

Committee Reports AHA Convention 2011  
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### **Convention Planning:**

The Convention Planning Committee reviewed plans for future conventions. A bone of contention was the cost to the delegates of the Vancouver Convention. It seems that the costs that were quoted did not include the taxes that raised the price almost 25% over what was quoted plus the significant rise in air fares. As a result future bids will need to include all ancillary fees PLUS air fare estimates from five different locales around the country. A motion was passed to have the convent in Denver from 2014 through 2016. A contract was negotiated with Marriott for rates of \$119.00 to \$129.00 over the three years contract in addition to \$25,000.00 to AHA per year of the contract. Convention for 2012 will be in Denver and Lexington, KY for 2013

### **AHA Judges & Stewards Commissioner's Review Panel:**

The Commissioner's Review Panel is asked to review and comment on infractions by Judges and Stewards sent to the Commissioners' office for disposition. Currently anyone who serves on the panel may not serve on any other committee or commission. There has been a request for a change in the rule and the 5-90 review committee has been asked to bring forward a resolution dealing with that in 2012. Marty Kleiner was elected to the panel.

### **Membership Committee**

Resolution discussion revolved around 1-11, the change of youth ages from 17 to 18. The Youth Convention was in favor. It was pointed out that TWO 18 year olds showed at the 2010 U.S. Nationals. The change would permit 18 year olds to still compete at Youth Nationals and this would be a financial benefit to the Association. The membership committee endorsed the resolution. The committee also heard that the review of the committee to look into the date change for memberships was still going on and would be reported on in 2012. This was whether or not to return to the calendar year membership going from January 1 to December 31.

### **Market Development and Promotion Committee**

The discussion was about what could be done about promotion with the limited amount of funding that was available due to most of the money being spent on the Arabian Horse Gallery at the Kentucky Horse Park. We were reminded about the printed literature available to all clubs. An extensive amount of time was spent on social networking and interfacing with the AHA web site. It was felt that the web site is not quite user friendly and that it may even drive folks away. A new "program" of lesson barns was thoroughly gone over as a way to get new blood into the organization. Christine Ryan has compiled a list of 108 barns throughout the country with lessons available. It is hoped to get this information up on the site, with links, so people may contact them.

### **Barn Safety and Fire Prevention**

This was the first time a program like this has been presented. The panel consisted of firefighters, first responders, an electrician and someone that had a major barn fire. Suggestions and ideas were given as to how to "fire proof" your barn and generated quite a list of recommendations; a video was also made of the meeting. The video, handouts and stall information cards will be available for download on the Arabian Horse Distress Fund web site.

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### **November 15 Board Meeting**

Part of the meeting was spent nominating, voting and appointing various board members to various committees and chairs. The more important parts were the committee reports. Much was made of the Canadian Nationals Show Committee for putting together a show in a new location at literally the last minute as contracts and arrangements had been cancelled. The US Nationals Show Committee equally was tasked as they strived to make improvements to the Tulsa location. Requests for proposals were sent out to 12 locations to bid for future US Nationals. The Tulsa folks really are trying to sweeten the pot as additional monies have been pledged to keep the show there. Some locations, realistically, have little to no chance in being named, but all were encouraged to apply. The Sport Horse Nationals Show Committee happily reported a successful show in Lexington, KY. The board voted to approve the rotation of this show in coming years. Discussion of east rotation location will be addressed later. Youth Nationals saw decline 50+ plus horses for their show. Youth appear to be declining in all aspects, disciplines and breeds. President Walters earmarked \$25,000 (?) beginning in fiscal year 2013 for Youth advertising and promotion.

The Market Development and Promotion committee encouraged all to embrace technology and current trends. Showing and horse ownership is not the same as it was 20 years ago and we need to adapt the old ways to better address current horse ownership and showing trends. A new market to try and capture is the lesson program. Many barns are now starting academy and lesson programs. Horse ownership is more expensive than someone want to spend, but a solid lesson program could definitely reap some rewards. Not everyone will own and show, but our horses and trainers may gain some exposure. To that end, President Walters budgeted monies for farms, clubs, trainers, and events to use in spotlighting our breed and programs. Small in nature, these requests can be used to bring our breed into the publics' eye.

The IT department is still working on various bugs in the software. Tickets for fixes are prioritized. The most critical list has whittled down and the second and third level requests may or may not be resolved as many of these are wants and wishes to the system.

The legal and accounting committees are finishing up the migration of the Sweepstakes trust fund to its one legal entity. This process was started several years ago, but never completed. The separation of the Sweepstakes trust and AHA adds a layer of protection to those assets.

The underlying concept to everything AHA does is whether or not it is fiscally possible and sound for the organization. While some of the membership believes AHA exists to serve them, AHA as an organization needs to survive first, than provide services and fulfill needs. Whether you agree with the decisions of the current board or not, I at least feel comfortable knowing that the members do seem to be working towards a fiscally sound organization.

