

## 2015 AHA Convention report

The 2015 AHA convention was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Tulsa Oklahoma. There were 268 delegates that attended out of a total of 398 that were eligible to attend. There were also several guests and alternates that attended as well.

AHA President Cynthia Richardson gave her Presidents State of the Association Address. She stated that AHA has implemented a FUTURE STATE to redefine the way that AHA does business. They are moving to have everything available online to improve performance and smooth processes for maximum efficiency. The web site is still being upgraded/updated. The AHA building is 30 years old and needs some upkeep. The lighting, roof and air conditioning have all been upgraded already. AHA has 47 employees. 44 are full time, 2 are part time and 1 is a seasonal temp employee. As a promotional tool for the Arabian horse, AHA put on a show in Central Park in September. Due to a lack of stabling as there is only room for 50 horses, it was limited to "By invitation only". AHA asked some trainers if they were able to bring some horses for the show. There were only a few classes offered that included Halter Stallions, Mares, Yearling Fillies and Yearling Colts, Western Pleasure, Country English Pleasure, Hunter Pleasure and Native Costume. They felt it was a success and are planning on doing it again in 2016. All the Nationals shows were successful. Canada and US exceeded their budgets. Sport Horse was in Raleigh, North Carolina and had 472 horses, Canadian Nationals was in Brandon, Manitoba and had 700 horses. Youth was in Albuquerque New Mexico and had 815 horses and US were in Tulsa Oklahoma and had 1780 horses. Youth moves to Oklahoma City for 2016 and Sport Horse goes back to Nampa Idaho. As of October 31/2015, there were 2489 registrations for Purebreds and 717 registrations for Half Arabians. That is down 13% from the same time last year. People aren't breeding, which means there are fewer foals being born. Our horses are getting older and it will be hard to replace them as the market is small.

Aurora did exceedingly well at Convention this year. We were finalists for the Club Excellence Awards for Club Project and Communications. We won both of those and ended up being the AHA Club of the Year as well! Thank you to everyone who contributed to these. Not to be outdone, Sydney Young was awarded as the AHA Youth of the Year. Huge congrats to Sydney. Her speech will be memorable! This is only the second time that a Canadian Youth has won. The first one was also a Region 17 member (Katie Johnson) Natalie Alves from the AAHA of BC was second runner up. It was exciting to have two Region 17 youth in the final four. The Region 17 Volunteers of the Year were Darlene Brouwer and Bob Sproule.

The Horseman's Distress fund raised \$360,000 at US Nationals. Another \$22,700 was raised at Convention. Some of Region 17 members have benefited from this fund.

The results of the resolutions are on the AHA web site.

Resolution 5-15 was withdrawn. This was to allow leased horses to be shown in amateur owner classes. There was a lot of discussion at convention about this. It was felt that it wouldn't pass, so the

proponent withdrew it. Resolution 34-15 was also withdrawn for the same reason. This was to extend the qualification time frame. Resolution 36-15 was also withdrawn. This was to modify the life time qualifications for National Champion Stallions and Mares. This was withdrawn as the original change was made by the Board of Directors, so only they could change it, not the delegates. I believe they have already voted on this and it has been changed that a National Champion Stallion and Mare can NOT show back in the same class that they won in the same Country. For example, if they were National Champion Open Stallion in Canada, they cannot show back in the same class in Canada again. They can show in US in the Open or they can show in the Amateur classes. This takes the rule back to be the same way it was before.

Resolution 6-15 was defeated. This was to allow non related amateur owners to co own a horse and both show in amateur owner classes. This topic comes up at convention every couple of years. There is always a lot of discussion around it and there was this year too. In the end, it was defeated. Most people felt that there are lots of AAT classes for people to go in that they don't have to co own a horse, but can still share the costs. The owner classes were to be left to the true owners.

Resolution 33-15 was approved. This was to rank the Top 10's at nationals. At the show you can see where you placed, but on the show records, it just lists Top 10. This will be like how the Regional placings are listed – Top 3, Top 4, Top 5. You will now be able to see where a horse (or rider) placed in a class. You will know if it really was 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 10<sup>th</sup>.

If anyone has any questions about the resolutions, please contact me.

### **Canadian Nationals**

They had 700 entries this year. The VS issue continues to be a problem in getting horses from the affected states to come to the show. They are reviewing the walk/trot classes and may split them as the classes have grown. They are looking at possibly adding PB SHIH AATH. The new warm up ring in front of Ring 1 was a great improvement. They are looking at making the Westoba Ring (Ring 2) wider. They are still in discussions with the facility to get another building. This would be a partnership between the City of Brandon and the Province of Manitoba. Governments move slow!

### **Amateur Committee**

The Amateur Committee spent most of the time discussing the resolutions.

### **Awards Committee**

The Awards Committee only received one submission for Open Competition Award and one for the Ambassador Award. The Open Competition Award was given to Comander-N-Chief. The submission for the Ambassador Award didn't meet the criteria, so it was not given out.

## **Breeders Sweepstakes**

It seems like every year there are some changes to the Breeders Sweepstakes. As mentioned earlier, breeding is down, so that means entries into the Breeders Sweepstakes is also down. And it is BREEDERS Sweepstakes, not SHOW EXHIBITOR Sweepstakes. Everyone that shows wants their classes to be Sweepstakes payback classes. Last year they changed the amount of money given out at US Nationals and spread that money out between the 18 Regional shows. They encouraged the shows to combine the classes so the prize money would be bigger and not have to be split between two or three age groups. This year, they are now giving 10% payback to the BREEDERS of the horses that won money. It used to be 5%. It isn't a lot, but it is something. Hopefully it also encourages the breeders to Sweepstake nominate their horses. Another change for 2016 is that only Sweepstake Nominated horse will be able to compete in the yearling Sweepstake halter classes at the Regionals and Nationals. This is the way it used to be a few years ago. It is nothing new, but people seem to be upset about it. Several Regional shows already offer two yearling classes, one Sweepstakes and one not, but most people enter both classes. Now, only the Sweepstake nominated horses can show in the Sweepstakes class. They are trying to encourage people to Sweepstakes nominate their unborn foals. The biggest Sweepstakes change for 2016 is to have 6 Sweepstakes Jackpot classes at the US Nationals. They will be PB and HA WP AAOTR, PB and HA CEP AAOTR and PB and HA HP AAOTR. They will be jackpot classes so the entry fee is \$500.00 and no qualification is needed. The only stipulation is that the horse MUST be Sweepstakes Nominated to be eligible to show. It is for horses 6 years and over. There will still be the regular AAOTR age group classes at US Nationals that you will need qualifications for and are open to both Sweepstake and non Sweepstakes nominated horses. The Sweepstakes classes will be \$15,000 added to the Jackpot fees. The payout will be 20% to Champion, 10% to Reserve Champion and 8.5% to the balance of the Top 10. It is all ages combined, so like the Select class this year, there could be 50 entries. The more entries, the bigger the prize payout. This could be the answer for a second class for amateurs at US Nationals and the answer for payback classes for the older horses.

The Sweepstakes Committee is asking that shows have a place on the entry form to list the breeders of the horses. They would also like the shows to announce the breeders name during the awards presentations for the Champion and Reserve horses, and all Top 5 if possible.

The 2016 AHA Convention is scheduled for November 17-20 in Denver, Colorado.

Karen Caughell