

WCRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, Nov. 20, 2010
Chilliwack, BC

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I'm happy to report that 2010 was a year of relative stability and harmony in the WCRA. The big event of our year, of course was the holding of the World Equestrian Games selection finals, in conjunction with the West Coast Classic. You will have a detailed report from Sharon, but we can all be proud of our club's accomplishment—first of all, in being granted the right to host the event, and then in carrying it off so successfully. We were disappointed that there were not more entries, and there has been controversy over the decision to hold the event in the West, but there have been nothing but compliments for the event itself. We all owe show manager Sharon Hall a debt of gratitude, but we can also pat ourselves on the back for a job well done by a club that didn't even have a major show like a WCC just a few years ago.

There were no major controversies within the club (that I'm aware of!) but one matter arose at last year's AGM, as it has at each meeting for as long as I can remember: the question of refunds for scratched entries at our shows. The one point it seems that everyone can agree on is that all our shows should adopt the same policy. So at last year's meeting we agreed to ask the show secretaries to come up with a solution that they all could live with. The WCC committee put forward an option—basically a refund, less an administration fee—upon production of a doctor's or vet's certificate. But the show secretaries were uncertain and in the end they agreed to let sleeping dogs lie. I suggest that if this is to be taken up again, somebody should undertake some research into other NRHA shows that have different refund policies and find out how it works for them, and the advantages and pitfalls; then canvass the experienced High Point show secretaries for their comments; and then put forward a proposal to the club.

One other question that needed to be resolved early in the year involved the use of our website for promotion of private businesses. The position of the executive has been that exposure on our website should be used as an inducement to our sponsors and supporters. Other events can be listed on a calendar of events, as a service to our members, but if private businesses wish to promote themselves on our website, the

club should get a benefit in terms of sponsorship. This issue caused some hard feelings and I regret that, but I feel strongly that the club doesn't have a lot of leverage with many of the people and businesses we approach for sponsorships, but our website does give valuable access to our members, and it should be used to best advantage.

Speaking of the website, Kim took it over at the beginning of the year, gave it a great new look and always kept it up to date. The website, plus notices emailed as necessary by Leslie, I think kept the membership well informed throughout the year. Sherea also did a real service by developing and maintaining a terrific site for the WCC.

This year for the first time ever, the AQHA's Region 1 held their Regional Experience here in BC, at Thunderbird Show Park. The timing was a challenge for reiners, as it took place on the one weekend between West Coast Classic and the Armstrong reining show, and at the same time as the BC Summer Games, also held at Thunderbird. A fair amount of time and effort went into trying to co-ordinate events, and find some synergies, but in the end the AQHA show didn't do a good job of accommodating reiners and I don't think we gained or lost significantly because of it.

If 2010 was a year of peace and harmony at the WCRA level, the same can't be said for our "senior" organizations in the horse world—meaning Reining Canada, Equine Canada, the Canadian Reining Committee, NRHA and FEI. You will have a chance to get up to date information from Reining Canada today and I encourage all of you to keep abreast of developments in the organizations that affect you and take advantage of every opportunity you have to vote, and to make your views known. It's a different world down there in Oklahoma, just as it is in Eastern Canada and even more so in Europe, so don't let them forget about this corner of the reining world.

The major project for me this year was to overhaul our club's Bylaws. Last year we made what I saw was a significant change in the Constitution, which is like our club's Mission Statement: we put the interests of the horse up front and center. The Bylaws were the next step because they essentially are the framework within which the club accomplishes its mission. In whatever form the new bylaws are passed, I hope they serve the club well into the future.

Now, I hope you will allow me some personal remarks.

I first want to thank the executive and those I have worked with since becoming involved in this organization a number of years ago.

Bob and Sharon, you were the ones who got me involved in the running of the club – I've enjoyed working with you, and I've learned so much.

The executive was struck a blow in February with Jody's announcement to us that she had been diagnosed with cancer. This has been a challenging year for her but she has not shirked her duties as Vice-President and has always been quick to respond to my messages with her trademark levelheaded wisdom. Thank you, Jody, and I know that every one of us wishes you the very best for your recovery.

Linda was High Point chair for several years and last year stepped into the role of Secretary, which really is the big job on this board. Linda's tact, hard work, attention to detail, and sense of humour have made my job really a pleasure. She's also been a great friend to ride and show with.

Shannyn Smith has been our hardworking treasurer for several years. Shannyn doesn't ride, she has her own job and her own new household to run, but still she helps us out just because we ask her to. It's much appreciated.

Janice Hagedorn stepped up to take on the High Point chair's role this year and her shopping skills will be on display tonight!

Leslie Bogula is another faithful member who has been involved for years whether she has a horse to show or not. She has been our membership secretary and by keeping control of the membership list, she has been my email link to all of you.

The show chairs – Wilma, Janet, Amanda and your committees have given us a succession of wonderful shows.

Hilary Friesen has been a stalwart show secretary, volunteering so much of her time while working and completing her degree that she had no time to ride her own horse.

And thank you to everyone of you who has lent a hand at a show, or brought in a sponsorship cheque, or helped in any way to create opportunities to develop and show these wonderful horses.

I can't let the moment pass without also saying thank you to Ruth: my coach, trainer, teacher, mentor, and friend. You took care of my horses as if they were your own, you taught me to ride with my legs and to feel my horse, and, having done your time over the years in running clubs and putting on shows, you always encouraged your gang to take our turn and get involved—It's no coincidence that in the last couple of years, the president of Fraser Valley Reining Chapter, Lower Mainland Quarter Horse Assn and WCRA were all from your barn.

Most of you will know that I've made a decision, not only to retire from this executive, but to retire from the horse world altogether. This is a big step for me—horses have been a part of my life forever, and a huge part these last few years—but I have my reasons for stepping back and looking towards new horizons, at least to see what the wider world has to offer.

So I've been thinking a lot lately about what it is that I've enjoyed so much about my time with horses—because I'm going to have to find a way to replace that. A partial answer may have come in the latest issue of the journal "Science." It turns out that although one of the things that set us

apart from animals is the ability to think about one thing while doing another – this tendency towards a wandering mind in fact can make us less happy. What researchers have found is that we're at our happiest when we're thinking about the thing that we're doing—being "in the moment." And that's where we are when we're riding, or playing with our horses, or just grooming and saddling up. Horses demand that we be there, in the moment, with them – or something bad is bound to happen!

I also have been thinking about some of the things Rob said to me when he first started coming to our shows, then started taking lessons, and then showing– he had participated in many sports during his life but he told me he loved reining for the way it brings together men and women, young and old, everyone having a good time together. And once, when we were sitting out on the grass over at the Saanich Fairgrounds in the evening sun at the end of his first Rockslide—he said, "People here are really nice to each other, and I like that." I look around this room and it's full of people who have been really nice to me. I've enjoyed working with all of you, and have appreciated your friendship, and I thank you very much.