

2012 APHA Convention Report – Shannon O'Dell (WA)
Oct. 4 – 6th, 2012 – Fort Worth, TX

I want to start this report by saying a HUGE “Thank You” to those of you who voted to have me be Washington’s alternate director for 2012. It has been an incredibly interesting & rewarding experience and I am so thankful to be your National Director for 2013 & 2014.

This year’s Convention was held in Fort Worth, TX at the historic Hilton Fort Worth (historic because this was the last place that President John F. Kennedy slept before the tragic events in Dealey Plaza in Dallas). Either because of the location or because of it being the exciting 50th anniversary for APHA, there were TONS of new faces to meet this year as well as catching up with some people that I have not seen in years. Jodie Moore found a wonderful bakery a couple blocks away from the hotel and that is where we ran for breakfast every morning. If I could have figured out a way to fit one of their coffee cakes in my luggage and get it home in one piece, I would have done it!

I started out on Thursday by attending the Youth Committee meeting as a guest. There was quite a bit of discussion on how to continue to bring youth into this sport and keep those that we have. This is especially difficult in these economic times when parents may be trying to find ways to reduce costs. They reviewed the PAC enrollment numbers because there are a lot of youth in that program that are not crossing over to APHA shows. There is hope that there will be ways to reach out to these kids and attract them to the regional shows. The committee has put forth a rule clarification that a horse may be shown by 2 family members – one in the Novice division and one in the regular Age division. It was never intended to disallow this crossover but it had been brought to the attention of APHA that some show secretaries thought it was not permitted and youth have not been allowed to show. The committee is also going to be looking at making some changes in the Youth Walk/Trot division. This currently is not a point earning division yet they are paying full entry fees at many shows. Some view this as quite unfair since the Amateur Walk/Trot division is point earning & has an ROM & counts toward Honor Roll. Discussion on what this committee will do with the youth kids if it is approved for APHA to go to a single meeting in February of each year. That is because we want the youth to participate but recognize that the new meeting schedule would mean they would be in school. They are going to reach out to the youth and figure out if the committee needs to make any alternate arrangements to include the kids.

After this committee meeting, I decided to skip the Director Orientation meeting. I attended in June and there were a couple of APHA staff members that I chat with on email or phone all the time (usually asking them to help me out) and those staff members were not expected to be able to attend the Hosted Reception at headquarters. So Cathy Glover of BC and I grabbed a taxi and went out to visit with Linda Knowles and LeAnn Fast. Of course, APHA introduced some REALLY cool things they will be rolling out for directors. At the core of this is a new program called MemberCare. I’m still getting up to speed (since I skipped the orientation), but at the core, MemberCare is going to make me your liaison between you & APHA as well as making me your first point of contact on many matters. My job as a Director is to represent you at the national level, and I can only do that if I’m interactive with you. So this is a step in that direction – plus it takes some of the pressure off APHA staff in dealing with matters that a director can handle (please remember from my prior reports that APHA is down 1/3 in staff in trying to make changes in this economy). So if you contact APHA for something, they may be referring you back to your National Directors. The new program sounds very interesting and I’m excited to be a part of it. APHA even gave all of us new business cards to hand out to you!

Upon returning from my early visit to APHA Headquarters, it was time to attend the General Membership meeting. Executive Director Billy Smith gave his report:

1. APHA is continuing to work to develop corporate sponsors (Coors Beer is a new one on board). This will help bring in revenue that we can use to increase futurity payouts and other programs. Much of past revenue came from registrations (which is now slim pickings) so corporate sponsors allow us to increase revenue. Current sponsors: Gist, Farnam, Merial, Markel, Purina, Hart, & JW Custom Hats. As APHA remembers we need to remember that whenever possible, we need to do business with these sponsors.
2. For us as APHA members & directors, we need to remember that we need harmony. This does not always mean agreement but rather a commitment and a passion for common goals.

