* Keeping track with a counter on both home page and each category.
* Changing the pictures to reflect any current or new information.
* Change title of World Hunger to something like local foods.
* Change title of Community Forum to something like Local Community targeted more toward asset based programming.
* Other titles might not need to be changed, but new ones might be added if different resources are provided.
* Search denominational websites to see what they have for rural resources.

**Rural Social Science Education (RSSE):** This may be the driver for type of material resources needed for more resource links on the website. Perhaps we could have writing teams for topics to develop resources. Start with what we have and solicit more input. We should consider developing a tool kit that ministerial association in a town could use. The Blanket Foundation has been doing something similar for demographics. Shift material to be accessible for a person who does not go to ministerial meetings of the denominations. How to build cohorts electronically is a new challenge. (Note: later we heard that the Education for Ministry Program is using electronic cohorts for its EFM program.) Alcoholism and Drug abuse is running rampant in many rural communities, especially those in the mining areas. Might consider developing a Blog possibility to kick off a topic like chemical addiction in small community. Have discussion topics such as: suicide or family care then archive blogs on website. Maybe only four or five week study blocks should be used. Lon will contact Gary Goreham to see if the material is in a PDF form. If it is, he would send it out for review by each of the attendees at the meeting. There may be sections from the lessons to be used for blogs like getting to know the community. Looking at the other materials such as the RSSE program on the church will be different; the RSSE study on the rural family will be another possibility for short studies. Bernie Evans prepared material for RSSE related to ethics that was never used. Shalom Hill Farm is preparing a new website; the person developing the video may be useful for RSSE and/or the RCN website. We will look at the current RSSE material and decide whether to “pirate” from it or start over completely.

**Cards to membership:** Lon has done this as a reminder that the RCN still exists. Next card to be a more direct pitch: Mid summer and Christmas are best times to send out appeals.

**Financial appeals**: Dave needs to send out a request to denominations in October for funding.

**RCN archives:** Thanks to TAMU library for allowing RCN material to be archived.

**AMERC:** Lon explained background and current activities. Experimenting with CPE with Louisville is an exciting move this year with phenomenal success. AMERC is now looking at ways to make CPE work year around in any rural area.

**Fill vacancy for Member-at-Large**: Judy Hill was elected as at-large member by motion of Alvin and Lon.

**International Rural Church Association (IRCA)** is tentatively scheduled for Malawi 7/16-22, 2014.

**Rural Sociological Society (RSS) annual meeting:** Alvin reported that the RSS celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2012. Its early formation was by rural church leaders. During the last decade, there has been little emphasis on rural churches through the RSS. Gary Goreham organized a session with 13 attendees. Five were from the RCN. Bill Kemp and Kenny Sherin made presentations. David Andrews received the outstanding service award. During his remarks, David provided good words for the RCN and its usefulness. The role of rural sociologist in rural churches will be of interest next year. Alvin will contact Gary Goreham to indicate that the RCN may be interested in participating and that we should request a session as a way to keep rural church as part of the rural sociology interest. The 2013 meeting may be in NYC next year. Papers and interest discussed in Chicago might be good place for RCN blogging.

**Election of Chair and treasurer** will take place at the next meeting. Alvin has served three years. Two year terms are normal. He could be eligible for renewal for another two years if his schedule will allow. The Executive Committee will be responsible for a slate of officers.

**Donor Base:** Need to be more intentional about donor base. Lon volunteered to take on this responsibility. Best to have Dave and Lon work together sometime soon for a day to identify current donor list. Consider for a year of experimenting before changing bylaws. Consistency of person for fund raising is more important than title. Vital and exciting is the approach that is missing right now. Our approach has been a Christmas card and mini annual report. We need to be showing a value to the person being requested along with their connection in the organization.

**Next meeting is a Conference call:** April 11, 2013 from 9:00-11:00 CST. Dave to set it up:

**Fall. 2013 meeting**: Consideration will be given to going to Shalom Hill Farm or meeting with the Rural Chaplains. The date and venue will be determined by the Executive Committee.

**Adjourned** with devotional prepared by Mark and led by Alvin.

Dave Ruesink, Recorder