

2016 AHA Convention Report

By Chelsea Wesson

The first General Session of the convention started out with requests that all AHA members log into their accounts on the AHA website and verify their emails. AHA is moving away from snail mail as much as possible, so we all need to make sure that our emails are accurate. You also need to check that you are allowing them to come through to your inbox. If you are not receiving and emails from AHA, and your email is listed correctly with them, you will need to contact AHA directly. Unfortunately, the club cannot handle that for you.

The importance of attracting new people into our breed was as emphasized as ever. Statistics were used showing that there are more people involved with horses than in the popular sports of skiing and tennis, and it is roughly an equal number that is involved in golf. Clearly, there is an interest. As a breed, we just need to figure out how to attract them to the Arabian horse.

AHA's finances are in the best shape they have been for quite some time. There are still concerns, of course, but the trend is improvement.

The AHA National events are all holding pretty consistently in their numbers. Sport Horse Nationals sees the greatest variations from year to year with the rotation, but it has been that way since it was developed. The other National shows were all up in numbers, with Canadian Nationals seeing the most growth. Qualifying AHA shows are holding fairly consistently in entry numbers at this time, as well.

Stan Morey spoke briefly on judging and shows in general. His main point was about habituation and how we must change before others force it. There are many different angles you can look at that from, so I felt it was a fair point to mention again.

The AHA Convention will be in Denver in 2017. It will reportedly return to Tulsa in 2018 and 2019. The AHA Convention Planning Committee is looking for regions or groups to host the convention after that.

Most of the Convention was spent on the resolution concerning shoeing, which is 5-16. After great discussion, here are the changes that were approved at Convention:

- Bar shoes are permitted, but they may only contain a single straight bar located anywhere with the shoe or be of an egg bar type shoe. The bar may not extend below the ground surface of the shoe.
- No horse under age four may wear a bar shoe of any style.
- A ¼ inch of toe length is allowed (includes shoe and pads), but the resolution changed how the toe is measured (from hairline rather than from the soft spot in the hoof). This means that the length of toe will not be affected in a majority of horses.
- Any material meant to add weight to the hoof put within or between pads or between pad and hoof is forbidden. Supportive materials, such as rubber or latex, are permitted.
- Shoe/hoof inspection may be required and means for inspection are listed.

- If a violation has occurred, penalties are now established and mandatory. The suggested penalty is a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of on-year suspension.
- These changes went into effect on December 1, 2016.

The other approved resolutions include:

1-16: Reduced minimum of adult members in an AHA club to two to allow small clubs the ability to stay associated with AHA.

2-16: Bylaw update reference of Immediate Past President.

3-16: AHA Membership Fees are raised to \$50 for one year or \$135 for three years. The cost of a competition card was not raised as long as you join through a club. These changes will go into effect as of April 2018.

4-16: There is no longer a limit on guest judges for Working Western panels.

6-16: An optional change for show management that sets a new gate time limit in place if the show chooses to use it. The gate will be closed if a steady stream of horses is broken for more than two minutes or if no horses enter within two minutes of the class being called into the ring.

7-16: In sport horse under saddle and show hack classes, a fall of horse or rider will result in automatic elimination.

8-16: Clarification of leveling was made. Riders may no longer show in two consecutive levels. They must pick either the one they are actually in or the one above it.

9-16: Sport horse in-hand scoring system is defined.

10-16: Regional shows no longer have to hire a specific trail course designer.

13-16: For Reining Seat Equitation, an exception was made to allow a trainer to school horses after the class has begun. This will allow every entry an equal opportunity.

14-16: Another resolution that is optional for show management, this no longer requires judges to give oral reasons when using the comparative system for halter.

As far as other meetings go, Laurie Kern & I started out the convention by spending some time in the AHA Sport Horse Committee Meeting. There was a fairly lengthy discussion on whether pelhams should or should not be allowed in sport horse under saddle classes when the horse is shown under other dressage tack and attire. The room eventually decided that the horses should be shown in attire and tack that matches the rules of the division that they are portraying. It was an interesting discussion with good opinions on all sides.

The Dressage Committee spent time discussing how best to incorporate Western Dressage into an approved Nationals class. There were many ideas discussed for consideration.

The Region 11 Caucus was held during convention, as well. Starting in 2017, there will be a new program for youth that has been graciously sponsored by the family of Marlys Anderson. The Region will offer two different categories, one for rated shows and one for non-rated activities, and both must include breed promotion. The prize will be a belt buckle for each division. Watch the Region 11 website and our own Facebook for more information!

The next Region 11 meeting will be held February 25 & 26th in St. Louis. We will share location and other information when it is available.