3. Working with the APHA Foundation to improve access to scholarships for those youth that are showing. Also trying to work with therapeutic groups to maybe help fund training people to work in these programs (huge need in that area).
4. APHA will be focusing on taking care of members. One example is those members that don't renew their "forced" memberships (due to registering or transferring a horse, etc.). We need them to be happy with their membership and what they can get from it so they will stay. We want to increase loyalty (which then increases revenue). If you have not gotten the word by now, APHA is running a fabulous membership promotion. If you haven't heard, you can read about it here or contact me for more details: <http://my.apha.com/association/pressroom/releases/2012/10/01/apha-announces-opportunities-to-become-a-golden-anniversary-member>
5. One thing that is apparent from reviewing the data is that horses are a female dominated industry and we need to keep that in mind when developing various programs.
6. APHA will be proposing moving from the 2 meetings per year in June and September to a single meeting the end of February. That time frame was chosen because it had the least impact on show dates. He believes that a single meeting will increase director participation. Also, it will reduce APHA expenses and allow for better workflow by APHA staff.
7. Some interesting statistics: nearly 45% of the visitors to the APHA website are new visitors annually. Most of the APHA Facebook fans are not APHA members (we have more Facebook fans than actual members – so there are some potential members to tap into). The APHA Connection is a top 5 equine publication. This publication hits over 60,000 homes.

Next we heard from Jay Hickey with the American Horse Council. In short, we must work with Congress as they can affect a lot of what we do (access to areas for recreational riding, taxes, disease tracking, gambling, etc.). The A.H.C. was formed 40 years ago and their job is to try to explain to Congress why the horse industry is important and how big a part of the economy it is. While the A.H.C. would love for you to be a member, you can join their "Calvary" at no charge – this gives access to things they would like you to pass along to your Congressmen/women. Jay also reviewed why the upcoming lame duck session of Congress is important (tax breaks expiring, sequestration cuts, Sec. 179 expense deduction is scheduled to change to only \$25,000, depreciation is scheduled to change from 100% to 0%, etc.). More information can be found by contacting the A.H.C. Some things they have been working on: (1) USDA bill to fund things like dealing with disease outbreak (Congress did not get the bill passed but will be filling the equine positions – just not sure on the amount of funding), (2) Immigration – the current administration rolled back some immigration rules which has made rules on H2As and H2Bs very confusing. Part of this is currently stuck in litigation, (3) they got \$85 million back into the highway bill that funds opening & maintaining recreational riding trails, (4) slaughter – the USDA can still pay inspectors and there is no federal prohibition on opening plants. However they don't see any opening until things get more settled due to the potential expense, (5) they were able to work with the Department of Labor getting the rules withdrawn that prohibited youth from working on farms. Jay also clarified that the Animal Welfare Act ONLY applies to horses used for research. It does not apply to farms, breeders, etc. They have seen serious issues related to the Tennessee Walker programs – the USDA has a limited budget so is typically only able to do checks where there is a history of problems. They will be putting forth legislation regarding pads/wedges/action devices for 3 breeds.

With no Old Business and no New Business, the General Membership Meeting was dismissed so we could all get ready to catch the busses to head out to APHA Headquarters.

All I can say about the Reception is WOW!!! The APHA staff went all out. The food was great, the items for sale in the General Store were flying out the door, and the faces in the crowd (many of whom have their photos on display in the building) were plentiful. The mayor of Fort Worth gave a quick speech and let us know that the city had officially proclaimed October 4th American Paint Horse Day! After the speeches & introductions, I wandered around the building and checked things out. I also browsed the many items that were up for live & silent auction and bid on a few (sadly I was outbid).

Friday started off with the Board of Directors meeting. Unfortunately APHA is still projecting a total loss of around \$574,000 for the year. This is an improvement and things are starting to move in the right direction so that is good news. This deficit is due from overly optimistic projections on revenues – sponsorships down, Journal subscriptions down, memberships & registrations down, World Shows, etc. The 2012 Youth World

show lost \$71,063 overall after the Texas Trust money. This is expected to turn around in 2013 as the Youth World Show pairs up with the Appaloosa National Show (as a bigger show, this will increase vendors and the hope is that there will be more opportunities for people to “ride share” and perhaps increase entries). APHA’s overall financial position is still very strong and they are continuing to actively seek opportunities to grow existing revenue streams as well as develop new ones.