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### **November 17 Sport Horse Committee Meeting**

The Sport Horse Committee brought forth a resolution addressing whip length for sport horse under saddle classes. While not so much an issue with hunter judges, dressage judges have disqualified exhibitors because of whip length. The approved resolution references a dressage rule for a maximum whip length if one is used. As this was my first resolution working committee, I was slightly amused and yet amazed how the changing of one word in some eyes could create so many different interpretations. The word settled on, they moved on. Look for sport horse showmanship in the near future. Much like our main ring showmanship, the exhibitor and their ability to effectively show their horse is being judged. Things to consider include whether to work the quarters or the halves of the horse, the ability to travel in a straight line and to extend the gaits on the appropriate sides of the triangle. There was some interest for a breeder's group class. This is a group judged class similar to get of sire and produce of dam. The common factor for these groups is the breeder is the same. Horses representing the breeder do not have to be related, but the group should represent the ideal that breeder is trying to achieve. Both the sport horse showmanship and the breeder's group classes are both established in the dressage world. I did not realize that get of sire and produce of dam could be offered in sport horse. I couldn't tell you last time a saw a get of sire or produce of dam class offered let only fill. To me, I do not for see a need, but it allows shows some new options.

### **November 17 Sport Horse Nationals Commission**

Many applauded the approval of the east-west rotation. Not everyone, however, was thrilled about the move to the Virginia Horse Center. Bill Pennington, the committee chair, stated in the previous day's board meeting that the contract with the Kentucky Horse Park is year to year. If the show was held there in 2012, the grounds fee would increase by \$14,000 and an additional \$10,000 for the subsequent year. The Virginia Horse Center would cost about half of what Kentucky would charge. Pros of KY are it is a destination, the show would receive far more public exposure, and it is a world class facility. VA, unfortunately, is kind of in the middle of nowhere with far less visitor traffic. It is, however, far more compact than KY. My question is how can Region 14 hold their regional show in KY year after year, but the grounds are too expensive for our national show?

The other hot topic was the split between dressage and hunter types for the in hand and under saddle classes. The meeting attendees really wanted this. Mr. Pennington said it would cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000 to split the classes. I chimed in. If the VA is half the price of KY, couldn't those savings be used to offset the additional cost of ribbons, trophies, and judges? I believe the moral of the story is the

additional savings will just make it to AHA's coffers. This is where the membership gets frustrated.

### **November 17 MOS Scoring School**

Did you ever wonder how in the world two 2nds and a 5<sup>th</sup> ended up winning? And the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> horse didn't make the cut? Ron Hardin creator of the Majority Opinion Scoring (MOS) system demystified it. If you are adept at Sudoku, then MOS should be a cinch. First we had to rethink our terminology. Horses don't get places, but votes and in which position is that vote. The cards are lined up and each back number is assigned a 1, 2, or 3 depending where the back number is on each card. The actual places are based on the horses assigned the 2s with the 1s and 3s breaking the ties. On paper, it's pretty cool. This is one of these exercises better taught by example. I will gladly show anyone how.

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### **November 18 Equine Stress/ Research and Education Committee Meeting**

This meeting consisted of several parts: genetic testing and research, rescue and rehoming, horse cruelty, and drugs and meds. Beth Minnick presented updates on CA, SCID testing and genetic markers and such. Quite frankly, she was speaking Greek. She had recently attended a conference in Qatar. One of the issues discussed was identifying carriers or printing genetic test results on registration papers. Some countries thought this valuable, others not. WAHO forbids disclosure. I did learn later that evening that Beth used to work at Imperial Egyptian Stud.

The far more volatile and emotional subject was equine slaughter. United Horsemen is a group of agriculturists that dispelled many of the rhetoric the anti-slaughter proponents use. The approach of United Horsemen is to be proactive in the measures regarding the laws, design, and control of processing instead of being reactive. For me, it was rehashing many of the same old arguments.

In the meeting, it was discussed that USEF GR 839 now includes language that any device used to restrict the horse from closing its mouth is cruelty. The new single NSAID rule goes into effect December 1, 2011 plus anabolic steroids are now a forbidden substance. There wasn't much discussion on the bar shoe resolution. I didn't quite understand the need for it, personally, but it was explained to me as such: by moving the bar towards the front of the shoe, this reduces concussion on the heels of our club-footed horses. And by allowing the bar to be placed anywhere on the shoe, horses that otherwise may knock themselves can be prevented from doing so. Wouldn't breeding better legged and better footed horses solve the need for this?

### **November 18 Equitation & Showmanship**

At issue for these folks was the change in our age splits. Now we are 18 and under and 19 and over. The proponents of this resolution want to allow kids, many in their senior year of high school, to compete one last time at Youth Nationals. Because some turn 18 before December 1<sup>st</sup>, they would now be adult amateurs instead of youth exhibitors. This would help to keep numbers up at Youth. The other resolution discussed was allowing the top four equitation riders to switch mounts and perform tests. Switching mounts is common in other disciplines; this is just in keeping with other equitation formats. When a straw vote was taken, from my vantage point, the only nay I saw was from a trainer. I can see a trainer being concerned about a rider undoing his or her work.

### **November 18 Barn Fire Safety Seminar**

A panel consisting of an engineer, EMS personnel, a state fire marshal, and a barn fire victim enlightened the group with their knowledge and expertise. A very emotional Lori Conway related her story of her barn fire. She felt they had done everything they were supposed to do, but a switch in a gas heater failed. Simple things to look for such as overloaded extension cords, box fans, dust and cobwebs around pilot lights. All these things can start a fire. The group prepared a safety questionnaire. During one of the general sessions, Mary Trowbridge representing the Horsemen's Distress Fund, showed a very heart wrenching video of the Gosslin fire in Texas. There wasn't a dry eye in the place.