

2012 CONVENTION REPORT

submitted by Linda J Vance

What an amazing Convention APHA had to celebrate our 50th Anniversary! The WOW factor ran high from the very first event through to the last one! What an amazing job by the APHA Staff from planning to orchestrating each of the events from the Welcome Reception at the APHA Headquarters to the Inaugural Luncheon and the 50th Anniversary Hall of Fame Induction/Dinner, every detail was intricately planned and carried out assuring a most enjoyable experience for all from beginning to end.

Exec Director, Billy Smith, conducted a new Director Orientation that I decided to attend since I was not scheduled for a committee meeting at the time. I am always interested in the information provided to National Directors and I also enjoyed the opportunity to listen to Billy and get to know him a little better. I am quite impressed with the new direction APHA is taking towards customer service with our "member care" tenets and a set of developed goals for our National Directors. You will benefit from this new attitude when you conduct business with the Association or when you perhaps work with a National Director from your area on a problem or issue. APHA is going to be looking for better ways to do things; and plans on focusing on "what" is right not who. We now have a newly formed Compliance Dept that will deal with problems on all levels. There will also soon be a Directors Website developed to help educate Directors with issues to expand their knowledge of all areas of the Association. We will be striving to get more members and Directors engaged in our processes and one of the ways this is proposed is to go to one meeting per year to conduct all of our governance and decision making business. A transition into one meeting will actually take 2 years to complete with a single meeting in June, 2013; and then an annual meeting in late February of each year beginning in 2014. Our rule book will, in effect, be frozen for a period of time during this transition. A full detailed explanation will be outlined by Staff prior to implementation (see website for details).

From the General Membership meeting, we found out from Scot Jackson that he felt his year as President has been a great one and we are starting to move forward again for the next 50 years! We have added some new corporate and World Show sponsors to work with in the future; and we heard from several representatives at this meeting (check APHA website for full details and promotions). APHA feels that we need harmony to move forward – we do not always need to agree, but we need to work together in harmony and focus on trusting one another and taking care of our members. We are currently working on reclaiming members, renewing memberships, and focusing on generating revenue through increased productivity and better communications at all levels. We are making a big push on Facebook as we have 70,000 followers (84% are female) and most are **not** APHA members! The General Store has been renovated and sales are up by 85%. We are also doing a lot of work on our web site presence. 84% of our web visitors are from the US, and 16% are International. We are currently creating ways to buy and sell online. We are planning on improving technology for faster responses and to reduce paperwork. We want to expand our scholarship programs and provide incentives to show Paint Horses. Our Paint Horse Connection is in the top 5 equine publications today.

Jay Hickey from the American Horse Council gave us insight into issues pending with the government that are important to horse owners. He warned us that Federal budgets have been cut in areas such as disease outbreaks. Animal Welfare is a hot topic; and there are amendments being introduced to the Horse Protection Act that we as horse owners need to keep up on. We cannot afford to not be informed on what our government is doing in agricultural areas.

Financially, APHA continues to reduce expenses when and where possible. The Staff is focused on revenue generating and has a newly developed finance team lead by Bruce Anderson, and outside adviser. They will also be looking at ways to engage more folks in our revenue generating programs.

