

## ***2013 Convention Highlights***

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for once again allowing me to be your delegate for the 2013 AHA Convention. This industry is a complicated one at times and it takes the involvement of many individuals to make this happen. We see it first hand at the club level at our shows and other activities but it also takes many hours at a regional and national level of many dedicated volunteers for this industry to evolve. This is very evident at the AHA Convention with many passionate people, passionate about their clubs, their activities, their form of participation with horses where be it endurance, racing, breeding or showing, come together to help address issues, find solutions and to continue to grow and meet industry needs.



As your 2013 delegate, I try and represent as many club interests as I can through the Sport Horse and all of its divisional interests, the working western and amateur perspectives and committees. In addition, I have also been involved in the Breeding and In Hand Committee.

My involvement at 3 of the National shows also allows me a perspective into the National Show Commissions. Of other interests are the Sweepstakes, and now the Equitation and Showmanship Committees. Needless to say once Convention starts I am a very busy person. So much so this year that I was unable to even attend the Welcome Party! Which as many of you know is a huge disappointment to me as I hate to miss a party! So what is new?

**Sport Horse:** The momentum regarding the splitting of in hand classes for Hunter and Dressage Type is growing. Many of you may have seen the announcement re Sport Horse Nationals, which may I remind you all is in Nampa Idaho again next year! This is an accumulation of many years' worth of work with this committee. It took years to get the resolution drafted, accepted by the committee and passed on convention floor. Then to get shows to offer them, one of the first was our Region 17 Show which as your delegate I was instrumental in getting the show commission to do, and because of that success, and a few others, the Commissions are acting on it. SHN's has confirmed and I know that Canadian Nationals is considering it! When we have multiple judges at our shows of the different disciplines it makes sense! The under saddle is also under review and we are hopeful more Regional shows will offer it in the future. I know Region 17 is considering it. Other items under discussion ore the requirement for helmets as is with dressage and hunter classes but the proposed resolution was not passed.

**Showmanship/Equitation:** Over the last year I worked with a subcommittee on clarifying the correct attire and tack to be used for showmanship, but regardless of the efforts of the subcommittee the ability for the five of us to get together during convention was invaluable. The result is the soon to be inclusion in the rule book a table that covers all disciplines outlining the correct tack and attire for exhibitors, except Sport Horse Showmanship which is in the Sport Horse Section. This resolution was

passed and will clarify what appointments are appropriate when showing in a stock halter or hunt bridle as an example. Regardless of attire an Arabian Headstall is always appropriate. This will be incorporated into the handbook and rulebook but in the interim if you check the AHA web site the attire is there. Other changes in Showmanship will be the determination that only the quarter methodology will be used in the Arabian Division. This is especially important with the growth in Showmanship for adults and the addition of the class at Canadian Nationals. The US Show Commission is considering it. The chair of the US Commission, Bill Hughes, commented during the commission meeting about the great turn out and classes he judged this year including at Region 17.

**The Breeding and In-Hand Committee:** This meeting was very focused on the resolution for shows (Scottsdale and Breeders Cup) to be able to opt out of using the approved AHA Scoring system. As a result of the committees work with the proponents a successful compromise was reached that will ensure that if a show wants to, and has a justifiable reason, can apply to AHA to opt out of using the AHA scoring system and use another scoring system or the comparative method. If the comparative system is used there is to be NO final stand up allowed. Judging is finished when the last class is completed.

Stan Morey, in his address, to the delegates addressed the change by stating his commitment to ensuring that the evaluation is based on the conformation of the horse based on the standard and as a breeding animal and NOT a who had the best show! Giving not only the industry, but especially the judges, notice that the expectation is to adjudicate based on the horse not the presentation!

**Amateur Committee:** Well the topic of the day was definitely the leveling of classes and allowing horses under a co-ownership arrangement when the co-owners are not members of the immediate family to show in Amateur owner classes.

The leveling resolution passed but it is largely not well understood how this and when will this be implemented. The biggest thing is it is an option for shows to use if it makes sense. At our shows maybe Select makes sense and the rest to be J/AATR and J/AAOTR, or combinations thereof but at Scottsdale maybe it makes sense to have Select, Classic, and Elite this giving riders of different experience and abilities opportunities to compete against individuals with like experience. I am sure it will continue to evolve as the Select Rider Division did. The intent is really to find a way that can allow individuals of a similar level to compete against like individuals. This is a trend in the horse industry to find ways to do this. Jumping has done it for years so has dressage really, although horses training and ability are also major factors there. In recent years the Quarter Horses and

The Co-owner resolution was withdrawn in the end and sent back to committee. Mike, the committee chair has asked me to be part of the working group. This will need to be discussed in the coming months. It is not as simple as everyone believes. There are multiple issues at play. One the definition of owner in itself causes some of the conflict and was originally the impetus for the resolution as USEF does not recognize same sex relationships, EC does. However it grew and was going to allow multiple family members of multiple families to all own the horse at the same time. We will have to see how this issue evolves in the coming months, and I would appreciate any input anyone has on the subject. In

my opinion there are really three things at play here and how do we address them, and I believe we need to do one at a time. Firstly there is a question of what constitutes an ownership relationship and that definition of. EC has a very comprehensive one and it could be adopted by the Arabian Division of USEF. Secondly do we want to allow non-familial relationships, when co-owning a horse for all parties to be able to show in owner to show classes, versus just amateur or junior to show classes the way the rule currently stands? The third factor is how we manage trainer and family members of trainers currently owning horses. Currently the USEF Amateur rule is very strict and in fact stricter than the amateur rule in Canada. Currently a family member of a trainer cannot show any horse for which any member of its family receives any monies for doing anything with, except breeding! It includes boarding, training, conditioning, etc. Under a co ownership rule this distinction could get very muddy.

