

## **2015 AHA CONVENTION REPORT**

### **Van Jacobsen**

I would like to thank MAHA for giving me the opportunity to serve as a delegate once again at the 2015 AHA convention. I have lost track on the number of conventions I have attended as a delegate, but it is more than 25. With current technology results of the annual convention are reported online as they happen or shortly thereafter. The focus of my delegate report is not to repeat action that has been taken but to offer our membership some insight in what actually happens when delegates are considering the various resolutions that are brought to the floor.

I would like to focus on four resolutions that came from the Amateur Committee as they pertain to the definition of a family, joint ownership, leased ownership and joint ownership with a horse rescue charity. In summary, all of these resolutions deal in some fashion with the ability of individuals to show as an amateur owner.

The Amateur Committee did a lot of work on these resolutions. As a member of the Committee, I was able to offer my personal views while these resolutions were being drafted as were other members of the Amateur Committee.

It was apparent from the discussions prior to the convention and during the convention that many members have strong opinions on these issues. The discussion on the pros and cons of these resolutions was healthy but spirited. I do believe people were able to share their respective positions and the positions of the individual members they have heard from during the resolution review process.

In all of my years as serving as a delegate, I have never had a set of resolutions that generated more response from our members who were not attending the convention. As a delegate, I heard from many MAHA members who had strong feelings one way or the other on the pros and cons of these resolutions. Procedurally, when these resolutions are included in our convention packet, they are often times referred to committees. The majority of these resolutions were referred to the Amateur Committee, Competition Advisory Committee, Board of Directors, Membership Committee, Registration Committee, USEF Arabian Division Rule as well as the Working Western Committee. Each committee is required to either approve or disapprove the proposed resolution prior to it reaching the convention floor. When the resolution is read, the action of each committee is reported. The following action was taken on these resolutions:

- **Resolution 4** – Definition of Family for the Purposes of Showing. This was approved by the convention to modify the definition of family to be consistent with the definition of family and the current legal definition of marriage.
  
- **Resolution 5** – Leased Horses Allowed to Show in “Owner” Classes. This resolution was withdrawn by the Amateur Committee prior to consideration on the delegate floor

- **Resolution 6 - Joint Ownership.** This resolution was disapproved by all committees it was submitted to and disapproved by the convention delegation as a whole. However, this was a very close vote from the delegates on the floor, despite being disapproved by all committees.

This is the resolution that generated the most discussion and is the resolution that I received the most comments on from members opposing joint ownership. I did vote to disapprove this resolution and other MAHA delegates voted to approve this resolution. This is where the democratic process works. Many people have strong feelings that owner classes should legitimately be preserved for the legitimate owner of the horse and oppose any efforts to lessen the idea of ownership. Multiple comments were made by delegates that AHA specifically provided for non-owner amateurs to show horses by adding the JTR, ATR, JTH and ATH classes in our shows. On the flip side, many people felt that joint ownership would allow an individual to share a horse and share expenses associated with the horse ownership.

- **Resolution 7 - Joint Ownership with a Horse Rescue Charity and Eligibility for Owner Classes.** This resolution was disapproved by the convention delegates but approved by 2 of the 7 committees originally referred to.

Whatever your position on these resolutions is, the convention delegates have decided the issue for this year. I would anticipate that these or similar resolutions could be back before the convention delegates at some date in the future. For this reason, it is important that everyone communicate with your delegates to let them know your views on some of these important resolutions that do come before the convention floor.

This is just a sampling of the work that is done at the convention. It is truly an honor and privilege to be able to serve our Arabian horse community and members of the Minnesota Arabian Horse Association as a delegate.

Van P. Jacobsen