Discussion on combining Workshop & Convention to a single meeting per year. The plan is for a regular Workshop in June 2013 and the next meeting will be the combined meeting in February 2014. This means that 2013 will be a 2 year rule book. Obviously some things are left to be worked out (like the meeting will need to add at least one day plus improvement of ways for committees to stay in touch throughout the year and do much of their work electronically). A Resolution was put forth and passed with near unanimous support.

2012 Rule Change Proposals – I’m including a brief description of what each of these were, but to see the full language before the 2013 rule book comes out, visit

http://press.apha.com/pdfs/rulebooks/OnlineRuleChanges1012_.pdf :

- Control AIII-2 – passed (grouping international representative areas)
- GR-010 – passed (changing how a rule change proposal can be brought out of committee by petition). There was some discussion that for the most part, the vote of the committee to defeat or table should be trusted, but it was pointed out that sometimes a committee may not understand the broader issue and the issue is important to the entire body. If those important matters have no way of making it out of committee when they have broad support, then those matters will not be heard by the entire body.
- GR-020-2 – passed (lifetime memberships)
- RG-020 – passed (replacing the International Appendix Registry language)
- RG-070-1 – passed (crop out rule). Discussion that the drawing in our proposal did not match the language in the proposed rule (the drawings available online are correct). Discussion that the language we had in our booklets changed the overall HYPP language when the intention was to only exclude H/H crop out horses (not H/H one Paint parent horses). That language was corrected. One director got up to speak towards defeating this rule and bringing it back with allowing cropouts based on the current white requirements of one Paint parent horses. The Registration Committee feels there should be a different “line”. I know the people that contacted me about this rule were concerned about protecting Paint breeders – particularly those with minimal Overo programs. As such, I think this rule is a good compromise. If a horse with no Paint parents has white up to the lines in our APHA rule, it is considered regular registry with AQHA (no excessive white). So basically this rule means that a horse has to be considered “excessive white” with AQHA to be eligible for APHA registration.
- SC-060 – passed (the ½ point rule – 2 horses in the class = ½ point, 3-5 horses in the class = 1 point for 1st and ½ point for 2nd, 6 or more horses goes back to our current point scale)
- SC-096 – passed (re-categorizing Special Events & allowing 3 categories to be held at a Special Event). Discussion on why longeline is with the halter category (this is because halter is part of the judging and this is considered an in-hand class). Also a question about the mileage restriction (this rule does not change the current rule).
- SC-210 – passed (changing Hunter Hack to be a max of 3’)
- SC-215 – passed (changing the over fence scoring)
- SC-215-1 – passed (Working Hunter classes will have a minimum of 5 minute warm up after the judges walk the course & approve)
- SC-220 – passed (Jumping jump-off rules)
- SC-265 – passed (Working Cow scoring)
- JU-000 – defeated by a VERY close vote (it was counted twice) of 52-48. This was allowing a judge to be able to judge a horse they had owned or received any kind of payment on after 3 months instead of 6 months. Discussion that this would bring APHA in line with other breeds that have changed their rules. Others felt this had the appearance of being too soon at 3 months. The bottom line is that judges do and will continue to use integrity. But it was felt by the slim majority that judges need to wait 6 months to judge a horse they have trained or shown or sold.
- AM-010 – defeated. This was allowing someone who had hung out their shingle as a professional trainer or a judge to come back to get their Amateur card after 3 years instead of 5 years. Discussion that this would align APHA with AQHA and make it easier for those who try their hand at training but don’t cut it to

come back as an Amateur. Some feel that we will drive those people to AQHA if they can't get their Ammy card. I personally feel that they can still show in open (I show in open as an Amateur) and I hear all the time from Amateurs that they are tired of competing against former trainers. At least with 5 years, it gives some separation.

- AM-095 – passed (adding In Hand Trail & SPB In-Hand Trail)
- AM-111 – passed (adding elements to Eq. Over Fences)
- AM-205 – passed (allowing people to reapply for Novice status after 10 years)
- RA-060 – passed (adding Running Champion Awards and adding Broodmare of the Year racing title)

After completion of the voting on rules, we heard presentations from the two candidates for the Executive Committee – Don Beard and Craig Wood. Craig Wood is our newest EC member.