**Working Western:** The Working Western Committee is very strong and growing. The changes to the classes at US Nationals to allow the leveling in reining and the addition of English Train etc. are resulting in increased participation. As chair of The Trail Sub-Committee we are busy writing suggested procedures for warm up trail in addition to lobbying for additional classes for English Trail, and Green Trail whilst also adding the levels. An exciting time as this has definitely been one of the fastest growing divisions at US Nationals. I recently posted on Facebook some practice courses and easy exercises to do for people interested in starting to ride trail. English Trail is a challenge as we have to continue to think how best to develop courses that ensure that the classes are not western trail under English tack.

Reining is growing and everyone is hopeful that Canadian Nationals will add the levels as well.

Cow Horse and Ranch Sorting are growing throughout the western states however there does not seem to be any momentum to add these classes here in Canada.

**Sweepstake Commission:** Not sure what the future will hold for sweepstakes. They tried to introduce a payback concept but this was largely shot down by the Amateur Committee as it would see an increase in entry fees at the National level, which no one was supportive of. The fact is breeding is down, participation is down and as such payouts are down. Everybody wants prize money but no one wants to fund it. Without some fundamental change in structure, which the Commission is unwilling to undertake, the spiral will continue. It is kind of like a sinking ship. You can keep bailing but regardless of what you do it is still sinking! At some point you have to get off and get a new ship but the Commission feels paralyzed to do that, so we continue. The emphasis on young horse classes is important as it is the breeders who are currently funding the program so they need to sell horses to do so. It needs this cash influx of money every year. I know they are open to new ideas, and they are willing to listen. So if you have one share!

**Canadian Nationals Show Commission:** This was a good meeting, well attended. They are looking to add classes where possible. Some classes being considered are the splitting of the Sport Horse in hand classes. The Commission is committed to Brandon through 2015. But will start looking at alternate facilities as part of its competitive process in 2014.

**Sport Horse Commission:** Some changes being considered. The Commission is looking for a permanent facility in the Midwestern US. The show will be held in Boise Idaho in 2014. Classes being considered

and since approved is the splitting of the in-hand classes. Also I believe they have reconsidered the use of one judge for the in hand and over fence classes, and will be using the two judge system.

**US Show Commission:** The Show is growing. The Working Western division has outgrown their digs and as such consideration is being given to how to use the Pavilion differently. They are looking at how to show case the Breeding and in-hand classes differently on the final nights.

That about sums up convention. Allot happening that largely affects the “show” part of the Arabian Industry. This is probably a bit narrow of us and little time is being spent looking at how we can involve more people or develop new markets etc. I do think the Committee time could be used more fruitfully and the delegate floor out to a better use than rehashing resolutions that are developed, modified and decided on in Committee! But to do that we would have to change our constitution and probably change how committee membership is determined. I have spoken with Cynthia Richardson, AHA President and Nancy Harvey, Vice President about this and maybe there is hope. Thank you again for allowing me to be your delegate and I hope I have represented our membership well and fairly. If you have any questions, concerns or comments please contact me at [lornerobertson@shaw.ca](mailto:lornerobertson@shaw.ca) or call me at 403-608-0524. You can also facebook me!

In preparation of Convention in 2014, I think we need to look at how we can participate more closely. The Aurora Arabian Horse Association evolved the English Trail Resolution, and now it is a National Class with growing participation. If there are things you think should be changed we can do it. Some ideas that I have that need to be addressed and could be submitted by AAHA are:

- Dressage Scoring and using one ride to count for two classes as long as the rider is an amateur. This is allowed in Open Dressage. At the time of entry, a rider can elect for their training ride to count for their open score and their amateur score. This would really enable people to show in multiple classes. As the rule exists in open we probably just need a handbook update to allow it in the Arabian Division. This may also help people to progress through the levels as they would not have to ride in so many classes at Regionals and Nationals.
- Training Dressage and mandatory progression of horse and rider combinations. This has been talked about for some time and Terry Johnson did raise this with the Dressage Committee. With the leveling concept coming into play I believe this progression is logical.
- Carson Ehret had raised the concept of placing classes at Nationals on the “Promoting Positive Change Facebook Page”. This concept has been talked about for some time and I was hoping to bring a resolution forward with the support of the Region 8 Director but we could not get it done in time. I do not want to lose it though. Other breeds do it and it makes sense. Since we went to placing full top five and or top ten people feel the value has diminished this maintains that and as all cards are posted we all know how we do so let’s quit calling it equal when we know it isn’t!

These are three resolutions I think need to be brought forward but I know there are more. We have the power if we choose to use it.

Lorne Robertson