
Hello fellow MQHA members,

The days are getting longer, the flowers are starting to come up, the temperature is warmer and best of all winter hair coats are shedding fast! Spring is in the air and there's a lot going on at MQHA to let you know about.

March to the Arch was a success. Although that show isn't owned by MQHA, we always have a number of members who compete there and others that volunteer their time (and pocket-books) for a great cause. The last of February/first of March date always sneaks up on me and it seems like the horses I keep at home are never quite as slick as I'd like them to be (I learned how to creatively clip my daughter's walk-trot mare this year, she just didn't want to drop her winter coat!). Long hair aside we had a great time and it got me excited for the upcoming show season. It was great to see a number of MQHA members there.

The AQHA National Convention was held in Fort Worth March 6-9th this year. This was my first experience at a national convention and I'm sure it won't be my last. We attended the Hall of Fame Banquet. I love to hear the story behind the horse and that is the place for that. Listening to stories told by owners of Plaudit, Smart Little Lena, Corona Chick and Coy's Bonanza was a lot of fun. At the general membership meeting we learned that Missouri was one of 3 states that won an affiliate award. The award is cash to be used in holding an equine industry summit in our state. This is an idea that has been kicked around at board meetings for a couple of years and now we have the resources necessary to pursue it. Thank you to Rachel Robinson and Michelle Forness for their work on that task. One of the interesting things to me was how rule changes are debated and ultimately adopted. I left the convention with the thought that AQHA is truly an association, not a corporation. What I mean by that is that if there are things you think could be done better, more efficiently or just differently your voice will be heard. If you've never attended the convention, put it on your list you'll be glad you did.

That same weekend was the first Ozark Quarter Horse show of the season. I hear that they sold out all of the stalls and had a great show. These shows count for points toward MQHA year-end awards and it sounds like there are a lot of people hitting the ground running this year.

The following weekend MQHA provided 4 classes for the state 4H horse judging completion. Special thanks to Jim and Susan Dudley for providing horses to be used in HUS, Horsemanship, geldings and mares. The 4H horsemanship project numbers in the state have declined over the years along with all other aspects of the horse industry. However, it was refreshing to see the enthusiasm and interest the participants showed in the horse. It was great to be a part of a quality program and I look forward to helping them again in the future.

MQHA's amateur committee has been active since the convention and they have an exciting raffle taking shape. Because of very generous donations from Circa A Show Horses (Betty Allen), Missouri Farm Bureau Insurance and Quality Equine Insurance, we will soon start selling tickets for a chance to win a new iPad. The proceeds from the raffle will benefit a very special therapeutic riding program called Freedom Reins. Freedom Reins is a program that assists US military veterans. We plan to present the proceeds to them as well as have a demonstration by them at our Memorial Day novice show in St Louis. I can't think of a better way to spend the Memorial Day holiday than honoring our military veterans and showing horses.

Speaking of the novice show, don't forget to mention that to friends and family that might have an interest. We are keeping the cost as low as we can (about \$65 to show all day including stall). We will have clinics, BBQ lunch and the above mentioned raffle drawing and presentation to Freedom Reins.

That's all I can think of for now. I hope everyone has a great second half of March, I'll see you in April.

Joe Eddy