

## AHA Convention 2015

Tulsa, OK

It was an honor to represent our club at this year's convention once again. It was nice to see so many familiar faces and meet many new ones. It was nice to not to be the "newbie/rookie" this year. Our path to getting to convention was quite uneventful (only a couple hour delay in Denver) compared to so many of our other delegates who flew all over the nation just to get there due to weather.

I attended several meetings that were very informative and once again a lot of passion in those rooms. My first meetings were the Youth Committee and it was nice to see how well attended they were and nice to see how many people take great pride in our youth and up and coming amateurs. We reviewed our resolutions along with discussion and debate that were assigned to our committee. We were assigned 19 resolutions, which took two days to review and vote on. We had our yearly AHA Youth of the Year committee volunteers and I decided to bite the bullet and put my name forth this year to become more involved. As they say the youth is our future. It was a nice surprise to see that a lot of people wanted to step up and I was part of a vote! My very first one, it was so exciting. Being that I am very new to this, I understand that I was beat out. However, I am only thrilled as I could not have been beat by anyone more qualified than Terri Johnson! Maybe next year ... some things are still a struggle again this year, getting our youth membership up and bringing new people into our world. How do we do this? How do we target the people who are new to Arabians? This is not only related to youth, it is all areas.

Another committee meeting I was part of was probably one of the most interesting and passionate. I attended the Equine Stress Management Committee Meeting and was very much intrigued and want to do more research on three areas of concern that affect us all. The Arabian Horse Foundation put forth a donation to Dr. Babak Faramzrzi from the Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, CA to research and study Equine Biomechanics and Hoof Health. I am very much looking forward to the finding on this study as it affects such a major part of our horses' health. There was a survey put forth on the top issues horse owners are concerned about. 1) Excessive Bagging for Halter Horses 2) Hard Stand up for the Halter Horses and Shanking 3) Too Many Pads 4) Unsoundness in a Class 5) Excessive Lunging 6) Dead Tails 7) # of Classes entered by one horse. There was a lot of debate and discussion and no argument regarding these issues. There is going to be a further study regarding the pads, we took a straw vote and the consensus was that anything over 2 pads was excessive. A lot of good points for both over and under. Dead tails was another issue that I really did not know much about, but I can now say I understand the issue and it saddens me that anyone would physically alter their animal in any way.

There will be a new resolution (could be as soon as 2016) to review hoof measurement and where the definitive marker should be. Hoof measurement from the ground to the hairline vs. the ever-changing "soft spot" with an addition ¼ inch added. In addition there will be discussion on removing the bar on shoes? Age related? No Futurity or Maturity horses with bars? Again this was very well discussed passionately on both sides of the fence. What is therapeutic? What is hiding lameness? Bands on feet? Would really like to know everyone's opinion, maybe we can issue our own local survey on these issues.

The General Session came to us in three sessions. After I saw that we had 36 Resolutions to review I was sure we were going to be there all night! There was once again much debate and discussion and we managed to get through them. Of the 36 resolutions we passed 24, did not pass 2, withdrawn were 9 and 1 was referred to committee.

Once again membership and registrations continue to be the biggest struggle for us, but it is affected all the breeds. The new website that we saw last year did not get launched. There is a re-launch slated for January 11, 2016 and will be on a limited basis such as the guest features and a new log on. There will be a mix of the new and old website. It is going to take approximately 3 to 4 years to have a fully operational new website. From the simulation we saw, it is going to be quite nice and easy to use.

The Central Park Horse show was a success and we will be scheduled again in 2016. One of the highlights was the Club Excellence Awards. It was an honor to be able to attend and be part of a magical night and help receive three of the four awards to our very own club, Aurora Arabian Horse Association. We even took home the Club Of The Year Award. These honors brought us \$1500.00 USD, which is a whole lot in Canadian lol! We also had the pleasure and great honor to be the home club to the AHA Youth of the Year Sydney Young, who made her speech memorable and unforgettable. She is a great role model and I know she is going to do great things with our breed and our club.

We also had another great presentation for the Arabian Horsemen's Distress Fund and a reel of highlights over the past year of all that was accomplished by such an important group. It brought tears to my eyes to see such passion and caring that we in this breed have for each other, how we will take the shirts off of our back to help one another. To see how this fund has helped so many people in our Arabian world.

We have our list of Judges and Stewards for all the major upcoming National shows and are a great bunch. Some exciting news and changes for Youth Nationals in 2016, we are seeing it moved to Oklahoma City and will be hosted by Oklahoma State Fair Park and is an exciting venue and I really suggest that you take the virtual tour on their website. They are bringing freestyle reining back to Friday night and will be putting the leveling in the JTR classes, no age splits. Canadian Nationals, US Nationals and Sport Horse Nationals will continue to be at the same venues for 2016.

The President's Banquet brought this year's convention to an end, which was productive and informative. I look forward to another great year with the Arabian horse and hope to attend again next year.

Thank you.

Marlene Tomusiak

Aurora Arabian Horse Association, AHA Convention Delegate 2016