We dispensed with some other minor things since the meeting ran over and we were already late for the President's Inaugural Luncheon. That was held in the hotel at Ruths Chris – again, can I say OMG?!?! The food was plentiful & amazing (really can't believe I didn't gain weight on this trip). Scot Jackson gave his remarks as our outgoing President and Gregg Reisinger accepted his new role. Being a man of few words, we moved right into the presentation of the 2012 Clubs of Distinction and Gold Star Recipients. Congrats to Washington State Paint Horse Club for receiving an honorable mention for Club of Distinction and for receiving their Gold Star status again. And huge congratulations to British Columbia Paint Horse Club for receiving their Gold Star Status. Cathy Glover was there on their behalf to receive the award. And the big finale for the NW was watching Grace Harris receive her 2012 Distinguished Service Award.

Since the lunch started late, that meant it also ran over and that meant we were behind for our committee meetings. So back upstairs I ran for the General Show & Contest committee meeting.

- Discussed the calendar shift that happens this year and reminded clubs that they need to secure their date with their facilities and let APHA know so any conflicts can be avoided.
- Reviewed the PAC program – number of horses enrolled (we are currently around 2001-02 levels with 1,368 horses enrolled – this is down from the high in 2008 at 2,230). We were given a handout that shows the number of PAC horses enrolled by state and it is broken down by horses that have PAC credits AND APHA points versus those with just PAC credits or those with just 4-H PAC credits. Obviously there are horses showing in PAC that we are not attracting to our regional shows and that is something we need to work on.
- We are putting forth a request for a rule clarification to allow family members to show the same horse in the Novice Division and the regular Amateur Division (see my notes from the Youth committee on day 1). The intent has always been to allow sharing of a horse within a family in these two different categories.
- Discussion on trail. It has been brought to our committee both at Workshop and again at Convention that judges are seeing trail courses that are too hard for the majority of horses. The trail courses we discussed were at very large shows where a complicated pattern is warranted. However, when judges are seeing 50% or more of the horses have a hard time getting through at these big shows and the horses that do get through being very bunched in scoring, it seems like we have a problem. This conversation got interesting because there were a couple of trail specialists in the room that don't see any issue. I on the other hand as a show manager hear from judges in APHA & AQHA as well as exhibitors around the nation that feel our trail is getting a little out of control. I for one appreciate that trail has become more "professional" and is no longer about riding by a chicken coop or cow hide. But I also recognize that as trail becomes more specialized we are running a high risk of losing exhibitors. Some of these courses can be very complicated to look at on paper and virtually impossible to get through unless you have a trainer. And it seems that trail is turning into a class that is about going over as many poles as possible instead of being about negotiating obstacles. I also see a trend where those who are trail specialists think courses take about 2 ½ minutes when in reality they time out around 4-5 minutes per horse (which is a problem for shows with decent numbers – the trail class is taking a long time out of a limited show schedule). We will be bringing suggestions on how to make this manageable. It was noted that we need to let clubs and show managers and such know that they are responsible for making sure they have a trail course that is appropriate for the skill level of their exhibitors. I think that we need to make sure it is appropriate for the majority of our exhibitors (there are probably 10-15% of exhibitors who are trail specialists, 80% who are somewhere in the middle, and 10-15% of exhibitors who are competing at a lower level. We cannot have courses

designed for the top 10-15% that are too difficult for the 80% to get through without feeling overwhelmed if we intend to keep those 80% showing in the class. I think we need to find the happy medium as best we can.

