

APHA Workshop - Dallas, TX
 May 29 and 30, 2009
 Lori Nevin

This year's workshop focused on how the current economy is impacting our Association and on improving communication at all levels of the organization. While you are reading my report, I hope you will be thinking of what you can communicate to me. Call, email, write, fax or otherwise send me your opinions, ideas, suggestions, perceptions, and thoughts about the APHA. I promise to communicate what you are sharing with me on up to the APHA. If you think a rule should be changed or added, I will help you submit the rule change proposal by the January deadline.

Convention in October 2009 will be in Colorado Springs, CO. This will be special because our own Washington Director and Executive Committee President-Elect Linda Vance will be installed as our new APHA President. Consider driving or flying down to support her many years of service resulting in this. If you want to keep costs down you can share a room as many from our area will be attending. Just contact me so I can see if I can help you find roommates. Now on to the highlights...

Friday morning the committee chairs, co-chairs and Executive Committee (EC) met for almost 2 hours. APHA President John Corbin facilitated a discussion about whether we thought the APHA needed to hire a consulting firm to address whether the APHA was heading in the right direction with some of the recent cuts made, whether we should further add, change or omit programs, and whether we should have a balanced budget. Currently we operate in the red because we have so many services and programs that create only intangible value. The APHA can continue to operate at current level of service for the next 10 years just on current cash, assets and investments alone. The consensus and feedback from all directors was: 1) Volunteer qualified professionals from the membership, staff, EC and Directors can be chosen for a task force to meet the objectives of what would have been accomplished by the consultants; 2) APHA should operate from a balanced budget including the intangible services; 3) Communicate at all levels of the organization openly; 4) Go forward united and optimistic that the future of the APHA will be responsive to economic conditions and its members.

Next I co-chaired the Recreational Riding committee. Members reported on any contact they made within their community. I reported on the upcoming Southwest Washington PHC Ride at the Beach. An outcome of discussion is to review the welcome letter sent to members upon enrollment in the Ride America program to ensure how the recognition awards program works is clear. Jerry Circelli, Marketing Manager gave a report on plans for a Therapeutic Riding program demonstration, barn dinner & dance on October 1 and a trail ride at the Air Force Academy October 3 at Convention in Colorado. The committee recommended the trail ride approval system be offered to individuals and facilities because staff member Cindy Grier indicated this had been requested. Those approvals should include a membership fee so trail ride organizers must follow APHA rules. Ideas were to offer slow moving or low cost General Store merchandise at a discount to trail ride organizers to offer as give-aways, and to require APHA literature be available on site at rides. The merchandise and literature taken away lives on after the ride and continues to promote APHA. We requested the cost of a Ride America program participant to determine if other horse types should be able to enroll and to understand if the \$25 enrollment fee should every be increased. We suggested any APHA or Foundation marketing include promotion of the program and APHA trail rides, and that ride organizers be sent a short survey after conducting the approved ride to communicate via email how we can better serve the organizers. Cindy offered current statistics and information on 2009 rides/locations. Year to date last year 2008 there were 117 new Ride America participants. This year there are 116. Contrary to APHA membership, the program membership is holding steady.

Later at night I attended the Foundation Dinner and Auction. And yes, again I did my part to support the fundraiser. All day I sported the tie I bid and won at the 2008 Convention. This event it brought over \$600. Also, I bid and won a Dyrk Godby print. This I'll keep. There was good company, new friends, and good conversation throughout the evening.

On Saturday morning Chairs and Co-chairs resumed meeting with the EC to present feedback from all Committee Members about the option of hiring a consulting firm and looking ahead at the future operations. We will continue to see improvements in the cost controls and nothing will be hidden from members.

Next, the Board of Directors meeting was held beginning with an update on the APHA Presidential Project: Make-A-Wish. Banks Ready of Mississippi presented a well-made slide show documenting the accomplishments of the project and announced the project raised \$77,000. A director then generously gave another \$23,000 to make a total of an even \$100,000. This is the most successful project and certainly shows the contribution of our youth members and their dedication to the APHA.

After roll call, recognition of service by Directors for 20 and 30 years, approval of Convention minutes, and ratification of EC actions, the standing committee reports were given including rule change proposals we will be asked to vote on at Convention in October. Please read these in the Journal or online and communicate to me your opinions.

Report highlights:

- Foundation: 130 children participated in May in Kids Day. An increase in Buy a Trainer trainers reached 100.
- Amateur: Recommended a PAC show approval fee and require APHA membership for PAC participants.
- Show and Contest: Recommended a PAC individual reporting fee versus a show approval fee, allowing novice program participants when an exhibitor has been away from showing for a period of time.
- Judges: Held their first open session with 14 visitors.
- Long Range Planning: Purina is a new sponsor and plans to support members at the Zone level. Recommended allowing solids in the Challenge classes at World Show, a qualifying system to exhibit at World Show, not allowing show managers to exhibit their horses at shows they are managing, and new EC nominating procedures.
- Professional Horsemen: Recommended emphasis on recruiting new youth members and an Ombudsman for members.
- Racing: The largest purse will be raced for tonight at almost \$300,000. Including Barrel Racing community in their communications, discussions, promotions and marketing.
- Youth: Considered PAC participants must have an APHA membership and ideas to increase youth participation at Zone Shows.

A financial presentation detailed APHA has no debts, and actions taken to control costs. Ask me about these details if you are interested. In addition, the full annual financial report is available to members online.

A marketing presentation detailed current bold efforts including:

- The Connection publication is not available electronically
- Website enhancements
- Facebook, myspace, twitter social networking
- The new Journal editor was introduced
- Working with the Foundation to mutual benefit
- Scholarship endowments raised to \$25,000 due to lower payout of investments
- Charlie Daniels donations to the Foundation including an autographed Golden Fiddle to be auctioned at the Fall World show.

If anything you read sparked a thought, suggestion, or opinion – I want to hear it. Please contact me! I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Lori Nevin

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