

## AHA Convention 2016

What a fascinating convention this year. For the most part, there was not much to discuss other than one specific resolution about our shoeing in the Arabian division.

This is what I would like to talk about this year for my convention report. The Arabian family is amazing when they need to come together to make sure something good happens for the breed. At the 2015 Convention, there was talk about issues with what is allowed for shoeing on our show horses and how some outside interest groups were in process of bringing issue with how we shoe horses to the local governments. These groups were mainly looking at the Tennessee Walking horse and the abuse that was happening in their breed, but unfortunately without information and education, they were lumping all trotting breeds into this government regulation.

Over the show season in 2016, we would hear snippets about what was going on with what these groups were doing and how it might affect our horses. Our President at the time, Cindy Richardson, got a diverse committee together to look at this issue and formulate a resolution that could be brought to the convention floor for a vote.

Here is what was amazing about a regular process that happens every year at convention and can happen every year forthwith. Trainers, vets and ferris from all over the country came to convention to bring insight and help the delegates make an informed decision. Whether you were in the APAHA committee, amateur committee or working western, groups of delegates as well as AHA administration discussed the resolution and as the convention continued, the resolution was altered, enhanced and modified to meet the needs of our community of horse owners taking first and foremost into consideration what is best for the horse. We are not talking about what is best for the horse and how to make him win, but what will make the horse comfortable and perform in the best way that they can as well as allow the horse to live a much longer life.

I have to be honest, that at first, I was against parts of the resolution and still wish that we could have modified the pad width a little more, but I do understand and agree with the reasoning why the resolution was written and accepted by all delegates at convention. I had to go back to real life and thinking about people that I know as well as my own family and how people wear corrective shoes to make them walk better as well as feel more comfortable when they are walking all day. One of my best friends was born with one leg longer than the other so she has had corrective shoes all her life. One of her shoes is 1 1/2 "taller than the other. You wouldn't notice it unless you look at her shoes and see the different heights of her soles. Issues with horses feet happen all the time and corrective shoeing is done to relieve pain, stress on ligaments and many other things as well.

Now, are some people still going to abuse this rule and shoe their horse so that they can get the absolute best motion out of their horse so that they can win? Sure, but we can't write rules for the people that are going to abuse them. We have to look at the betterment of the breed as well as our association.

Working on this resolution at convention, we as the Arabian breed were in the forefront on shoeing rules just like we were 10 years ago when the first shoeing regulations went into effect. Putting these

rules in place show other breeds that positive things can be done with the welfare of the horse first and foremost in our minds.

It was wonderful listening to the different trainers, vets and ferriers on what is good and what might not work. As the convention went on, conversations between people who had never met, were being had and an understanding of different aspects of the horse, shoeing, and training were discussed. Listening to different groups after a working committee meeting was fascinating. People would go into the meeting thinking one way and would come out with new insights and excited about the process that was happening.

At the end, the resolution came to the floor and after 4 days and a year worth of work, the resolution was unanimously passed to take effect this year. What was even more exciting to me was to hear trainers, vets and ferriers saying that they wanted to come to convention again and be a part of this great process.

We as a community are a part of this breed because we love the Arabian horse. We are very passionate about these wonderful animals who really become family members. For some, they are just a job, but for most of us they are our life and love.

As a delegate, I brought your concerns to the convention and these concerns were discussed in many different working committees. In the end, the process worked beautifully and I truly feel that we accomplished great things at this convention. You vote us in and as a delegate, we are responsible to bring your feeling to convention to the meetings. This year, your concerns were heard and change was made.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this great association. I look forward to seeing all of you at the shows as well as on the trails.

Toni Marie O'Daniel

Region 10 Delegate