- Discussion on changing SC-145 and SC-150 (show All Around and show High Point) language to be suggested rules & scoring rather than mandatory. APHA isn't checking to enforce these rules and high points / all around awards won at a show don't follow the horse's permanent record. Holly (our APHA liaison) will check with the Rules Committee to see if we can put through as a clarification rather than having to bring forward as a rule change in 2013.
- Discussion on what people are seeing with shows around the nation to increase participation. I am pleased to say that the things we've done at the Inland Northwest Paint Horse Club show were in high discussion. Things like the \$100 to the 10th place class average, low flat fees, etc. Another idea was that one club gave every horse an entry into a drawing for a saddle if they crossed over from Novice to Amateur or a performance horse entering halter. They received an entry every time they crossed over.
- Wondering how people feel on whether World Show qualification has helped or hurt. Some feel qualification has perhaps helped regional shows but hurt World Show entries. Some feel that the World Show is just feeling the effects of the economy – I pointed out that from the NW most trainers tell people to budget between \$5,000 and \$10,000 depending on how many classes you are riding and how long you need to be there. That is money that a lot of horse owners just don't have right now and so might be deciding to show closer to home rather than heading to Fort Worth. Or they might be going to the World Show less frequently than they had in the past. No clear answer here.
- World Show – some questioned why there is no discussion on putting the World Shows back together during the summer with APHA losing money. It was noted that with the current contract situation that if a change was considered it could take 5 years to implement. The other concern was trying to get enough dates with the changes to the Youth World and a reminder that just prior to splitting the shows that the World Show had effectively become a 24 hour per day show because entries were huge. While we are not at those entry levels now, we have to hope to get back to them. And finally, discussion that being in the fall allows more time for the young horses to mature, better weather so less horses are getting sick/dying, and more opportunities for increasing our futurities. People were thinking that both the Youth and the Fall World shows were losing money – but a quick review of the financials from Workshop show that the 2011 Fall World Show made a profit of \$201,220 – only the Youth show is losing money. Discussion ended.

After our committee adjourned, I made a quick stop in to the Regional Club meeting as a guest as they were not yet done. They were discussing the Regional Club sponsorship program and any changes that needed to be made. The deadline was going to be changed but after discussion, it was determined that the April deadline seems to be working with all the other things APHA staff have to do post-World Show as well as wrapping up the end of the year and the holidays. Shows held prior to the deadline are still eligible.

After this committee adjourned, it was a quick trip to the room to change clothes for the Hall Of Fame Induction dinner. Again, the food was amazing! More importantly, it was absolutely fabulous to see so many people who have been critical to getting APHA where we are today. Hearing about the inaugural class of 25 people and 25 horses did not leave many dry eyes in the packed room! Information on the inaugural class was published in the Journal and I believe I remember seeing something in the Connection. But if you want a copy of the program, please let me know and I will be happy to scan and email it to you. The dinner & celebration was truly a glorious finale to our 50th Anniversary Bash!!

The final morning was for the summary of all the Standing Committee Reports. These go pretty fast so I've done my best to summarize them all. They will eventually be published at <http://my.apha.com/events/convention>

- Registration – they clarified the crop out rule diagram & language
- Show & Contest – see my notes above
- Amateur – amateur show entries seem to be stabilizing and the Walk/Trot program continues to grow. They are seeing growth virtually every month in show entries but a decrease in amateur participation at the World. Their committee had discussions on Amateurs showing non-owned horses in Open classes, Show Management combining (or not) Amateur classes, Amateurs trading services, Walk/Trot exhibitors choosing to be Walk/Trot or Amateur (some are Walk/Trot part of the year and then move up

to Amateur but next year reapply for Walk/Trot status), and they would like to see APHA add the birth date to amateur cards to help show secretaries. Show ideas: no-bling shows, offering open all-breed classes/PAC, flat fees, free youth classes (so their parents can afford to show Amateur)