From the Committees: **R**egistration **C**ommittee discussed diagrams and clarifications on RG070.1. After discussion, a motion was made, 2nd and passed to approve as proposed to go to the floor for a vote. **S**how and **C**ontest committee discussed the All Around title and requirements as currently stated in the Rule Book and will submit a clarification to make the scoring system not mandatory. Discussed the current Trail courses and obstacles, length of the courses and how they are to be judged. It was decided that a Task Force needs to be set up to review the rule and make recommendations. Next discussed how to increase participation at shows and how APHA can help clubs and Zones do this. World Show Qualifying was discussed, and it is felt this has had a negative effect in some areas. **A**mateur **C**ommittee reviewed the Workshop meeting minutes and discussed the Amateur numbers which seem to be stabilizing. We are seeing growth in the Amateur Walk-Trot Division; however, a decrease in World Show Amateur numbers. It was decided that we need to focus on keeping the fun in our shows, flat fees are very popular as the no "bling" shows with open and all breed classes. There were some clarifications on amateurs showing non-owned horses in open divisions as well as discussion on trading out of services, etc. **B**reed **I**mprovement discussed black out show dates for Convention dates now that we will have only one annual meeting per year. The possible showing of SPBs with colored horses in non-point earning situations was discussed, as was genetic testing with results printed on papers and it was felt that results should be available on-line and it is certainly not the intent to require mandatory testing. It was suggested to work some way through the Breeder's Trust Program with top level stallions having been tested and show negative for all defects and others with some tests performed but not all be rated at a different level. The Committee felt that forming a Fellowship of Responsible Breeders Association might be a way to help educate folks and allow them to make better decisions when selecting a stallion to breed to. **J**udges **C**ommittee was quite large for the open session meeting – the purpose of the committee was discussed. The Academy was discussed and the fees may break down differently in the future as some changes will be implemented and we may not continue to host the Intercollegiate Judging Competition after this year so changes may be required and will be announced. Discussion was held on the request from the Professional Horseman's Committee to review wording for placement on the Judges' Application. **L**ong **R**ange **P**lanning – discussed the move to 1 annual meeting per year and agreed unanimously that this needs to happen, but recognized that it will affect our rule change process greatly for a couple of years and the committee felt that the EC should use their ability to clarify rules if problems arise. One meeting per year will make it necessary for Staff/EC/Directors to communicate better throughout the year. There was discussion on how to increase the values of our SPBs and the fact that we have two different products and the lower value of one is affecting the value of the other also. It is thought that a possible way to help resolve this situation is to allow SPBs and regular registry horses compete in non-point earning classes together. The Committee also feels we should allow AQHA and JC horses into our SPB registry as this could be a good revenue stream. The Committee also requests more time for their meetings with the move to one meeting per year. **M**embership **S**ervices viewed a presentation by Bruce Anderson, our revenue/sponsor adviser, on what has been done since the Workshop meeting and how they have organized and consolidated areas to create a "team" for member care and the tenants that have been developed. **P**rofessional **H**orseman's discussed a policies/procedures manual being developed. They created an action item list and set up a sub committee to work on the list and prepare for conference calls. They viewed the newly created ad for the Paint Horse Journal. It was suggested to have a booth set up and manned at the Fall World Show. There was also discussion on having some shirts with the logo available; and creating a "guide" for persons purchasing horses. **R**ecreational **R**iding ask the question, "What do the 92% of our members who do not show horses do with their horses?" They feel we need to educate folks on the other opportunities. They are working on revamping the Ride America Program as the numbers are way down, by making a maintenance fee and changing the enrollment fee as well as find out why people are no longer participating. Their new motto is "Lets Ride America and Paint those Trails". **R**egional **C**lubs will resubmit the rule change proposal for non-member show approval fees to be higher than member fees. After much discussion it was decided that we need to focus on

educating our PAC participants regarding the difference in Credits vs Points. Newly revised Gold Star and Club of Distinction application forms were reviewed and final revisions made. Discussion on moving to 1 meeting per year confirmed the need for much better communications in many different ways. **R**ules **C**ommittee discussed and clarified RG070-1. Our current Trail Rule was discussed in regards to the number of obstacles, etc.; and it was decided that a Task Force needs to be set up to work on this -anything else at this time would only be a band-aid not a true fix. Clarified the same horse being shown by two exhibitors at same event. Discussed SC-060 APHA Points/PAC Credit tabulations clarification. **W**ays and **M**eans reviewed their purpose and then reviewed the Financial Presentation for the membership meeting. The Committee also recommended that in addition to moving to 1 meeting per year, that we have that meeting in the Dallas/Fort Worth area for the next 3 to 5 years to maximize our cost savings. **Y**outh **C**ommittee discussed numbers for the year and the number one focus is on how to improve youth numbers at all of the shows. There was also discussion on combining of classes at shows. PAC numbers were reviewed and there was discussion on how to market the program to 4-H, FHA, etc. and setting up booths at 4-H, PAC, and open shows to help educate folks about more programs. The Youth discussed moving to 1 meeting per year and would still like to have their meeting attached to the adult Convention. They will need to work on logistics for this conversion as well as look for sponsors for the \$200 cost for a youth to attend the leadership conference. "The Code" of conduct was reviewed and it was decided that it did make a difference at this year's Youth Show. The World Games Competition was discussed with a great job done by organizers, great fun for all and great camaraderie by all. The **APHA F**oundation – reviewed and discussed financials presented. There was \$6,667 raised for the Foundation at the Reception hosted. They will now focus on providing support for training of professionals to help with handicap or therapeutic riding programs. The Fdn will also sponsor putting a leaf for all Past Presidents of APHA on our Heritage Tree. They refined their mission and purpose and sent it to the EC. They discussed ways of maximizing their efforts on marketing a donated, autographed Lynn Anderson guitar to the entire Country Western community not just our APHA membership. It was approved to increase the Board to 15 members. The Hall of Fame is now under the Fdn guidance; and they feel they need to work towards a museum.

In closing, I would just like to say that I truly appreciate the support of our Paint Horse Family here in the Northwest for our National Directors; and it never fails to re-energize me and my faith in the fact that we have not only the best horses in the world because they are "painted" but we also have the best horse people in the world in our association. It was a very humbling experience for me, no matter what I have done for our association, to be in the company of the people who founded our breed and who had such great vision for our horses and our future. Again, please go to [http://press.apha.com/pdfs/rulebooks/OnLineRuleChanges/1012 .pdf](http://press.apha.com/pdfs/rulebooks/OnLineRuleChanges/1012.pdf) to view all of the Rule change proposals passed for implementation in the 2013 Rule Book.