- Breed Improvement – discussed blackout dates for horse shows (I missed the rest of this). They would like to see the World Show allow Solid Bred horses to be able to show against the Regular Registry horses in the futurities. Working to try to implement a program that would give a “status” level to breeders to have their stallions genetically tested. The status would not be based on the outcome of those results but rather that the breeder has availed themselves of various tests and that those test results be available online. For example, a Gold status would mean the breeder has availed their stallion of all available tests, a Silver status would mean they’ve done certain tests but not others, etc. This committee is working to develop a Professional Breeders Code of Conduct.
- Judges – investigating changing the Academy pricing. They are losing money on the intercollegiate judging contest so very likely that program will not continue. They will be adding a question to the Judges’ application about whether or not that person is a member of Professional Horseman. Discussed World Show judges. It was pointed out that there were only a total of 235 responses to who the judges for be for the 2 World shows. The committee reviewed 9 applications, 2 temps, & 1 complaint. 11 applicants will be testing this year.
- Long Range Planning – they suggest that the Executive Committee have the power to amend rules if they are causing undue problems. Think technology allows Directors & committees to discuss stuff more. They feel that Solid Bred horses should be allowed to show in futurities with Regular Registry horses. We need to work to increase the value of SPB horses – right now we have two different “products” that we treat differently and this perhaps is decreasing the value of one or both. This committee would like to see APHA allow AQHA & Thoroughbreds without one Paint parent and without enough white be allowed into the Solid Bred registry. And if a resulting foal fits our color requirements, then that foal be given regular papers.
- Member Services – quick presentation on the membership department and what they are doing for promotions. Creating an ombudsman sub-committee. Mike Short will get with the Executive Committee on structuring & purpose.
- Professional Horseman – 78 approved and 4 applicants in process. They need to develop a procedure manual – in progress but not yet done. This will be an informational tool about what it takes to become a member. Will be doing more promotion of the program (October Journal ad – booth at the World Show). World Show booth will be staffed by Professional Horsemen whenever possible.
- Recreational Riding – only 8% of our total APHA membership are show people. So the other 92% likely fit in some form of recreational riding. What can we do for them? Committee is working to revise the Ride America program since participation has been declining. Summary of the Fort Robinson ride and a reminder that this ride is usually filled up by February with a long waiting list.
- Regional Clubs – resubmitting rule change to charge a higher show application fee for non-APHA regional clubs. Need to educate people on the difference between APHA show “points” and APHA PAC “credits”. Rule book will be changed to be consistent with the credits terminology. Revised Gold Star, Club of Distinction, & Regional Club Show Sponsorship applications. They would like to see all the deadlines for these applications listed in the rule book calendar. And this committee wants clarification on what support APHA will provide to committees with the change to one meeting a year (any conference calls, chat rooms, etc.)
- Rules – discussed that the crop out rule had been “fixed” by the Registration committee. Discussed the problems with trail classes at regional shows. They decided that any clarification would only be a band aid. They will form a task force to work on what other breeds are doing to try to come up with something standardized.
- Ways & Means – they would like to see the single APHA meeting remain in the Fort Worth area for the next 3-5 years to maximize the savings for APHA
- Youth – reviewed numbers of memberships, youth World numbers, and what other clubs are doing to increase youth participation. Rule change that a youth that is training cannot be considered a Novice. Clarification on allowing multiple youth to show a horse in Novice versus the Age classes sent to the rules committee. They have filled their Zone 5 position. Discussion about combining classes at shows. In their 2nd meeting they discussed marketing PAC to 4-H and Open show youth. Perhaps setting up boots at some of these shows & educating them about available scholarships. Majority of youth indicated that with APHA moving to a single meeting that they would like to stay with the regular

meetings rather than scheduling their own meeting during the summer. They will be working to develop some scholarships so youth can afford to come. Code of Conduct introduced last fall was VERY well received at the World Show this year. Discussion on how the 2013 combined show with ApHC brings some opportunities for fun activities. One idea was for the APHA youth to have t-shirts available that say “my spots bigger than yours” and so on. A rule change regarding the Walk/Trot program will be put in for the 2013 Workshop. Comment that the camaraderie at the Youth World Games was fabulous.

- Foundation – raised \$6,640 at the auctions during the Reception Friday. All of the monies have been distributed out of the trainer crisis fund and are now out of that business (in line with the Foundation’s purpose). Looking to support therapeutic riding by training professionals (this has something to do with our IRS goals) and getting medical professionals to use Paints in their equine therapy programs. The Foundation is looking into the logistics of actually having a Hall Of Fame Museum in its own space instead of in a small portion of our headquarters.

And with that – our business for 2012 concluded. It was a busy couple of days and I felt like I was constantly running from meeting to meeting and working to get to know new people. It was a wonderful time and I’m already looking forward to our final Workshop in June.

If you have any questions or comments about this report or things that you want to be brought to APHA, please let me know. I have enjoyed being your Alternate Director for 2012 and look forward to serving you as a regular Director in 2013 & 2014!!!

Sincerely,
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